Dhaka, Thursday, August 5, 1993

When Police Fail

To think of the entire population of a village fleeing the wrath of none other than the custodians of law needs unusual ment al capacity. But in this land of the imponderable, realities are sometimes stranger than what the faculties of imagination can grasp. Reports have it that Bijoypur village under Chouddagram Thana has become desolate since July 31 when the police went on a rampage, demolishing the houses, destroying the valuables and even felling the trees on the compounds of some families. It is obvious that marauding law enforcing agency did not do it for nothing; the provocation was great.

Only the previous night a constable was killed and a few other policemen were injured in an attack by a group of people of the village on the contingent that was taking to thana four accused villagers in connection with an abduction case. Sharp came the retaliatory offensive from the police station and the temporary police camp stationed at the village after five days has failed to convince a single soul to return to the village. Amidst the chaos and extreme aggression as demonstrated by both the public and the police, neither side ever paused to think that the way they were acting was an outright violation of the law of the land.

No denying the fact that the people who attacked the police, with the arrested men, on their way to thana committed the criminal dare-devilry in the first place. But there are precedences in which the men in uniform have made the first offences. The rampage in Halishahar. Chittagong should be fresh in people's memory and four similar incidents one each in Chittagong, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Comilla, taking place within a few years' gap, also jolted the conscience of those who cared to fathom the depth of the alarming - and no less tragic developments. Happily, the navy-men responsible for igniting the Halishahar inferno were promptly punished by the present administration. But the other such incidents in which the men in uniform were on the wrong side were not looked into by the autocratic regime during which those barbaric acts were staged.

The Bijoypur incident makes alarming reading for a number of reasons. One report says that the arrested men each paid a huge sum to some men in manpower business but they were neither sent abroad nor returned the money. This prompted them to pick up one of the manpower dealers who in turn filed a case against the accused. Their plight is understandable but under no circumstances this gives them or their supporters the excuse to swoop on the police contingent that was simply obliging its higher authority. If this is a dreadful mistake on the villagers' part, the police have no reasons to go berserk the way they did. However, not all the villagers were involved in the attack on them. Like the public, the police also cannot take law in their own hands nor are they the right agency to interpret the legal provisions.

Some of the people sometimes can do wrongs in violation of the law and the police as an executive branch has solely been created to deal with those offenders with court orders. Maximum discipline and restraint are expected of them in their dealings with the public. But these appear to be the rare attributes in our law enforcers. Their impervious and hostile attitudes coupled with unprofessional practices have indeed made them suspect in people's eyes. The growing distrust and antagonism seem to be responsible for many of the sad episodes in the police-public relations. This latest incident in Comilla is no exception.

This is an alarming situation, to say the least. While criminals roam freely, innocent people are not spared of harassment. Thus people's confidence in the ability of the police gradually gets eroded. Society is now on the brink. Without a review of the police performance, its health cannot be restored.

Too Late?

The 16-nation NATO alliance has decided to make immediate preparations for undertaking stronger measures, including air strikes, to ease the stranglehold on Sarajevo by the Bosnian Serbs. The decision is unprecedented and if put into action, it would be the communism-containing alliance's first offensive operation. The fact that President Clinton's assertion of, if need be, going it alone with the bombing of the Serbian siege must have largely led the NATO into the present posture does not detract from the importance of the decision by any measure. What, however, takes much of the bite out of the strong resolution is the way it would affect the development of the tripartite talks in Geneva - and, more importantly, the unlikelihood of NATO's going into actual bombing before the situation on the strategic Mount Igman worsens to a degree that all will have been lost.

Although Lord Owen, the peace merchant on the spot, seems not to have been overly pleased with the NATO decision, without which the three parties already heading for some agreement leading to ceasefire and partial lifting of the siege, the US position clearly upheld the cause of justice and humanity. Nothing can be acceptable in a situation where there would be no choice but to capitulate, was what a senior US official's views at the end of the day amounted to say.

President Alija Izetbegovich has kept himself away from the talks for a day and the NATO decision may induce him to go for talking from a position of not everything is lost yet. But this would, albeit brave, at best be a gamble. All aspects of the bloody interminable carnage is unpredictable barring one-the Muslim majority would be beaten into a non-entity. The Serbian and Croatian pledges of defanging the siege is mere talk until the field commanders on Mount Igman comply. And there is little sign or hope that they would. Or that even a particularly hurting attack by NATO airpower would dislodge them.

