

When a Family is an Island

It is hard to call the condition of our flooded eastern districts a tragedy. For a near-regular occurrence, very much apprehended from well before...

Water has now blanketed all of the Teesta-Jamuna and Surma-Monu-Kushira-Meghna basin with pockets of Dhaka-Mymensingh and Noakhali spared to date...

The crux of the problem — as it is — is that millions are marooned with endless expanses of water separating the few in their family from society and civilisation. Out there every family is an island...

What can be done? Drinking water and food—a lot of dry and/or processed food—must reach the marooned ones—all of them as the first move...

We are asking so many disquieting questions in the belief that the bunch of these and hundreds of others would not compare even in atomic proportions...

The so-called and much-questioned Flood Action Plan is, for sure, a non-starter. Let us for God's sake start being prepared in right earnest on a scale that meaningfully mitigate the suffering...

Massacre in Rio

The killing of eight street children by unidentified gunmen in the Brazilian city Rio de Janeiro on Friday last is a grim reminder of the constant danger facing the most defenceless of the South American city population...

While the post-murder response from the Brazilians has been laudable, one does not find enough reasons for not accusing the Brazilian government for its failure to come up with a rehabilitation programme for the innumerable street children...

Not surprisingly, a police officer has been cited as responsible for the killing of children this time. Already three members of the military police had been taken to custody for their alleged involvement in the heinous crime...

However, there is no doubt that apart from some social organisations' relief works among the neglected children of the streets, nothing worth its salt has been done by the government. Such incidents are worrying specially when the issue of children's rights is getting focus the world over...

Students and Authorities: A Question of Understanding

A slogan-chanting procession of students passing by the corridors. The average size of the procession could be anything between twenty and fifty. If nearer to twenty, then it is one of those routine things...

As far as I know, the proposal is to raise tuition fees from Tk. 10/12 to Tk. 25.00 per month. The earlier rate was fixed more than fifty years ago. During these fifty years, much water has flowed down the Ganges...

But the other day, when the student organisations — I am not sure if all of them were in it — gave a call for a nation-wide strike it was not one of those routine things...

THE unleashing of the world's might against Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aided and his rebel forces through the military power of the United States is yet another example of the morally suspect basis on which the United Nations has been functioning...

The chase for Aided, loosely deemed as a war criminal, and the use of US forces as world policeman recall not only the 1991 Gulf war but also the more unilateral US expedition into Panama in 1989...

The UN, say its critics, has been run down the decades as the club of the rich Western nations, and more often than not, as their bully boy. During the Cold War, much was made of the tilt of the General Assembly toward the socialist bloc...

That perception was deceptive. The General Assembly was able, from time to time, to block initiatives of the US and Western Europe, for example, through the voting process. Such actions were no more than temporary embarrassment...

The real power has always been with the Security Council and the permanent members that arrogated to themselves the power of the veto after the UN was set up following the end of World War Two...

students to which I have referred just now. But those who know our people will not be surprised.

The absurdity of the situation reminds me of one propaganda point of the former Soviet regime. As against the inflation of Western economy, they used to flaunt the unchanging price-level of foodstuff...

PASSING CLOUDS

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui

crashing down. And it collapsed from within, not because the Americans wanted it so.

I had this thought haunting my mind when, some six weeks ago, I was visiting a college in a remote village. I could not refuse the earnest importunities of a former student...

Those of us who have time to survey the basic economic aspect of our educational system, with all its variations, absurdities and enormities, will be intrigued by the reaction of the

by the total collection which was not affected.

Was there any resistance from the students? From the community that the college served? — was my question. The answer was in the negative.

What was the basis of this confidence, I wondered. They told me. The college was providing instruction with so much devotion, order and regularity...

And so I come to my point: the institution and the confidence of the community. For the universities, the community is coextensive with the nation. Even universities with a regional bias are national...

How, in what process of gradual decline, the universities have been reduced to this impotency is a different story altogether. It will be a complicated story but worth the telling.

Please wait.

Time to Reform the United Nations?

Mohamed Hamaludin writes from Miami

Since its inception the UN has been run as the club of the rich Western nations, and despite their numerical superiority, the developing countries have little power on decision making.

Keepers of the peace: UN forces around the world



the members of the world body, a single country with a veto — US, Britain, France, the former Soviet Union (now Russia) and China, decided the world's position on crucial issues.

In effect, that period strengthened the military might of the West through a huge arms build-up that was said to be needed to keep communism at bay.

Even worse, the newly independent nations, pawns really in the East-West confrontation, found their post-colonial dreams frustrated as they were locked in the battle for ideological supremacy.

With the end of the Cold War, another division of the globe between the North and South is becoming sharper. The developing world, which comprises four-fifths of humanity...

Although there is talk of expanding the membership of the Security Council to bring in Germany and Japan, the inclu-

MOHAMED HAMALUDIN is Managing Editor of the Miami Times.

Seeking Passage through Iran

Georgia looks toward Iran as it struggles out of Russia's shadow. James Dorsey reports from Tbilisi

CHRISTIAN Georgia may have little in common with Muslim Iran, but leaders of these two nations are forging an economic and military trade alliance.

In May, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Vaezi signed an agreement under which Iran will export five million cubic metres of natural gas per day to Georgia...

Earlier, a delegation from Iran's defence ministry had visited Georgia's Sukhoi airplane

factory near Tbilisi. Deprived of raw materials from Russia and short of cash, Georgia is trying to restart plane production...

They add that Iran may supply aluminium to produce the planes in exchange for Georgian willingness to sell them to the Islamic republic.

Officials here suggest Georgia may try to sell the planes to Iran through Russia to shield itself from international criticism. "It's a good and healthy idea, it would be a joint venture," comments Russian ambassador Alexander Zemsky.

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But what comes next? Does the BTV or the Government have any schemes to harness the potentialities of the performers? If not, then, in my opinion, the Government should

Renald Mallick, Gulshan, Dhaka.

Georgia's foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze underlined Iran's importance in Tbilisi's long-term plans by making it the first foreign country he visited since taking power.

Iran has already pledged to sell Georgia two billion cubic metres of gas a year or an estimated 25 per cent of its total need as well as chemicals, foodstuffs and clothes.

Georgia aims to become an international economic and energy hub and hopes a consortium including Chevron and British Gas, will opt to pump oil from Kazakhstan through Georgia to Europe.

Iran has already expressed interest in financing expansion of the Black Sea port of Poti and modernisation of the Georgian refinery in Batumi.

Iran and Georgia are also drafting plans to construct a highway from Poti via the Azeri capital of Baku to Tehran.

Georgian officials are already busy drafting plans to turn their country into the Switzerland of the Caucasus.

"We are a talented people of free spirits," he adds. "We'll create a new Georgian civilisation in a very short period of time."

To the Editor...

Features

Sir, It is the recent political commentaries published in the columns of your esteemed daily written by eminent authors from home and abroad, that surpass the half a century old daily, not to mention the name.

The purpose of this letter is to request you to publish the feature on education more frequently. Now it is well known that education is the key to all types of development.

males, the Development page may focus the phenomenon. Besides, 'Living cannot be well done by one sex neither man nor woman can live alone.'

Mr. Abdus Sattar Molla, SME, IER, DU

An opportunity

Sir, As you are well aware, the "Notun Kuri" organised by BTV, is a very competitive event designed to bring out the very best in the young performers.

But what comes next? Does the BTV or the Government have any schemes to harness the potentialities of the performers? If not, then, in my opinion, the Government should