The Baily Star

Dhaka, Sunday, May 30, 1993

The Legacy of Zia

Every national leader leaves behind a legacy that serves as a source of inspiration to his followers, motivates the people and helps a successor government to learn something from the way the leader performed his functions and carried out his duties. One such leader was the late President Ziaur Rahman whose 12th death anniversary is being observed today throughout the country.

We have several reasons for paying our tributes to the late President. Perhaps the most important one is his establishment of the multiparty government which Zia clearly saw as the cornerstone of a democratic system providing for the right of dissent and free press. Perhaps the second most important achievement of the founder of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was his commitment to grassroots development - his canal digging programme being a good example which he monitored himself, instead of leaving it to bureaucrats.

The observance of Zia's death anniversary today may well be largely ritualistic, with the presentday leaders of the BNP administration indulging in sincere exhortations. This is understandable. However, it is important that leaders of the government take time off from public meetings and rallies to carry out a sincere evaluation of the legacy of Zia as well as of its relevance to the new realities, not to mention of its implementation.

There are indeed many challenges to be met. In the first place, BNP leaders should accept that in many areas, the work of the late President had remained unfinished, partly because of lack of time and partly because of the absence of a serious cohesive thinking within the then ruling party. This explains why the establishment of the multiparty system did not help the democratic set-up function within acceptable institutional norms. There is a vacuum which even Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia says must be filled through institutionalising democracy, the role of the opposition, even the place of the free press in our society.

If we look at areas where Zia's unfinished work must be either completed or adapted to the new situation, BNP leaders must also be bold enough to identify the qualitative decline in performance by today's government agencies. The law and order situation, the unstable relationship between the labour and employers and a lack of political rapport between the Prime Minister and the Leader of Opposition have been sapping the national energy at a most crucial time in our history.

A strong effective leader, Zia had his own way, sometimes controversial, of halting a drift. It will be unrealistic to expect the present BNP administration to treat the legacy of the late leader as a ready-made blueprint for progress. On the contrary, it must surely evolve its own style and develop its own agenda. However, it must look at some of the enduring lessons left behind by the government of Zia, such as its commitment to good administration, rural development and a wide-ranging political debates. Then, when we add to it a new sense of accountability of the government and transparency in the formulation of its policies, we may well find a new sense of direction towards our future. When we do so, we will be paying the right kind of tribute to the memory of the late President.

New Hope for Tourism

This daily carried a report yesterday on the possible foreign investment in the country's tourism sector. After years of local experiments devoid of ingenuity and innovation, there is hardly any other option other than seeking foreign help not just in the form of investment but also in the shape of attractive new ideas and proven skill. Not all of who are showing interest in developing our tourism sector may have both the required skill and enough money. But some of them surely have better ideas to promote tourism in this country. Better it would be if one with such expertise is invited to look after the development of the sector even if it means discouragement to those with the fat purse.

Preferably, both ideas and resources take a fair share in the development of our tourism. But to have the benefits of best of both worlds, the prerequisite is to make the right choice of the prospective partners in the business. Our experiences in the past in such matters are far from happy. Personal interests have often got over the national and common benefits and thus money has been laundered at the outset, leaving the whole system unviable. Scimitar stands as an epitome of such bad deals. This time the question of developing Sonadia Island in Cox's Bazar and Kuakata sea beach in Patuakhali must not be swayed by any such narrow considerations. Because there are equally other important points that deserve careful attention before we opt for developing the two places as full-scale sea re-

This is exactly at this point, the local authority must retain the right to say 'no' wherever things go against the country's perceived interests - be it in the cultural, economic and environmental areas. After all we should not follow the example of the island states like the Bahamas, Tahiti and Western Samoa. Environmentally most vulnerable, we will do better if we took a more realistic view and kept our aim reasonably moderate. We cannot sacrifice our future for immediate gains. This calls for further prudence to devise a tourism plan that brings us loreign exchange without sacrificing our long-term interests.

