

DEPZ — a Positive Move

Although it may allow local entrepreneurs to operate on its soil, an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) is seen as doing its job best if it can attract more and more foreign investors. Foreign investment means accretion to a nation's net assets and so the acid test of performance of an EPZ lies in how much capital from overseas it has succeeded in pulling in.

An EPZ is like a city state within the State. It has its own set of rules and regulations to conduct its affairs. The laws of the land grant entities functioning within an EPZ near immunity from internal taxes, duties and levies; nor do the normal export-import, exchange control regulations apply to them.

It is, therefore, not quite correct to assume that building an EPZ will lead to an increase in our export earnings. Except to the extent it 'imports' material from inland as input for the goods it produces, exports from an undertaking operating in the EPZ do not add to the foreign exchange receipts of the host country — these earnings are retained by the EPZ unit itself. However, benefits accruing to the host country by way of employment of its nationals, transfer of technology and skills, could be substantial.

An EPZ can also contribute a lot to the host country's image-building among the foreigners. It provides overseas investors with sort of a window on the host country. If they like the goings-on, they would stay on, expand their operations and, maybe, invite other investors in.

As a medium term strategy for attracting direct capital investment from abroad, building EPZs could suit our purpose best for now. As a prospective market for goods produced by a foreign manufacturer, this country, though strong in terms of the number of consumers it holds, is weak in purchasing power. In our case, therefore, foreign investors will be lured more by prospects of feeding markets abroad rather than the domestic one.

Read in this perspective, formal commissioning of the country's second EPZ at Savar near Dhaka by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Sunday, should be considered as a positive move. We also hope that all concerned will pay heed to the call issued by her on that occasion for amity in industrial relations. Foreign investors have before them the whole world to choose from. Why should they come to Bangladesh unless they are assured of a truly business-friendly environment?

We have also taken note of Commerce Minister M K Anwar's suggestion on that occasion that local industries should be provided with facilities akin to those of other countries to enable them to compete in the international market. We mention this mainly because the scale of additional benefits made available to operators in EPZ tends to make local industrialists more aware of the facilities they lack. Wage rate is another area one has to tread carefully. If the rates of wage offered in EPZ differ substantially from those inland, it could cause friction in the society.

We feel happy at the prospect of the newly set up Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) being directly connected with the Zia International Airport by road. The sooner this is done the better. Proximity to an international airport will be one of the main points of attraction for the DEPZ; the Dhaka-Aricha highway has earned quite a name for itself from its traffic jams and road mishaps. Maybe, someday DEPZ will have its own helipad too!

It is said that the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) has already sanctioned 16 industrial units for DEPZ. This should give no ground for complacency. DEPZ has a hundred industrial plots to dispose of and there are many other EPZs in the region. We suggest that BEPZA launch an intensive promotional campaign abroad to sell DEPZ. In addition to the west, the campaign should cover the Asia-Pacific Rim also. It is not only Japan who is investing in Asia. Countries like South Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia also are spreading their wings. BEPZA publicity drive should increasingly target all such countries too.

Tribute to Golding

With the passing away of William Golding, a glorious chapter of classical English Literature seems to have come to an end. He may well be considered the last of the Mohicans who have directed the prism onto the human frailty and defects of the modern civilization. A quite and patient man, Golding had to wait long to convince publishers of the merits of his classic, 'Lord of the Flies' — the first novel he came up with; and still longer to earn the recognition of the Swedish Nobel Committee for his literary works. But his long wait was amply rewarded by not only the once-reluctant publishers and the Nobel Committee but also by the countless readers across the world, who discovered in the novelist a highly perceptive commentator on the psychic malaise of our time.

Based on his experience as a teacher and a Navy man in the World War II, Lord of the Flies is a caustic commentary on the innate evil quality in man. In a marked difference with the writers of great tragedies of all time, novelist Golding has never tried to lay the blame at the door of any supernatural beings — rather he holds man and man alone entirely blamable for all his misfortunes. Indeed, it is not a case of more sinned against than sinning but one that is a creation of his own doing.

