

New Chapter for Seoul

In more ways than one, South Korea has turned a new chapter in its contemporary history.

As if taking a cue from President Bill Clinton, Kim is said to be making an effort to pick people from all walks of life as well as from all different regions of the country.

All this augurs well for South Korea's civilian government. In the first place, the republic needs to reemerge as an open society.

By now, President Kim would realise that the changes in his country's domestic politics and external relations must come through well-defined stages.

For South Korea, bigger problems lie in its external relations, first with North Korea and secondly, with the United States.

One cannot underestimate the challenges facing Kim Young-sam and his administration. A country like Bangladesh which has maintained good relations with both Seoul and Pyongyang.

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Of Goat and Man

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But the goat is indeed unbeatably voracious — in some very innovative ways. The latest proof of that is reported by Reuter from Nairobi.

If the goat is celebrated as anybody's fool for nothing beside her voraciousness, how shall we celebrate man — the Homo Sapiens — a member of which species sentenced her to two days' incarceration?

American elections attract a lot of attention around the world. Perhaps it is natural to be curious about the richest and most powerful nation in the world.

It is democracy at work at its finest. In England, for example, the monarchy blurs the peaceful succession of power but in the United States one can see how, for long two hundred years, the American people have had an unbroken record of peaceful transfer of power.

For almost one long year the election drama is played out on the nation-wide stage. The primaries, the gruelling race for nomination, the mudslinging and scandal-mongering and finally the conventions are all part of this drama.

In some of my articles I have written about different aspects of American elections.

Clinton's Inaugural Address: Is there Something for Us to Learn?

On the subject, there are I believe much to learn from it for us in Bangladesh.

A writer in an English language weekly commented on my article and said that one must not compare situations in America and Europe with those in Bangladesh.

The next point that seems relevant for us is when he said, "It is time to break the bad habit of expecting something for nothing, from our govern-

Clinton began his speech by paying a gracious tribute to his predecessor. "On behalf of the nation," he said, "I salute my predecessor, President Bush, for his half-century of service to America."

The concept of local initiative behind a local cause means, regrettably, lobbying in Dhaka with the minister or secretary for allocation of funds.

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ON THE RECORD

by Shah AMS Kibria

leader of a political party. Can we not learn from this to put country before party?

In Bangladesh today the principle that holds sway is my party, right or wrong. I can see the underlying motive for this policy.

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Tough Days Ahead for Veteran Clerides

by Annie Charalambous in Nicosia and Derek Ingram in London

In a surprise election result 74-year-old Glafcos Clerides (sworn in as President on February 28) has become President of Cyprus.



Glafcos Clerides, 74, veteran politician, has found himself catapulted to the world stage as the new President of Cyprus.

The elimination of businessman Paschalis Paschalides. He polled 50.3 per cent of votes on February 14 while Vassiliou got 49.7 per cent.

The UN-sponsored peace talks between Greek and Turkish leaders on the island, divided since 1974, were a key issue in the election.

Although Clerides' party is considered right-wing, he is generally looked on as a moderate with long experience in negotiations and a deep knowledge of constitutional issues.

Following his first meeting with the outgoing Vassiliou, Clerides told reporters that talks may not resume in March, as expected, but most probably in April.

peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem.

Clerides wants to hold consultations in Cyprus and Athens before resuming formal peace talks.

The 30-year-old Cyprus problem took its most serious turn when Turkey invaded the island in 1974.

Although the Commonwealth summit may find itself meeting at a critical time in Cypriot affairs, it will not want to find itself becoming involved in the 30-year-old Cyprus problem.

clear: it supports the UN resolutions calling for Turkish withdrawal.

Clerides, a British-trained lawyer, will need to use all his considerable diplomatic skills in the months ahead.

He is the son of another distinguished Nicosian lawyer, Ioannis Clerides. He was in London at the outbreak of World War Two and joined the Royal Air Force in 1939.

Clerides completed his studies after the war and was called to the bar in 1951. In London, he met and married his wife Lila. Their daughter Kate, now a member of the House of Representatives, moved back to Cyprus in 1951.

Clerides played an active role in the four-year Eoka struggle in the late 1950s against British colonial rule

we show on the television the actual condition of the rural health centres or the roofless school houses? Some newspapers do try but these unglamorous news is relegated to the inside page where it can be safely ignored.

The last point that touched me deeply in his thought-provoking address was when he summoned his nation to work by referring to the American idea, "an idea tempered by the knowledge that, but for fate, we — the fortunate and the unfortunate — might have been each other."

I have said this often and even at the risk of repetition I would like to stress once again that all our efforts for "development" will be abortive when most of the people who are to enjoy the fruits of development are illiterate, under nourished and often living in sub-human conditions.