Development of Kuakata and Sonadia as modern tourist resorts should not pose any such threat to our culture and environment if necessary caution is taken beforehand. The plan has to be made keeping in view the future pressure on those island resorts without harming the bio-diversity of those places or of the country in general. A continued top-order management will have to be placed in charge of an overall balanced process.

World Conference on Human Rights : Are We Poised to Slide Backwards?

Let us not kid ourselves. We are all witnessing the genocide being committed in Bosnia. This is happening to the Muslims in Bosnia because of their ethnic origin and religious belief. Amnesty International is doing a fine job but is it enough? Is it not just something to satisfy the pricks of conscience of some kind and thoughtful persons?

rights and therefore the right to a gainful employment must take precedence over other rights. It was this line of thinking which led to the passage of a series of new declarations emphasizing the importance of economic development which is a pre-requisite for the enjoyment to human rights.

In order to enforce human rights a number of important covenants and agreements have been signed under the auspices of the United Nations. A lew important ones are listed below

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. 1976. (Ratified by 115 states.)

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1951 (Ratified by 103 states)

International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969. (Ratified by 132 states)

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. 1981 (Ratified by 120 states)

Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment Punishment, 1987. (Ratified by 71 states

Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990. (Ratified by 126 states.)

This is indeed a most impressive list of documents that have been negotiated by the international community over the last half a century. On paper we stand on a much higher ground than we ever did on the question of human rights. No aspect of human rights has been neglected. The United Nations Human Rights Commission and its subsidiary bodies observe, study, monitor, investigate and publish information on the status of human rights in different countries as well as their violations. The World Conference will no doubt go into these issues in

order to devise ways and

means of enforcing the human rights more strictly than it has been hitherto possible. But we all know that the most ringing declarations and resolutions are useless if these are not backed by the political will of the member countries. Ability and willingness to enforce is the key issue. For example, it is well known that the military regime in Myanmar is guilty of the most blatant violations of the human rights of the people of that country. Not only the democratic rights of the people are being trampled under foot by an unscrupulous military junta but illegal arrest, detention without trial, torture and murder in captivity are known to be common occurrences. Aung San Su Qui, the

Commitment to human rights took a back seat. What is likely to be the assessment of the World

Conference about mankind's record during the last quarter century? Has there been a significant progress since the Teheran Conference? Awa reness of human rights and their violation has undoubtedly heightened to a new level. The news media cover violations more extensively and often they also uncover the se cret activities of autocratic regimes. Thanks to the alert news media, the world came to know about the large-scale secret killings master-minded by the Argentinean military junta. The rights of the women as well as those of the chil-

ON THE RECORD

by Shah AMS Kibria

Nobel Laureate for peace, has been under arrest without trial for more than three years. She is the leader of the political party which won an election but the junta ignored the verdict of the people and refused to hand over power to the elected representatives. Des pite the black record of the regime, has the international community been able to help the people of Myanmar? The western nations have rarely been consistent in upholding human rights. Many military regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America received support from them for political, military or economic reasons. The case of Zaire leaps to mind. A brutal, corrupt and most undemocratic regime under Mobutu was propped up by the western countries because they all wanted to exploit the rich natural resources of that country.

dren, to be fair, are now more widely recognized but the progress achieved is more symbolic than real. In Bangladesh, for example, there was a case, only a few months ago, when an woman was literally stoned to death, because she refused to satisfy the lust

of a Molla How can they enjoy did rights at par with men wnen so many of them are poor, illiterate, without property or assets or income which can give them the means of asserting their rights? A few speeches by the leaders or the establishment of a government department may create the illusion that things have changed a lot. In reality the age-old habits are very persistent. Many more years of ded icated, concerted and aggressive action will be necessary before we can claim that the actual human rights of the

Hindu widow re-marriage was legalized more that a hundred years ago but has the practice been fully accepted by society even today?