Cynic he may be called quite rightly, but he never tends to be misanthropic. He seems to be critical of the flaws in human character; he may even be hating the tyrant in a man but his love for the oppressed and the victim of tyranny wells up with equal poignancy. Without this deep-rooted love for man, he might not be rated as highly as he is done today. This love-hate ingredients in his writings have given him that enduring quality of a classic writer. Whether it is Pincher Martin or Rites of Passage or the other two of the trilogy last named, Close Quarters and Fire Down Below, Golding is concerned with the quality of heart and he demonstrates a rare insight into it, never contriving to divorce characters from reality.

The fact that writers like Golding chart a course completely their own and have no followers to relieve them is both sad and encouraging. Sad, because the path comes to an end and no fellow traveller takes the road beyond; encouraging, because every creative mind is unique and follows the way of his own making. We can take consolation in that fact of his unique creativity which expands our mental horizon.

Dimension of Integration in Socio-economic Development

by Raihan Sharif

THIS is something like a Drawing Attention Notice on an emergency issue — to all concerned. As an economist, I am raising this different kind of flag of emergency for our world of 'planning and development' affairs in which Gunnar Myrdal's epithet of 'Planning Ideology' applies to the conditions of South Asia.

To begin with, we have to refer to the tremendous roles we economists play in these affairs. As such, we play a vital role in the society and nation to provide the lamps of guidance to sit up roads and highways as well as lanes and by-lanes of the country's development planning and also watching the progress of implementation of plans, programmes and projects. We know, our history of achievement of all such diversified efforts, especially in regard to the realities of reflection of the wishes and aspirations of the people. The records of realities of production of goods and services of welfare and their equitable distribution are known to be sadly marked by tragedies and failures, both in politics and economics, in the sense of national integration and dynamic coordination. Yet politicians and military adventurists played 'dramatic' roles of 'sound and fury' signifying nothing.

In the midst of tragic mis-planning and corruption-rich urban glory of uneconomic happy-go-lucky sparks of foreign-aided spectacular showpieces, people's will continued to be the silent work of sustaining the foundations of the future: this is clearly visible in the four pillars of achievement — (a) top export earning garments industry; (b) near-self-sufficiency in food production by the farmers; (c) substantial and expanding remittances by our workers abroad; and (d)

development of an extensive rural network of employment and income generation for women and landless poverty-gripped people through the dedicated efforts of Grameen Bank and some NGOs. (This latter move is highly promising and reflects the motto of 'Weaving development around people' indicated by the UNDP Human Development Index Report, 1992.)

Unpleasant Truth

Now in 1993, basking in the bright sun of democracy, we are infused with high hopes, as the other day's morning Radio song sang: 'We will tell today with words of brightness.' In fact, every morning dawn sings its eternal truth. The nation's rude realities about the urban and official plans, programmes, implementation etc are the unpleasant truths looking up pointedly to the 'conscience' of the nation's politicians, economists, socially conscious intellectuals, thinkers, planners, decision-makers and executors of plans, programmes and policies. Let's broadly refer to the following:

(a) Politically, the basic condition of democracy's success as a prerequisite orientation, has not been 'internalized' by the vital segments of — leaders, parties and present upholders of democratic principles to the people; principles of democratic discipline, based on rights and obligations; principles of 'nationalism' vs party allegiance in the light of the meaning of patriotism; demonstration of nationally sustainable living standards and lifestyles (i.e. 'reflection' of ways of life and consumption in line with what are nationally and morally justified; consciousness about too much 'luxury' consumption as unnatural and unpatriotic because anti-people; national demands of wealth and resources trans-

fer from the urban people to the rural people (through patriotic socioeconomic planning); lack of 'real' national outlook compelling wilful acceptance of 'imitation economics' and 'imitation planning' (including reliance on aid and subservience to World Bank/IMF).

