

Urgent Measures Needed

The daring day-light shoot-out and dacoity that occurred in the heart of the commercial district of the capital, has sent a wave of nervous shock throughout Dhaka, and to much of the country.

The rise of crime, violence and terrorism is something that our people have watched with tremendous concern. We in the media, especially the newspapers, have repeatedly drawn the government's attention to this phenomenon which cuts across all political parties and partisan views.

One of the saddest development of the past several years is the politicisation of crime, and the criminalisation of politics, which has direct bearing on the rise of organised crime. The use of armed gangs within major political parties to provide the fire and muscle power when needed provides political cover and legitimacy of sorts to those who are otherwise plain thugs.

Government, and especially the law enforcement agencies, must take up the issue of law and order with much more earnestness than have been evident so far. Their evident lack of determination and sufficient push behind this effort, has given a wrong signal to the criminals.

If we take account of how many violent crimes the police have been able to solve, and how many murderers and killers have actually been put behind bars, then it becomes amply clear as to why criminals are becoming ever more daring and why people are increasingly becoming skeptical about their safety.

There is no denying the fact that the failure of the police force and the CID has been abysmal. The question now is, will the government take up this problem seriously and do something about it? The rise in violent crimes is not only a threat to the civic life, but to society at large.

Action, Not Studies

The first ever meeting of the inter-ministerial committee for restructuring mills and factories under various Corporations of the Ministry of Industry was held last Sunday. Needless to say we welcome this meeting. But must hasten to ask, why has it taken so long?

The Planning Minister, Zahiruddin Khan, speaking on the occasion suggested that in-depth studies be undertaken of 22 of the 63 industrial units that need to be rescued from their so-called sick status. The question therefore is, having taken so much time to set up the inter-ministerial committee, if we now take the course of going for in-depth studies, then when will we start taking the steps that will actually turn these loss making governmental units into profitable ones?

There, our suggestion would be that the inter-ministerial committee should, instead of in-depth studies on the problem, put its intellectual resources together in determining action programmes and in chalking out a series of steps that need to be taken immediately. For example, the question of management efficiency should be the first issue to come under scrutiny.

The measures we suggest do not require in-depth studies. What has been lacking so far is a will to act. We urge the government to go for concrete action, and not to waste further time. After all time is not an inexhaustible commodity. Neither is people's patience.

IF Serbs' atrocities on Bosnian Muslims have not aroused the conscience of the non-Serbs around the world, then the world is yet to be civilized. The atrocities can only be compared with the Holocaust which the world will always condemn.

President Clinton promised to act in Bosnia even during his Presidential campaign. He followed it up though with occasional hesitations but proposed military actions against Bosnian Serbs in the form of bombing Serbian military targets.

President Clinton's proposal to knock out by air strikes major military targets of Bosnian Serbs would not only have largely stopped the atrocities on Bosnian civilians but would also have persuaded the

World Helplessly Watches Serbs' Genocide of Bosnian Muslims

by Muslehuddin Ahmad

Serbs to accept much debatable Vance-Owen peace plan. But West Europe's arguments against air-strikes on the plea of safety of UN ground forces and continuing relief work do not appear valid.

It is not up to anyone to say what a Superpower President should do but people expect him to make his own decision, and carry others along.

As the situation stands President Clinton should stick to his own decision and act immediately. Otherwise, Serbs will continue their murder, rapes and ethnic cleansing.

The Vance-Owen plan around which all the diplomatic activity is centered today, is nearly nine months old. During this period the Serbs have sowed terror in Bosnia among the Muslims and have murdered, raped and expelled hundreds of thousands of Muslims in order to expand their territory.

neighbors has been engaged in genocide on another neighbor for over 13 months. Let Niras play flute while Bosnia is burning, one day all may be engulfed if such barbarism is allowed to continue unchecked.

Moreover, Europeans' arguments, probably influenced by Lord Owen in his final efforts to implement his peace plan, for more sanctions, more political pressure, appear meaningless as these generally do not work and are indeed futile in Bosnia-Serbia situation.

West Europe is unwilling to act even though one of its

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Also clear is the fact that the world once again looks upto the young US President Bill Clinton for decisive action. Again, the US in order to maintain her world leadership can no longer take refuge behind European non-action.

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Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia-Greater Serbia

Arshad-vz Zaman writes from Istanbul

AS 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia, which in effect means murder, rape and expulsion of Muslims from their hearth and home, continues with all its ferocity, the hand wringing of the international community, continues unabated.

around which all the diplomatic activity is centered today, is nearly nine months old. During this period the Serbs have sowed terror in Bosnia among the Muslims and have murdered, raped and expelled hundreds of thousands of Muslims in order to expand their territory.

cent of Bosnian territory. Alla Izzetbegovic, leader of the Muslims balked at and had to be pressurised to accept the plan. The Croats were more than willing. The Serbs, who have set their sights on a greater Serbia, have been playing for time.

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The Vance-Owen plan

Mystery of New Air Base near S. African Border

Marx Garekwe writes from Gaborone

CONSTRUCTION of the largest military air base in black Africa is almost complete. It is in the republic of Botswana and the cost is estimated at \$1 billion — about 20 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

A big air base is being built in Botswana only about 100 kilometres from the South African border. Funding is shrouded in secrecy. The United States and France are said to be involved and the French are supplying aircraft to Botswana as part of the deal.

subcontractors. The cost: about \$250 million. Critics argue that with a population of 1.3 million people and its much respected record of non-aggression, Botswana does not need this kind of project.