Eyebrows may be raised at

the rather pessimistic title

given to this article. Let us not kid ourselves. We are all witnessing the genocide being committed in Bosnia. This is happening to the Muslims in Bosnia because of their ethnic origin and religious belief. Amnesty International is doing a fine job but is it enough? Is it not just something to satisfy the pricks of conscience of some kind and thoughtful persons? In fact all the talk about human rights abuses in third world countries sounds hollow because of the hypocrisy and double standard being applied by the western countries in the heart of Europe. Even the United States, after the initial expressions of support for the Bosnians, have lost their enthusiasm. Why risk the displeasure of the Europeans for the sake of some Muslims? Europeans, one must note with dismay, are determined to let the Serbians finish the job of exterminating the Bosnian Muslims. Arming the Muslims. as Clinton planned to do earlier, would have given the Bosnians a fighting chance to deter the Serbian fascists but a clever diplomat like Lord Owen could not allow that to happen. So he used all his diplomatic skill, aided no doubt by Cyrus Vance, to make sure that the Americans do not make any move to obstruct the Serbian campaign of "ethnic cleansing". The Bosnian Muslims, according to Lord Owen, will be better off if they are kept bound hand and foot by UN sanctions. No one should try to arm them because, again according to the wise British diplomat, these Muslims might fight back the Serbians! This, in his view, is very dangerous for peace! The World Con-

ference in Vienna will perform a great service to humanity if it can expose the double standard that the world is witnessing in the Balkans

Some Asian countries have taken the view that our ideas on human rights cannot be the same as those of Europe and America. The western nations, they maintain, criticize them for violating human rights because the local conditions including the traditions of the country are not taken into account. Same criteria, in their opinion, cannot be applied in all situations. Further, the western countries use the human rights issue to interfere in the domestic questions of these developing countries. find these views to be selfserving. No one with a genuine commitment to human rights .can support such views.

Authoritarian regimes in Asia are so sensitive about the criticism in the western news media that they are talking about these local traditions etc to take shelter under them Human rights cannot be defined in geographical terms. A human being, born in Asia, cannot have less rights than one born in Europe. The Asians, alas, are also trying to apply double standard in judging these issues. In a way they are imitating the Europeans who have proved, beyond any shadow of doubt, that they are still unable to rise above ethnic and religious prejudice.

The University Declaration of Human Rights is still only a goal and to my mind, a distant goal. The most important task for the member states which will take part in the Vienna Conference should be a re-affirmation of the Declaration. Do we really believe that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights? If so, how come the Europeans seem to believe that the Bosnian Muslims have neither the right to live nor the right to take up arms in self-defence? I hope the world Conference will address these fundamental and central questions and set the stage for the next thrust in extending hu man rights in every society. If we do not wish to slide back wards, we must face the tough questions that confront us to day and find sensible answers.

Bangladesh — Viewed from a Distance Arshad-uz Zaman writes from Istanbul

nce in time and space may be that it gives the poss-ibility, hopefully, of viewing events in a detached manner. From my usual foreign affairs field, I propose to attempt to present to readers present day Bangladesh, seen from

HE Second World Co-

nfer-ence on Human

Rights, organ-ized by

the United Nations, will be

held in Vienna, Austria from

14 to 25 June, 1993. The first

World Conference, it may be recalled, was held in Teheran,

Iran in 1968. The struggled to

extend human rights started

long ago- perhaps even before

the dawn of civilization. As in

other areas of human ende-

ayour mankind moved forward

One can pinpoint certain

periods when the inherent and

inalienable rights of a human

being - regardless of his or

her race, colour, religion or

sex - gained some recogni-

tion. Often these hesitant but

forward steps were followed by

long periods of stagnation

Abolition of slavery was cer-

tainly a major step during the

18th and 19th centuries but it

was during these very cen-

turies that colonialism estab-

lished its vicious grip over vast

areas of the earth. The end of

the Second World War - with

the memories of the holocaust

and Nazi atrocities fresh in

mind - heralded a new phase

both in defining and protec-

tion human rights. The moral

and social values on which

these rights are based have

also been changing with the

passage of time. Mankind took

a giant step when the

Universal Declaration of

Human Rights was adopted by

the United Nations' General

Assembly in '948. The

Declaration not only defined

human rights but held up a

goal for the world community.