(b) Economic Behaviours: problems of urban affluence (of developed country style) in the background of massive poverty in the rural greater part of the nation attract only lip service at the seminars/conferences while problems accentuate; urban industrialists are in charge of the large industry sector; in alliance with bankers and importers/aidgivers, they produced only 'sickness' of severe character for industry as a whole and have inter alia spread the 'techniques of heavy corruption'.

(c) 'Market economics' and 'free markets' are the global cries of the West to suit their own interests. The UNDP HDI Report/1992 states: Global markets do not operate freely. This, together with the unequal partnership, costs the developing countries \$500 billion a year — 10 times what they receive in foreign assistance. The 'free market' capsule is no remedy for the economic maladies of the Bangladesh socioeconomic situation today. The obvious overgenerosity of the donors in the last Paris Consortium in their gesture of pledging even more than what was requested by the Bangladesh Mission tells the 'concealed' truth of credit business.

(d) Lack of coordination and determination of national priorities as well as lack of strong will is serious constraint; since earlier regimes, nationally important issues about sharing the Ganges water has been

hanging ruin to one-third area of the country's territory in the North with dismal development prospects.

(e) Tremendous wastes and loss of productivity are naturally and substantially flowing as currents of the trend set by the unnational politico-economic, promoted by the winds of the Western Sea' but founded on slipping economic growth for no fault of the economy itself; fast deterioration of the Ganges water, fast deterioration of the affected farming community and rapidly deteriorating fish and livestock resources have not attracted the priorities they deserved; nor any adequate attention has been attracted to these high priority areas of economic and politico-economic big problems.

(f) Issues about human resources development and its planned mobilization and use have not been considered in the national coordinated and integrated sense. People in general and the educated urban classes are traditionally devoted to 'cultural shows' and 'culture exhibitions' including painting, arts and sculpture. No conscious groups are interested in examining the issues of productivity and unproductivity related to these. Nor anybody bothers effectively for the role of 'cultural values' in controlling wastes in consumption and avoidance of social dangers like invitation to the invasion of AIDS curse through the Western style of free entertainment. The abominable cause has already arrived, BNP Deputy Leader, Dr Badrudduza Choudhury announced the other day; his announcement is only late while the alarms were loud with reports of millions of AIDS victims in Thailand and India as published in the Newswatch in

1991. If malnutrition and poverty along with population boom in the rural areas can swell some figures and AIDS killer along with party-political and other youth group terrorism can reduce some number in the areas, population growth may even remain unaffected. But does the human resources development through appropriate education and training as well as sciences and technology advancements continue and in good speed? For higher Economic growth?

DOUBTS AND DANGERS ARE APPREHENDED

The macro indicator of annual economic growth rate enhancement is strongly suspected. Even the latest news report indicates in Daily Sangbad (May 30) that bumper harvests of the current year inspired our Government to estimate the growth rate for 1992/93 FY to be 5.11 per cent which was not liked by the IMF; and the latter accepted 4.2 per cent which is close to the Government's Bureau of Statistics estimate of 4.3 per cent. Fourth plan's all the past years thus show great defaults in reaching growth targets while the glittering shows of urban living on the Western styles and posh designs as advertised in BTV. And this is what the American socio-economic critic warned in his book *Affluent Society*. Our efforts of tremendous amounts of billions of taka budgets (on annual revenue and development) are thus known to be producing the pyramid of urban top-layer affluence that tides over the horrors of campus violence with party techniques of politics and letting the crowds of frustrated potential 'key human resources' to help themselves loot, plunder and kill for upkeep and Western merrymaking. Alarms are indeed ringing loudly and bloodily to wake us to help the

nation save itself before real disasters engulf us.

DANGERS NEED BE AVOIDED BY CHANGE IN POLICY-PLANNING IMMEDIATELY: Briefly I am only referring to the utmost need for rationalization of policies and priorities in relation to reliance on national resources and development of human resources; national talents and skills can still be used to help with such a National Report, if desired.