It is gratifying that the call of justice and humanity is being responded to by the most powerful quarters of the world. They should now, to keep up the good work, see to it that their belated awakening is not reduced to a futile exercise.

Manpower Export — an Ignored Potential

by Kazi Alauddin Ahmed

numerous scandals in the Organising the remittances of the Bangladeshis abroad and diverting them into potential investment sector, export of man channels obviously need careful and thoughtful maneuvering. In this, our financial and industrial power from Bangladesh to different middle eastern and experts can play a very vital role. Our perpetual misfortune has been that even after so many years south east Asian countries has nobody could come up with any thoughtful deliberation over such highly potential aspect of our been substantial. In terms of remittence of foreign exchange too the figure has been simply vestment channels obviously ness to earn their living. Practically, the bureaucracy staggering. Over the past 18

Still then, it may be pertiyears over six billion US dollar nent to observe that such a big equivalent to over 25 thousand resource in foreign exchange crore Taka has been remitted by could give better and more posthe Bangladeshi wage-earners itive results if it was properly organized and put in the devel-Even though the period apopment sector of our economy. pears too long, the earnings Even if such an idea occurred have not been in any manner with anybody in the higher echinsignificant for a poor developelon of the administration at ing country like ours. Our boys, any point of time, it was never be they doctors, engineers. tried. technocrats, skilled or unskilled On one hand, there has been workers, are known to put every much lamentations that adehard labour to earn their living. Obviously, their resources support the dependents at home

OTWITHSTANDING the

considerably. The beneficiaries

here deploy these resources in

direct contributions to the

families have, however, little or

no impact on the national eco-

mobilisation of this huge remit-

tance of foreign exchange was

ever made, it could offer suste-

nance to about 10 million peo-

ple here. It could provide edu-

cational, marital, domestic,

housebuilding expenses for the

beneficiaries/dependents and

even Haj expenses for parents,

medicare etc. Besides, such

succours could help many at

home to neutralized their debts.

Some could organise new busi-

burden is so heavy that, UYANA'S foreign debt

and buying oil, the country has

no hard currency for other

purchases and ends up further

That is the word from

President Cheddi Jagan, whose

People's Progressive Party-Civic

Alliance government wrested

power in elections last October

from the People's National

Congress (PNC), which had

told a meeting of Guyanese liv-

ing in the region that Guyana

has to pay 68 cents per dollar

for debt servicing. Oil costs take

another 40 per cent, leaving a

administration to devalue the

Guyana dollar several times, to

for some debt forgiveness as

well as soft loan and debt

rescheduling and the interna-

tional climate may be

Shortage of funds for even

favourable for that, Jagan said.

other basic goods such as food-

stuff and medicine, he added, is

compounded by the brain drain.

Foreign donors have voted \$177

million for important projects,

because of a lack of skilled per-

sonnel to monitor the ventures.

bring Guyanese home. One

professional recruited by the

salary went on rent.

build homes

workers rights.

government found most of his

Jagan said the government

had ordered the sugar corpora-

tion to make thousands of un-

cultivated acres available to

national rebuilding strategy

that puts him walking a thin

line between encouraging in-

vestment and safeguarding the

national interest, especially

The President unfolded a

"All of you are over here." he

but the money cannot be used

The government has asked

a low of G\$125 per US dollar.

Such statistics led the PNC

deficit of eight per cent.

On a visit to Miami, Jagan

ruled for 28 years.

in the hole.

Despite no tangible effort at

nomic development.

property or in business. Such

quate educational facilities could not be provided to our children for shortage of foreign exchange and, on the other, we have allowed this most potential foreign exchange resource channeled into and spent for none too productive ventures. No body seems to have ever considered this aspect seriously. The fate of our economy being perpetually in the hands of the bureaucrats, creative endeavour on their part remains to be a far cry because, there seems hardly anyone in the bureaucracy looking beyond the rules and regulations or beyond the confines of the files. Perhaps they are more prone to avoid taking any innovative ini tiative which is not within their terms of employment.

has so far been least concerned about how best these remit tances from Bangladeshis working abroad could be put to productive use. This potential as pect has been totally ignored. Of necessity, therefore, it is incumbent upon the government to immediately embark upon a comprehensive plan. Planning experts should be utilized to formulate such a plan with forehand cautions that it does not contain any illusive dispensation or incompatible inputs. It must, by and large, present a practice oriented bias suited to our development needs. It must also call for objective selection of projects which would not only be import-substituting but would also ensure large-scale

employment opportunities. Once the proposed plan is ready the responsibility of its meticulous implementation may be initiated. At this stage the commercial banks may be suitably involved. Adequate care and vigilance too shall be required so that the process of implementation does not fall in the quagmire of bureaucratic