This historic document is still

considered to be the basic

charter for all oppressed men

and women everywhere in the

tries of Asia and Africa com-

mitted themselves to the goal

of upholding human rights as

enshrined in the Universal

Declaration but their attitude

to this issue was somewhat dif-

ferent from that of the western

countries. They all felt that

what they needed most was

not just abstract ideas of rights

and individual freedoms but

economic development. With-

out such development, they

felt, these "rights" has no

meaning for the people. A man

or an woman without work,

employment and income can-

not enjoy any of the human

HE advantage of dista-

The newly emerging coun-

in stages - in uneven steps.

It must be readily conceded, and I am using media language, Bangladesh is not newsworthy. One does have to go abroad to come face to face with this truth. We live in the age of satellite TV and sitting in Dhaka, it is easy to comprehend that Bangladesh is not newsworthy. Bangladesh has become synonymous with natural disaster. Cyclone, flood and tidal wave put us on the world stage. Death must run into thousands in our case to attract world at-

ANGLADESH is striving

hard to achieve self-

tention and destruction must be at a gigantic scale. Overturning of an overloaded launch, causing hundreds of death, causes barely a ripple. Mercifully Bangladesh has been out of the international media, thanks due to mother nature for having spared us.

Having said all that, I must add that since I have lived the better part of my life abroad and I refuse to develop an expatriate mentality, I take great pains to follow events in Bangladesh. The most heart warming news that I have seen is a front page story of Grameen Bank obtaining King Baudoin prize and infinitely more important, the picture of Ms Manzira,

a rural woman, who is a member of the delegation. Women of Bangladesh, from all walks of life must take justified pride. In fact, Grameen Bank of Mr Mohammad Yunus, is a success story, which fills the heart of Another picture in The Daily every Bengali, with pride, for he has literally turned the beggars

hand into productive hands. I recall the late Mr Fazlur Rahman, the architect, who planned the tallest building in Chicago. he came to Jeddah to perform Umrah and I was Assistant Secretary-General of OIC and we met. He was dedicated to his work and would have liked to do something in

citizens, who perform Haj, are aware that it was Mr Fazlur Rahman, who designed that beautiful Haj terminal, the shape of tents rising gracefully in the sands of Arabia?

women have been extended.

Star, which is truly shattering is the bullock cart crossing the mighty (?) Padma. I recall my childhood, when the train would cross the Hardinge Bridge and I would marvel at the mighty Padma, where in winter crocodiles would be sun bathing. Twenty years ago the first bridge linking Asia with Europe was built in Istanbul. A second has been added since. We live in an age when people

are not satisfied with engineering feats on the ground, but have conquered space. Where is that man of vision who will harness the great human energy of the subcontinent and turn collective misery into prosperity. The problem is not of Bangladesh alone but involves India. What a sorry spectacle we present, when one billion people, one fifth of mankind, go round the world with a begging bowl. Alas! SAARC Summit failed to make any impact in the international media.

President Turgut Ozal of Turkey suddenly died on 17 April. His was a familiar roly poly figure, which dominated Turkish politics during the last

knew him from Jeddah as he had close links with the Islamic world and particularly OIC. Bangladesh was close to his heart. His successor Suleyman Demirel organised an impressive funeral for him, which was attended by many personalities from around the world. It is a pity that Bangladesh Government did not send any body from

decade. He visited Bangladesh.

Bangladesh politics seems to be where I had left off nearly two and a half months ago. The difference seems to be the widening chasm between the government and the opposition in whose ranks the Nirmul Committée seems to have been absorbed. The stage appears to be getting ready for an eventful Budget Session.