This may focus on at least three things to begin with: (1) How to solve the political tangles to forge a national consensus for the dissociation of political parties from armed youth organizations and campus student unions; (2) How to introduce proper linkages for coordination and integration of planning and implementation of plans, programmes, projects and policies where necessary; (3) How to provide integration of the education and training processes in such a way that skill and knowledge can also be combined with the motivation from the 'soul' and 'conscience' so that qualitative difference in human resource and also participation in economic functions of consumption, production and distribution can be socially desirable and material-nonmaterial balanced. And if these three questions can be faced, the next task is to set up a National Education Reforms Commission to provide appropriate education and training programmes at various stages, technical and non-technical, so that appropriate nationally desired boys and girls as well as man power/woman power can be produced for the economy and society.

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THE British are voracious newspaper readers even in these days of television. They buy 14 million copies of eleven national newspapers every day. And each Sunday they buy another 16 million copies of nine papers. This is in addition to the numerous daily regional newspapers.

Of all these papers *The Observer*, born in 1791, is the oldest Sunday newspaper in the world.

It has been a great paper in decline. In March it sold just half a million copies and was said to be losing 50 pence a copy. Fourteen years ago it was selling 1.2 million. Such a decline could not be sustained any longer.

The Observer had been almost destroyed in a few years because of disastrous changes of ownership. Yet in the 1950s and 1960s when David Astor was owner-editor, it was one of the world's most respected newspapers, not afraid to risk its future for editorial independence. One test came in 1956 when it opposed the British invasion of Suez at a high cost, temporarily, in readers and advertising.

In 1977 Astor was forced to sell to an American oil company. The paper began to lose its reputation and sales flagged until two years later when a strike shut its rival, *The Sunday Times*, for a year. In 1981 the transnational corporation Lorrho bought *The Observer* and from then on it was all downhill.