Organising the remittances of the Bangladeshis abroad and diverting them into potential in- besides enjoying the beguiling manpower export sector whole nation.

need careful and thoughtful maneuvering. In this, our financial and industrial experts can play a very vital role. Our perpetual misfortune has been that even after so many years nobody could come up with any thoughtful deliberation over such highly potential aspect of our economy. I do not think that our poverty cannot be overcome, rather, I believe that our planners, economists, industrial experts and others are not coming forward to express their intellectual property. They must rise from their slumber and effectively steer the wheels of our national development or else the posterity, smarting under the deadweight of abject penury and frustration, will not forgive them.

It is needless to say that our brethren abroad, making huge remittances of their earnings, would ever grudge their money being spent in productive fields at home towards development and improvement of our national economy. They would rather be most enthusiastic about such an investment that, in turn, would be equally rewarding for them. They too, in such event, share the fruits of it

work their way through.

He said other ideas under

consideration were for free edu-

cation for the very poor, loans

to those who need such help,

and fees for those who can af-

ford to pay. The education sys-

tem has deteriorated to the

point where the dropout rate is

20 per cent and children attend

classes in building that leak. At

one time Guyana had a literacy

phasis *human resources to the

point where we become like the

that the last government built

no industrial parks to attract

factories. His government

planned to build two, but could

not meet the \$800 million

needed to put in water, roads

the government's attitude to-

wards the privatisation policy

put in place by Hoyte. Jagan re-

fused to accept the argument,

put especially by Western na-

tions and led by the United

States, that state industries are

inherently inferior. He said the

During the last few days

there has been a drastic aggra-

vation of the situation at the

Tajik-Afghan border with un-

ceasing cross-border attacks of

the armed Tajik opposition mili-

tants actively supported by

Afghan Mujahideen increasingly

uncarthing a clear-cut and ob-

viously well planned pattern. All

incursions and penetrations

into the Tajik territory are pur-

posefully staged in such a

manner that the greatest pos-

sible number of casualties be

caused among both peaceful lo-

cal population and the Russian

latter are deployed at the border

at Tajik government's request

and in accordance with a spe-

cial agreement between the two

states in order to ensure protec-

tion of the boundary which oth-

erwise would have been com-

pletely unguarded in the ab-

sence till now of a Tajik border

security force - hardly inexpli-

cable given the turbulent his-

tory of that country's one and a

half year of independent exis-

tence. This small specialised

force has a strictly limited man-

date well defined both by the

agreement mentioned and its

own capacity and most

scrupulously keeps away from

having anything whatsoever to

do with internal developments

in Tajikistan. The same is true

with regard to the 201st

Russian infantry division de-

ployed in that country at its

government's request. It has to

be engaged in widely-dispersed

policing activities against the

background of extensive crime-

wave in the aftermath of the

bloody civil war just recently

concluded in that far- away

mountainous Central Asian

It may be recalled that the

border-guards.

issue is more one of misman

agement and corruption.

OPINION

Another dilemma is seen in

and electricity.

Jagan is determined to em-

In investment, he explained

rate of more than 95 per cent.

smiles in the faces of their own poverty-ridden brethren here.

The much destred initiative must, however, come from the government. But the commerctal banks and other financing agencies should be assigned the responsibility of investing the resources thus mobilized. Bureaucracy should be kept out of such exercise for obvious reason. Or precisely, despite some amount of success of some of the stalwarts in the sixties, bureaucratic intervention has always bred losses and failures to the detriment of our national interest. It is not to say there is no feeling of patriotism

within the bureaucratic ranks

rather, it seeks to point out

their inclination, in majority of

cases, to red-tape mannerism.