Southern Africa Puts Act Together to Ease Largest Food Relief

Mercedes Sayagues writes from Harare

Regional cooperation has been given a boost. When warned of the impending crisis in Malawi, southern African countries loaned grain and gave priority to Malawi-bound shipments

overtook Durban in June. Between April and December, Beira received nearly 900,000 tons of drought-related commodities.

More than 85 per cent of the flows into landlocked countries have been by rail. Slightly less than half of the imports for Zimbabwe from Beira moved by road and virtually all shipments for Malawi have been transhipped from

rail to road near Harare or at Mbeya in Tanzania.

The link connecting the South African railway system with the national railways of Zimbabwe at Beitbridge has been the most utilised, having carried 37 per cent of total drought-related imports to date for Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

Despite the huge additional demand (close to 3.5 million tons more than a normal year) placed on the regional transport system, it has coped very well except for minor bottlenecks such as low offtake on Tazara rail (northern corridor), lack of locomotives along

the Beira corridor and occasional bunching of trains at Beitbridge (southern corridor). The good performance is mainly due to large investments in the improvement of infrastructure and training of transport professionals during the 1980s.

The LAC has obtained funds from donors to eliminate transport bottlenecks. The LAC has made it possible to buy, lease or borrow equipment; install communication and signalling systems; repair rail wagons and tracks; buy stacking machines, weighing scales tarpaulins, radios and faxes and to repair and maintain roads and bridges.

The LAC itself is a unique cooperative mechanism linking different agencies with a common goal, namely, to bring aid to the needy and ward off the effects of a cruel drought

on the regional economies.

The weekly shipping bulletin issued by the LAC contains up-to-date, detailed information on all drought-related shipments (commodities, volume, destination port, arrival and discharge dates, etc.).

Regional cooperation has also been given a boost — the very idea behind the new regional goal of economic integration. For example, when warned by LAC of the impending crisis in Malawi, Southern African countries agreed to give priority to Malawi-bound shipment and to loan Malawi grain from built-up reserves.

— Depthnews Asia

To the Editor...

Migratory birds

Sir, It is often heard from bird-meat lovers and from crop conservers that it is wiser to eat up birds (migratory) to save crops. The logic is really absurd.

The rule describes that autotrophic producers (self-nourished plants), placed in the primary level, supply food first to herbivores (eat plants birds) which supply food to carnivores (eat animals-owl).

The omnivores (eat both plants and animals-man) depend on all three previous levels for food. (Most simplified food webs description, avoiding cross-linkages). To make the rule perform soundly, ecosys-

tem provides highest amount at the primary level gradually lessening to the upper. The figurative form of the rule can be shown as follows:

- a) Net primary productivity (plants): 270 g.
b) Every year herbivores eat 29 g.
c) Net herbivore productivity: 6 g.
d) Net carnivore productivity 0.4 g.

The productivities are given for 1m² of field in one year in a Tennessee field (productivity differs on varied ecosystems, generally increases from a low in the arctic region to a high in the tropics).

So it is clear that birds have the natural right to consume crops and fish but on the contrary, man has not that right

because he is no more can keep himself a pure natural creature.

It is true, the guest birds consume our ready-made crops, but it is we who turned their natural sources of food into our food sources. So we have nothing but permitting them to share with our food for the sake of balance in nature — breakup of which may endanger the life of omnivore man as well.

Tasnim Siddiqui (nature lover)

Aung San Suu Kyi

Sir, We extend our moral support to the call made by eight Nobel laureates including South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former

Costa Rican President Oscar Arias to free Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi who has been detained since July 1989 by the Burmese junta.

We sincerely hope that the Burmese authorities will immediately free the detained leader Suu Kyi in the greater interest and welfare of the Burmese people.

M Zahidul Haque Assistant Professor, Bangladesh Agricultural Institute, Dhaka

HBFC loans

Sir, Of late House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) has started issuing fresh loans to the applicants after a suspension for three years.

Amount of new loans is increased to Taka 12 lakh from 10 lakh. The rate of cost per square feet is also increased and the period of repayment of loans is decreased to 18 years from 30 years.

Old rates and limits are considered for them on the plea that the applicants earlier submitted applications on the basis of the old rates and limit. But it is unfortunate that the construction will now have to be made according to the present market prices of materials and labour.

i.e. 18 years instead of 30 years is preferred. How? This discriminatory attitude towards the old applicants should be given up by the authority and both the old and new groups of applicants should be treated equally because both the groups will now enjoy the fresh loans to meet the present market cost of materials and labour.

Minister for Finance, Govt of Bangladesh and HBFC Authority are requested to kindly take immediate steps to remove the discrimination and revise provision of loans at new rates to the applicants whose loans are sanctioned recently of old rates and who have not yet taken the 1st cheque and have not mortgaged their lands.

Some applicants