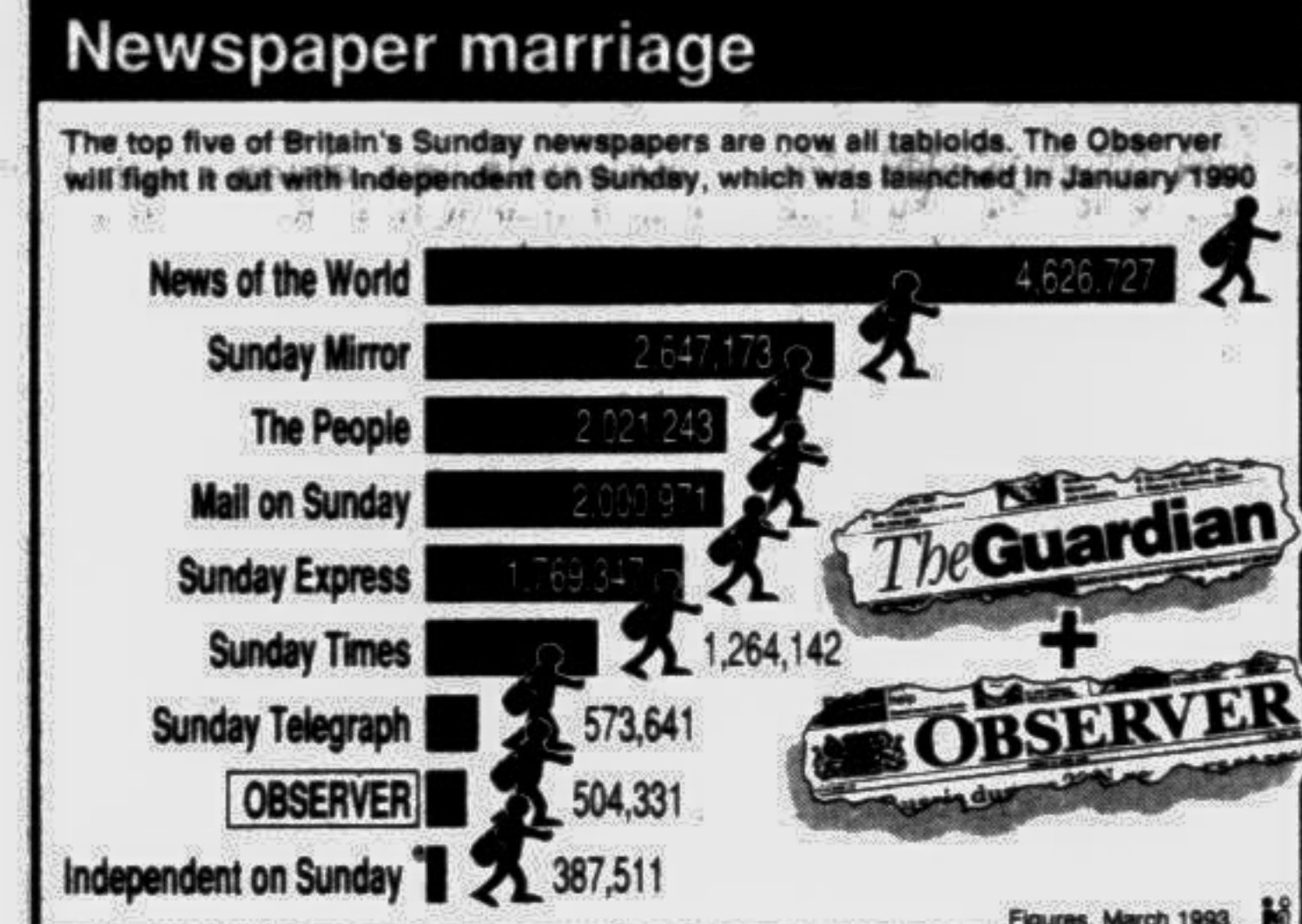
The paper not only suffered in the quality of its journalism. It sacrificed its credibility when Lorrho, headed by the buccaneering Tiny Rowland, used the paper to fight its own commercial battles. In particular Rowland personally fought through its columns the Egyptian Fayed brothers, who he maintained had unfairly acquired the prize Lorrho was trying to win: the stores conglomerate that owned the world-famous Harrods.

For many years *The Observer* has been a poor paper. And the history of fiercely

Why the Observer Save was so Critical

Derek Ingram writes from London

Subject to the Monopoly and Mergers Commission, the world's oldest Sunday newspaper, *The London Observer*, is soon to be taken over by another venerable British institution, *The Guardian*. In many ways it will be a marriage of minds, both papers being in the liberal tradition. The change comes at a time when the balance of the British press is leaning further to the right than ever.



competitive Fleet Street teaches that you cannot for long sell a poor product, however sentimentally attached to it readers may be.

The Daily Herald, started in 1912 as a Labour Party newspaper, flourished after World War Two because it had become a poor paper. It was relaunched as *The Sun*, but failed again and then moved from left to right under the ownership of Rupert Murdoch.

One of the great papers of the past, the liberal *News Chronicle*, whose first editor was Charles Dickens, died in 1960 because it had also become a poor newspaper. *The News Chronicle* was swallowed by the conservative *Daily Mail*.

The Mail coupled its title with that of the *Chronicle* for a while and liberalised its content and policy. In the end its conservative management under the second Lord Rothermere prevailed and the

Mail reverted to rightist policies. In a few years every trace of the *News Chronicle* had disappeared.

The balance of the national British press, which is always predominantly conservative, was seriously affected by the loss of the *Herald* and then the *News Chronicle*, and after that the left or centre-left was in the hands of the *Daily Mirror*, *The Guardian* and *The Observer*.

In the 1970s the *Mirror*, for long a brilliantly run tabloid supporting the Labour Party, was traumatised by its new owner, the egotistical fraudster Robert Maxwell. It is still suffering from those upheavals and is no longer a reliable supporter of the left.