On time disposal is often at

stake that speaks for under-

utilisation of funds provided by

donors. The constraint of time

is often over-shadowed by the

constraints of their ignorance or

It is heartening to note that a commercial bank in the public sector is preparing itself to take up responsibilities of a manpower export bank. Indeed it is a redeeming feature in the

tent, by unscrupulous 'dalais' and even 'cheats'. We have plenty of manpower who are capable but are not having enough means to go abroad of their own. A comprehensive plan to establish a full-range manpower bank is the crying need of the hour. The financial assistance programme such plan should embrace, will provide employment opportunities abroad to many of our unemployed people. On the other hand, our foreign exchange earnings will expand. In this connection, we may recall such an idea dished out to the press by the Honb'le Minister for Labour and Manpower some months before. It is high time that something is done tangibly in this regard. Manpower export sector is

presently, dominated, to an ex-

undeniably a very important sector in our national economy It is seen as a most potential outlet through which much of the employment crists in the country can be contained. Similarly, a deft handling of this particular area, can release much of the frustration of the younger generation seized by continued unemployment. We do not have to tell anybody that such frustration and dejection within the community breed desperation. And desperation lead our young men to social vices, eventually compounding national problems. Time is running out faster. The sooner something positive is done about it, the better for the

Jagan Talks to the Guyana Brain Drain

Mohamed Hamaludin writes from Miami

Nine months into office President Cheddi Jagan has been telling Guyanese living in the United States his plans to rebuild their country after 28 years of power by his political rivals. One of his many problems is the lack of skilled workers. Thousands left the country during the decades of rule by Forbes Burnham — and many are living in the Miami region. Gemini News Service reports on Jagan's meeting with overseas Guyanese.



The dilemma has been dramatised by a dispute between the government and industrialist Kayman Sankar, who recently won approval from the Inter-American Development Bank for a \$7 million loan to put 8,000 acres under rice cultivation.

The government put a brake on the venture because it does He said a acute shortage of not grant more than 500 acres housing is making it difficult to to any one person. Jagan embraced this policy while he was still a young politician - he is now 74 - after it was introduced in Puerto Rico. The intention, he said, is to ensure that ordinary people are able to

own land. He disclosed that already 40 per cent of the land is controlled by five per cent of Guyanese and 50 per cent of the population have five acres or less.

Jagan said his government welcomes foreign investment but not at any price. He ex-

plained: "We don't only want growth. We want growth with human development. We are determined to have growth, but growth with social justice in that the poor must not become

poorer and the rich richer." The government is prepared to make 2,500 acres available for the Sankar project. The rest will have to go to small farmers who will be obligated to sell their produce to the Sankar rice

"We are not against investors," Jagan stated. "We welcome investors and preference will be given to Guyanese and West Indians and then others. We welcome you with open Jagan has been a socialist

for at least a generation and is the only democratically elected head of government who is also a Marxist. His strong views on social policy are well known.

How his approach will work at a time when there is an empty treasury and a crushing debt load remains to be seen and could determine whether his government will be success-

In education, he adheres to the policy of the former government, led by Desmond Hoyte, that schooling should be free from kindergarten to college However, he explained that foreign aid sources are pressing the government to introduce a user fee for education.

He said he would not bow to that pressure. He drew attention to the work-study programme of Cuba, where schools are attached to industrial or farming ventures and students

Jagan headed the government of then British Guiana between 1953 and 1964, and was shut out of power by what observers believed were widespread election irregulari-

ties by the PNC.

He said the government had an asset worth more than money - the confidence and goodwill of the population.

It is forging a link with the people through citizens committees in every community. They comprise members of all parties, businesspeople, professionals and priests.

The committees will identify the problems of each community and propose solutions that can be provided with little help from the administration. Jagan said committees had already been proving themselves in fighting crime.

Jagan vowed to forge a new era of racial harmony in the country that prides itself as being the "land of six peoples." Anglican Bishop Randolph George was named to head a committee that is looking at ways to bring it about.

Jagan pledged that his administration would end all forms of discrimination and

sign the protocols to the United Nations Human Rights Declaration, enabling Guyanesc citizens to appear as individuals before the UN Human Rights Commission to lodge com-

He said the PNC government signed the Declaration but balked at the protocols. Jagan added: "We have no problem signing them because we do not intend to violate anybody's His government, he said,

embraced not only the traditional political and civil rights but also economic and cultural

Jagan also said that:

 His government has turned the official residence of late president Forbes Burnham into a centre for the arts.

· Village elections will be held before year end for the first time in over 20 years.

One questioner wondered what would become of stability in his coalition government if something should happen to Jagan's answer: "If I were do

die tomorrow, no problem. A leadership will emerge through the democratic process. I won't be too worried about who will replace me. And, in any case, I am still strong yet."