Food Production Increased, Apparently

by Dr M A Sattar

sufficiency in food within the country. During the pre-independence period, 1947-71, the food production of 68.64 lakh tons in 1947-48 increased to 112.55 lakh tons in 1970-71 with a rise of 43.91 lakh tons or 63.9 per cent over the initial output. The food production in 1947-48 included 73.8 per cent Aman rice, 21.2 per cent Aus rice, 4.7 per cent Boro rice and 0.3 per cent wheat. Again the population during this 24 year period increased from 4.20 crores to 7.12 crores i e, 69.5 per cent over the initial population. This means that population increased by 0.23 per cent over food production

each year. Considering the food requirement at the rate of 16 oz/day/person and the wastage of food due to insect-pest-rodent attack, storage and handling difficulties at the rate of 10 per cent quantum annually, a food deficit of 7.75 lakh tons occurred in 1947-48 without any import of foodgrains, while the deficit was 16.57 lakh tons in 1970-71, excluding the imported 11.66 lakh tons in the same year.

During the post-independence period from 1971-72 to 1991-92, the food production of 112.55 lakh tons in 1970-71 increased to 193.17 lakh

tons in 1991-92 with a rise of 80.62 lakh tons or 71.6 per cent in 21 years of independence. This tremendous increase in food production, after independence, has been possible due to increase in HYV food cropped area (36 per cent) fertilisers used (400 per cent) and irrigation application (250 per cent) in 1991-92 over those in 1970-71.

The food production of 112.55 lakh tons in 1970-71 contained 53.4 per cent Aman rice, 25.8 per cent Aus rice, 19.8 per cent Boro rice and 1 per cent wheat, while the food production of 193,17 lakh tons in 1991-92 had 48 per cent Aman rice, 35.2 per cent Boro rice, 11.3 per cent Aus rice and 5.5 per cent wheat.

As regards the population increase during the post-independence period, it has increased from 7.12 crores in 1970-71 to 11.63 crores in 1991-92, equal to 4.51 crore or 63.3 per cent against the increase in food production by 71.6 in the last 21 years. This shows that food production after independence increased annually by 0.36 per cent over the annual rate of population growth. During 1991-92 there

Let us now evaluate the anduction, food deficit and im-

any imported foodgrains.

nual rate of population growth, food requirement, food proport of foodgrains during the last 10 years of rapid agricultural development from 1982-83 to 1991-92. A table is cited here for at a glance perusal.

Bangladesh. How many of our

nual food import generally varies between 15 and 20 lakh tons in almost every year. Conclusion

that whatever be the food

deficit in the country, the an-

It is no denying the fact that every year population is increasing by at least 22 lakh

68	Papu	Food Pro	Food wastage	Net Food	Food regt	Food	Food	1
	lation	-duction	10 per cent	available	16 oz/d/p	deficit	import	
	(mi)	(Lakh mT)	(lakh mT)	(lakh mT)	(lakh mT)	(lakh mT)	(lakh mT)	
982-83	936	151.81	15.18	136.63	155.28	1865	18.44	
983-84	957	153.69	15.37	138.32	158.76	20.44	20.57	
984-85	992	159.02	15.90	143.12	164.57	21.45	25.88	
985-86	1017	159.37	15.94	143.44	168.72	25.28	1200	
986-87	1041	162.60	16.26	146.34	172.70	26.36	17.57	
987-88	1066	158.64	15.86	142.78	176.84	34.06	29.23	
988-89	1091	164.50	16.45	148.05	180.99	32.94	21.38	
989-90	1119	185.96	18.59	167.37	185.31	17.94	15.34	77
990-91	1141	188.56	18.86	169.70	188.90	19.20	15.78	
991-92	1163	193.17	19:32	173.85	192.54	18.69	NA	
3.7. 3.7.			W					