Under Murdoch *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* moved further to the right with the advent of Thatcherism. The new star in the firmament in

the 1980s was *The Independent*, launched by a group of journalists without the support of the traditional newspaper barons. It professed centrism and supported none of the political parties. In January 1990, unwisely at the beginning of the recession, it launched *The Independent on Sunday*. It has had a struggle to survive.

The launch of the daily *Independent* was a brilliant journalistic success, but slowly it and the Sunday edition have become in outlook rather more right than left.

As with British politics so with the press: in the 1980s the goalposts all moved right-

wards and the trend continues. Even *The Guardian* is not quite as radical as it was 30 years ago.

This increasing political lopsidedness of the British press is what made the future of *The Observer* so critical. When it became evident that Lorrho would have to rid itself of the paper there were three alternatives: takeover by *The Independent*, *The Guardian* or the Pearson Group, which owns *The Financial Times*.

The Guardian has long wanted a Sunday newspaper and its eyes always fell on *The Observer*. *The Independent* would have integrated the paper with *The Independent* on

OPINION

Censorship Culture

Apropos commentaries of Mahfuz Anam vide *The Daily Star* of May 21 and 22, wherein he requested for abolition of censorship, raising questions of *sahib, bibi, golam/bibi, sahib, golam* — the adage used to describe our notorious BTV and also pertaining to the frequent traps laid by the treasury bench members, into which the opposition steps in lock, stock and barrel, thereby resembling clowns or puppets as exposed in the electronic media —

This is the hallmark of political malaise that afflicts almost the entire third world, if not especially our sub-continent. Somehow, the violent snowball effects let loose by the people are deflated by the skillful bureaucracy — such handicaps are a perennially recurring phenomenon, due to the proverbial old wine in new bottle. Hence, irrespective of how the main actors are removed i.e. constitutionally or with the utmost violence, the real culprits popularly known as the kingmakers always go scot free. When, at all, these dark forces will ever pay and a dawn of hope will usher in is anybody's guess, as no light whatsoever is visible at the end of the tunnel so far. Frequently, cynical behaviours which are obscenely abhorrent are nakedly experienced — based on petty partisan gains bereft of any constructive solutions. Irrespective of a wave of free elections, rule of majority and democracy, be it in India, Bangladesh or Pakistan, yet a civil-war like anarchic situation is discernible on the surface as the entire system is becoming effete.

In the west, such appalling debaucheries are seldom, if ever, heard of. Although elections are very much held at regular intervals, yet, from day one of counting votes, the loser will not only accept defeat but will also ensure that he appears to accept defeat in the most categorical terms and in the

finest tradition of democracy. In the sub-continent, leave alone day of the polls, from day one of announcing election date the bogey of vote rigging is raised e.g. Pakistan where citing apprehension of rigging Ms Benazir Bhutto requested, and was assured, Pak army will conduct polls scheduled on July 14, 1993! The simple reason behind this mystery is that, in the west, politicians are more or less engaged in one or more profession and/or business.

How many amongst our great and mighty politicians can claim such privilege in the entire sub-continent? As a result, irrespective of whether elections are five days or even five years away, there will always be relentless pressure to monopolise TV, Radio, Railways, Airways, Police, Security forces etc... to cater to those politicians who will be pounding the platforms, *maidan* and the streets. Hence, system of governance suffers e.g. the Dhaka Hare Road mansion construction, wherein some wise guys in the bureaucracy finding constant absence of the minister, took full advantage for years together by incurring more than 100% of the allotted budget in 1990. The Minister in-charge, a well qualified and well heeled barrister, was dumb-founded when it sunk in that lapses like no 'prior' budget provisions, allocations and/or approvals or such accountability and transparency which governance is all about, was missing.