They say the facility is for the use of the US services which have already started military exercises in Botswana. The BDF is tiny and Botswana, unlike most of its neighbours, has never had to wage war — either internally or externally.

One theory is that the conservative government of President Quett Masire will recoup the costs of the project by renting the base to the US. The government says it is in the interest of Botswana's security.

1980s. Both grade school and high school students produce mediocre products. A growing number of high school age children are not up to standard because of a shortage of secondary schools.

After the first nine years of schooling, drop-outs add to the growing numbers of unemployed. They cannot find places for further education or jobs.

As a result of this the numbers of street kids are on the increase. Wealthy families — among them cabinet ministers and top civil servants — who can afford it, prefer to send their kids to neighbouring South Africa or Zimbabwe for schooling because they have lost faith in the system. Some even send their children to Britain or North America.

Those who cannot afford it are bitter that in diamond-rich Botswana their children are left to turn into *boBashi* and *boNshadi* — the Tswana words for streets boys and girls.

Botswana has about \$3 billion in foreign reserves, primarily from diamond exports, tourism and beef production for the European Community countries. Yet despite all this wealth most people are without running water.

GEMINI NEWS

MARX GAREKWE is a Botswana-born freelance journalist.

Billion dollar airport



firms are providing an undetermined number of military planes. The tender was awarded to the French company Spie Batignolles with South African companies as

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To the Editor...

Biman goes Utopian way

Sir, It is amazing to note that Biman, already burdened with a heavy debt servicing liability of about 100 crore, is going to purchase two new Airbus A 310-300 worth about 100-120 million US dollar. It is reported in the press that recently Council Committee of Ministers in its meeting recommended for such purchase in view of the very 'good condition' of our present economy.

It may be pointed out here that in the airline operations, now-a-days people are not buying aircraft because of enormous cost of modern jets, and leasing has become very popular, particularly airlines with weak income. There are many inherent advantages: First, there is very little financial involvement compared to purchase; secondly, you have

ready-to-fly aircraft without the hassle of maintenance and repair; and thirdly, if the operation is not profitable, there is the option of terminating the lease after an agreed period of even 30 days. It is for this reason that even major airlines like the British Airways, British Caledonian, Qantas, Air Canada and many others are operating with leased aircraft.

But, what about Biman Bangladesh Airline? A third world country airline? It is besieged with so many factors resulting in the hindrance to take a pragmatic outlook for acquiring wide-bodies aircraft for raising its fleet of four DC 10-30 aircraft.

It is gathered that Biman, according to the instruction of the Council Committee has already abandoned the idea of and is now preparing for the purchase of two used A 310-300 Airbus. Till that time, the route expansion programme of Biman in general and its planned operation to New York in particular, will have to wait.

resulting a great uncertainty. This is the state of affairs of Biman — our national airlines — in brief. Will some one in our Government machinery look into this mess and unscrupulous activities that plagued our national airline?

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Gross injustice

Sir, Those who have retired from Govt., semi Govt., autonomous or similar bodies between the period of previous 1985 Pay Commission and the current Pay Commission, effective from July 1, 1991, used to get one or two or three dearness allowances (DA) depending on the time of retirement. Each DA amounts to 10 per cent of basic pay. The fact remains that during retirement those employees had not got any benefit of those DAs while calculating retirement benefits.

Non pensionable jobs in sector corporations are worst examples as once their retirement benefits of gratuity and provident funds are paid, their names are struck off for good while pension holders continue to get subsequent benefits also from future Pay Commission. Thus a person retiring at Tk 5700.00 per month as basic pay on 30.6.91 with three DAs will get benefits of Tk 5700.00 while the same person retiring on 1.7.91 will get benefits of Tk 9500.00 per month. Under the above facts, is it not a gross injustice though we often preach natural justice, equity, fairplay and so on. Let us ponder over the matter.

Sadiq Alee Maghbazar, Dhaka

Bosnian peace plan

Sir, We wonder who rules Belgrade, the capital of former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, now comprised of

Montenegro and Serbia? Is he the Yugoslav President Dobrica Cosic, the Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Serbian Army Commander Ratko Mladic or the fierce Serb leader Rodovan Karadzic? Europe, the cradle of civilisation, has been threatened by the jungle rule in Belgrade.

We also wonder who Cyrus Vance of the USA and Lord Owen of the UK the mediators and peace makers of Bosnia? The so-called Vance-Owen peace plan to divide Bosnia into ten semi-autonomous 'states' has added fuel to the fire. The Serbs are annihilating the Muslims and swallowing up Bosnian land.

Why did Belgrade hold a referendum in Bosnia in February 1992? Subsequently, why did the UNO and many countries accord recognition to the independence of Bosnia? If the states like Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania can achieve their independence from the yoke of former USSR, what wrong have the

Bosnian Muslims committed? We fail to understand how and why and under what circumstances Vance and Owen have proposed division of Bosnia into ten semi-autonomous 'states'? Did not they know how the Punjab and Bengal were divided and demarcated under Sir Cyril Radcliffe of UK in the year 1947? Whither Bosnia today?

We would request the UNO, UN peace keeping force stationed in Bosnia and the world conscience to stop bloodshed in Bosnia, help maintain a status quo 'as it is, where it is' among the Serbs and the Bosnian Muslims and form a boundary commission consisting of jurists from i) Bangladesh, ii) India, iii) Pakistan, iv) USA, v) UK, vi) Russia and vii) China to decide and to draw a contiguous boundary line between the two different peoples, and help restore peace, security and stability in Bosnia.

O H Kabir Dhaka-1203.