The data show that with the increase of population, food production and food requirement in each year, the annual food deficit is also increasing from 18 to 34 lakh tons till 1987-88. After this the food deficit declined, ranging between 18 and 19 lakh tons in a year. But food import has not been significantly increased has been a food deficit of 18.69 with corresponding increase lakh tons, without considering in food deficit. This explains

for which we need a extra food production of 3.6 lakh tons over the normal yearly production. Each year we are producing an additional four lakh tons of food. This means that our total food production has now fulfilled our food demand and that our additional food production each year is also sufficient enough to meet the food demand of extra 22 lakh population each year. But what we

actually need is an extra provision to cover 10 per cent food shortage every year due to insect-pest-rodent attack and storage difficulties, and also due to flood, cyclone etc. If we fail to produce at least 18-20 lakh tons more foodgrains annually, we cannot cover up the above loss unless we import this vast quantity of foodgrains from abroad every year. In case we do not import food, we can meet our 20 lakh tons of food shortage by changing our food habit from rice to more and more wheat and potato. At present we are growing almost 11 lakh tons of wheat and 12.5 lakh tons of potato. If we can grow almost the double the existing amount of wheat and potato within five years and also maintain the rice production as the same as we have at this moment, then, in that case, we shall be totally selfsufficient in food not by rice alone, but by rice, wheat and potato plus other crops like maize and millets.

It is also worthwhile to mention that during the last 10 years of agricultural development in Bangladesh, the annual population growth has increased at 2.42 per cent against the annual food pro-

duction growth rate of 2.72 per cent. That means food production has increased at the rate 0.3 per cent over the population growth. All these indicate that the pace of food production is not lagging behind the population growth what we generally think often and on. However, this sort of food production attempt and spirit should be kept maintained in future. Also the population growth rate should be reduced to half of the existing rate of 2 per cent in order to make our country surplus in food and capable of earning foreign exchange by exporting enough food abroad in the near

Our population is increasing by 22 lakhs eachyear for which we need an extra 3.6 lakh tons of food over the normal production. At present we are producing an additional four lakh tons of food which is apparently, more than demand. What we actually need is an extra food production of 18-20 lakh tons each year to meet the recurrent food shortage of 10 per cent due to insectpest-rodent attack, storage problems and also flood, hailstorm, cyclone and heavy rain.

The author is the former Director of Land and Water Use, Bangladesh Water Development Board, Dhaka.

Session jam at BUET

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of BUET and the Ministry of Education to session jam at BUET and remedial measures thereof.

Currently, in the fourth year (final year) Engineering classes two batches are studying simultaneously as the BUET authority started their sessions together to reduce session jam. To accommodate these double batch students, extra books were purchased for the rental library, extra arrangements were made in the halls

of residence, bus services being provided for Dhaka based students and finally the teachers and other supporting staff in the laboratories paid extra for the double load. These two batches will be passing out in September this year. New students who passed

their HSC examination in 1991 and 1992 are waiting for their classes to start. Because all the facilities are available, may we, the guardians, request the BUET authority to start classes for these two batches together like they did four years ago. Ministry of Education may kindly provide extra funds

needed for this noble venture. In the recently held fourth convocation of BUET, the Vice-Chancellor also referred to the fund constraints to start classes for two batches together.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

United Nations, was being

and EC Sir, For the past thirteen months, the Moreon community in the Bosni republic, an independent Tountry in Europe and a member of the

A guardian

systematically murdered by the Bosnian Serbs, with the help of massive arms supply from the Belgrade Serbian Government of President Milosevic.

The European Community played a dual and hypocritic role throughout this period when a whole people were being decimated, raped and destroyed.

All through there was an arms embargo for the Bosnian Government, and they were expected to fight the Serbs with their bare hands. A widely circulated news showed that an unarmed and wounded civilian was being

targeted for the final kill by an armed Bosnian Serb. The Bosnian Serbs have so far killed nearly one hundred and thirty thousand Muslim civilians, raped thousands of women, and a whole people have been reduced to stateless refugees, huddled together in so called "safe havens", as was described by Warren Christopher and his European colleagues. Europe and the USA waited till almost the whole of Bosnia came under the actual control and occupation of the Serbs, thus

presenting a fait accompli. Never since the Second killing of an unarmed people was allowed to happen for such a long time. Apparently, the world civilization has now come to its lowest ebb. The least that the interna-

World War such large scale

tional community can do now is to set up an international war crimes tribunal, to punish all the cold-blooded murder ers and rapists, in soonest possible time. If this is not done, the future of the humanity itself will be in the greatest danger.

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