The minister under whose ministry toxic waste fertilizers were imported is even more remarkable. Top US officials repeatedly communicated to cancel the L/C, then to refuse to allow entry of the vessel into the territorial waters, again to refuse to allow berth to the vessel carrying the consignment and or not to issue NOC or test report for clearance from port and lastly, having failed, not to effect distributions. All such

requests repeatedly made to all the relevant officials, the Government of Bangladesh by the US authorities and the NGOs yet all these were successfully suppressed by the wise guys in the ministry simply due to the fact that our politicians, be them opposition or the party in power, are bound to be on the platforms, *maidans* or the streets pursuing *eldorado* which, they feel, can be achieved by hand pumping or punching the air.

It is now reliably learnt that, after wastage of crores of Taka toxic waste mixed fertilizer bags were collected from different districts and stored in Chittagong port area warehouses. When hot pursuit subsides then, just like the radiated milk powder bags, these toxic waste fertilizer bags may find their way into the local market again and will subsequently be written off as vanished in thin air. With the proceeds of this overkill, double-sales, double-profit basis, lucrative promotions/postings may be managed while poor Salimuddins and Kalimuddins will be harangued to chase out the Pakistanis, autocrats or one partyists etc... as if there is no such thing as kingmakers behind the so-called revolutions instigating the Rahims and Karims.

Hence, ombudsmen, abolition of censorship and/or raising in parliament meaningful issues are insignificant if not irrelevant — merely cosmetic. Simply lodging of case in the court of law as per the constitution against the Jamaat chief can set in motion the rule of law, yet crores of Taka worth of newsprint and other expenses are incurred in the parliament for the last several months, because there are lot of skeletons that may spill out of the cupboard. Otherwise why hesitate?

Salahuddin Jamal Firozshah, Chittagong.

To the Editor...

Moslem Bosnia?

Sir, Some people find Radovan Karadzic guilty of genocide. A few even talk of trying him as a war criminal in a resurrected Nuremberg.

A misunderstood prophet — that is what he is. A true disciple-in-principle of Hitler, he will soon be truly re-evaluated and revered. Indeed, he may even follow Menachem Begin to the altar of Nobel Peace Prize! Didn't Begin begin by wholesale massacre of Arabs?

See, the world has already forgotten Deir Yassin! So they will Auschwitz, Srebrenica and Ayodhya. Hitler aimed at the final solution of the Jews; Advant of Indian Moslems and Karadzic of Slav Moslems. Why do you find it so offensive? We only took a page from the Romans who sent the Jews on exodus to Diaspora from Judea. Thanks to their teach-like resilience, however, they could not be exterminated, even by Hitler.

But the Bosnian Muslims are quite another kettle of fish. What chimerical creatures are the Slav Muslims! And what

rights do they have to claim a lebensraum in the heart of Europe? Europe belongs to Christendom — be that Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox. Spanish Inquisition, Hitler's pogroms, and now 'ethnic cleansing' — all have the same aim. Europe is going to be grateful to us for doing their dirty work. Their moral approval we already have. Why else are the dilatory tactics despite desperate semantics from a playboy residing in the White House?

Our next port of call? Kosovo, here we come!

Voice of the Bosnian Serbs

Beware, the Serbs are coming!

Sir, On the one hand the United Nations Security Council had been passing resolutions one after another, the US President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher had been issuing warnings one after another, and on the other, the Serbs led by Radovan Karadzic had been invading and plundering

towns and villages one after another in Bosnia-Herzegovina killing and maiming thousands of men, women and children, raping hundreds of women and driving out millions from their ancestral homes. This is what our conscience watches.

The 'dilly-dally' and 'to be or not to be' policies of the UNO, the USA, EC and OIC have left the Serb marauders unchecked to commit their massacre and mayhem as much as they like. The 'civilised world' simply remained silent and witnessed the horrors and tragedies of Srebrenica, Cerska, Zepa and Tuzla in Bosnia-Herzegovina shamelessly.

Beware, the Serbs are advancing. This time they are going to raze Sarajevo to the ground and shed the blood of millions. Time and tide wait for none. The UNO, the OIC and the USA should not only arm the civilians immediately but also rush peace keeping force in large number to Bosnia-Herzegovina before it is too late once again. O H Kabir, Dhaka