MOHAMED HAMALUBIN. formerly Guyana correspondent of the Caribbean News Agency and managing editor of Guyana National Newspapers, is managing editor of the Miami

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

Unbearable loadshedding

Sir, It is a matter of great regret that in these hot and humid days and nights the people of Ibrahimpur and adjoining areas are suffering because of load-shedding. Specially HSC Examinees are the worst suffer-

The most interesting thing is that when Ibrahimpur remains without electricity for hours together the East Kazipara and part of Shewrapara are hardly affected by load-shedding. I find that in these areas workshops including welding machine shops continue to remain open till 10/11 pm in violation of the Electricity Rules. The line men and others who are responsible to enforce the rules under the Electricity Act, apparently avoid their duty, for obvious reasons.

Ibrahimpur, Kazipara, Shewrapara are becoming industrial areas day by day.

I appeal to the authority concerned to take immediate action in this regard and main-

tain these areas as residential ones. Save us from air and noise pollution as well as from the unbearable load shedding. M Saleem Ullah Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.

Mandatory cultivation programme

Sir, It has been observed that a considerable portion of our cultivable land is not utilized round the year although irrigation facilities can be extended to most of those places if some efforts are made. This is possibly because of two reasons: First, the owners of those lands do not know how best their lands can be utilized round the year and, secondly, they do not feel much the need. So they are least interested to get their lands better utilized.We may, therefore, possibly think of introducing a mandatory cultivation programme in our country, in greater national interest.

BADC can take up the programme with the help of UP Chairmen to determine the

utilization of all cultivable lands in their respective areas Suggestions should, thereafter, be given at grassroots level by the concerned authority how to make best possible use of the land by the owners or by the landless people of the area. If such a programme is carried out and regularly monitored, our food scarcity will, hopefully, be minimised to a great extent.

Mottus Samad Chowdhury Phultola Tea Estate, Sylhet

Who's terrorist?

Sir, If Iraq could he accused of plotting the assassination of the former US President, what about the USA herself when, a few years back, she tried to exterminate the Libyan President Gaddafi? In fact, everyone is well aware of the role of CIA in many countries where changes of power had been brought in a ruthless manner. But nobody dares to challenge them for they are invincible and immune to all accusations as well.

If the USA wishes to put an end to the state sponsored terrorism, what they claimed to have tried successfully against Iraq, she should pay attention to her own house first where she breeds perhaps the world's most sophisticated terrorist -

Md Jalaluddin Iqbal Mohammedpur, Dhaka Russian Clarification

Afghan Border Skirmishes —

country of 4.5 million people. Being convinced that only a peaceful solution has a prospect there, Russia stands up for a constructive peace-oriented dialogue of all the parties, involved into the conflict. The framework of such efforts may and should be provided by the meetings of special representatives of the leadership of Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Russia is also ready to resume intergovernmental talks with the leadership of Afghanistan in order to bring to an end the destructive activities of the militants from its territory.

Being deeply concerned with the development of the situation in and around Tajikistan, Russia is taking active efforts within the CIS through dialogue and negotiations at all levels, including top-level contacts, with the Central Asian CIS countries. At present the special envoy of the President, First Deputy Foreign Minister Mr A Adamishin is making visits to Dushanbe, Bishkek, Tashkent, Ashhabad and Alma-Ata to convey personal messages of the President of Russia to the leaders of the countries of the re-

Far from interfering into purely internal affairs of Tajikistan, Russia, on the contrary, believes in national reconciliation in that country through efforts of its all political forces and welcomes moves towards peaceful dialogue between the government and the opposition, involving broader strata of Tajik society in the cause of national reconciliation.

The seriousness of the situation may require in addition to the above mentioned political and diplomatic steps effective involvement of international community, and first of all the United Nations, into the solution of the problem. The situation at the Tajik-Afghan border has reached such a point, when those who would really like to prevent new outburst of tension in the volatile area joining Central and South Asia should consider whether activities which flagrantly violate norms of international law and encroach upon the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Tajikistan do not endanger directly their own national interests.

It is a clear and historically proved fact that a military solution to the problem is the road to nowhere, which may result in unpredictable consequences for the development of the situation in the region and have a very negative impact on the settlement of other conflicts in different parts of the world as well as on the international situation in general. The earliest normalization of the situation in and around Tajikistan would be thus in line not only with the interests of the peoples of Tajikistan but with the interests of the entire international com-

On balance, unbiased and responsible approaches, efficient and persistent political and diplomatic efforts, plus the international community's involvement, can bring about national reconciliation in Tajikistan and peace in and around it. For its part Russia is doing everything it can for the attainment of this goal.

Embassy of the Russian · Federation in Bangladesh