

### Let Kashmir Bleed No More

In Kashmir where Indian security forces and Muslim militants are locked in a bloody battle, casualties on either side are becoming higher and higher. However, Friday's killing of 31 innocent and unarmed people by the Border Security Force (BSF) is more than shocking even by the Kashmiri standard of violence. With 20 more seriously injured of a total of more than 100, the death toll may still go up. We condemn this slaughter of the innocent and express our great concern at this trigger-happy behaviour of the Indian security forces. The prospect of peace in Kashmir thus recedes in the distant horizon.

No doubt, this latest killing of civilian people will draw widespread condemnation; but this will do little good to those people who have lost their lives and who have lost their near and dear ones. The political stalemate in Kashmir is exacting a heavy price neither the Indian government nor the militants fighting for secession from India can afford. This latest confrontation between the Indian troops and the separatists has centred around the flushing of 50 armed Muslim militants from the holiest shrine in the state, Hazratbal Mosque. For a week now the separatists have been holding up in that mosque and government troops ring around it.

As it happens often in this part of the world, the issue of politics has become mixed with that of religion on the question of flushing the armed militants whose supporters defied curfew and tried to break the siege of the mosque. By opening fire on the unarmed people, therefore, the BSF have failed to take into cognizance the religious sentiment associated with the Hazratbal mosque. Their inept and insensitive handling of the issue, instead of quelling the armed rebellion, will cause a flare-up of violence in that troubled state.

Apparently, the situation is going out of control. Otherwise there is hardly any explanation for this marauding mood on the part of the administration of Kashmir. Only when the authority is in a panic, does it respond to such demonstration with an unnecessary amount of brutality. But as in the past, this use of force will lead the feuding parties to nowhere other than a situation fraught with more hostility, hatred, violence and vengeance. Insensitivity and miscalculation alone cannot quite explain the BSF brutality, for the futility of the use of force has by now been proved beyond any doubt. The Indian government must think of something radical and positive to save the day for both parties. The policy pursued so long in Kashmir has proved its inadequacy and obsolescence over such a long period that a fresh start to a well-calculated diplomatic move now looks to be overdue.

Against the old relations breaking down following the end of the cold war, the incompatibility of the old-world diplomacy has also been exposed. It is hard to reconcile with the new reality for statement of the old order, but unless they can take the fight, politically speaking, to the discontented and disenfranchised citizens, there is little chance of ruling peacefully and holding the country together. Conflicting forces — from rise of fundamentalism to openness and democratisation — are at work now more than ever before. Either delay or misjudgement in taking up the challenge will prove fatal.

For India, time is indeed running out. It is not only sitting on a long-drawn problem, but on one that is more like a time bomb with immense destructive potential. Unless the incendiary is defused, the disaster cannot be averted. However tall the order may be, India will have to rise up to the occasion. The Israelis and the Palestinians have proved, no matter how big the obstacle is, if there is sincerity of will, it can be overcome. India obviously can take a cue from the Israel-PLO agreement.

### Counterfeiting Goods

After spurious medicine, adulterated foodstuffs and pirated books, now is the turn for counterfeit wrist-watches. According to a report published in a vernacular daily on Thursday, the police have captured 14 counterfeit wrist-watches of Seiko-5 brand along with tools and parts of watch from Islamabad Market of Chittagong. This front-page small piece of news has not given many a detail other than the arrest of two men in connection with the incident.

Details or not, we all know how pervasive the business of counterfeit goods has been and how it has eroded the consumer confidence in goods of every description. The fact that select items of special brands and companies enjoy an enviable reputation prompts fake producers to imitate the products often with disastrous results. Certainly, this is an illegal practice and punishable offence. However, laws against counterfeiting is no guarantee that the practice will come to an end. People of dubious character risk their freedom for unearned profit.

Nowhere has the practice of copying products and deceiving customers apparently been carried more to its limits than in this country. Jinjira-made items are so ingeniously perfected that bare eyes fail to detect the differences between the fake and the genuine. Only after use does one realise that one has been deceived. One explanation of this widespread fake business can be that innovation and research — the key elements to beat rival companies — are lacking in the country. Taking advantage of the gap between demand and supply of quality goods, counterfeiting comes to fill in the vacuum.

This lack of competition in the industrial or productive sector is a dangerous drawback for the creation of wealth. The craze for foreign goods can also be explained by this stunted industrial growth. Like black money, the counterfeit goods leave an adverse impact on the economy. The question is, if a drive against such practices can at all be successful. The answer is: a popular government willing to leave its mark certainly can do the job. But then it will have to give a shake-up to the law enforcing agency for efficiently dealing with the problem. It is difficult to believe, much of the underground and clandestine production and trade can be without their knowledge.

**P**OLITICS in Pakistan seems to have taken a happy turn. A free and fair election has been held under a neutral caretaker government and despite the initial uncertainties about the position of the two major parties, Ms Benazir Bhutto has formed a government on the basis of a clear majority in the parliament. The nation can take some satisfaction that it has been able to successfully break the tradition of rigged elections, broken promises and usurpation of power by the armed forces. Indeed the positive role of the army has not only not taken advantage of the political crisis following the confrontation between Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Nawaz Sharif, it seems to have played a constructive role in encouraging the formation of a neutral caretaker government so as to ensure the fairness and legitimacy of the election. Ms Bhutto has earned the mandate to govern and she should get the nation's full support in implementing the people's mandate.

In analysing the election results a few points deserve special attention. First and foremost, Nawaz Sharif has emerged as a national leader. It was widely believed that Sharif's support would be confined to the Punjab but surprisingly he has been able to get substantial votes from other provinces as well. In fact his PML has polled 39.77 per cent of the popular vote against 38.36 polled by the Benazir's PPP. Even in Sindh, which is a traditional PPP stronghold, the PML polled 30 per cent of the votes and won 4 seats in the National Assembly and 8 seats in the Provincial Assembly. This is a significant development as it marks the emergence of two national parties in the country under two charismatic leaders. Sharif's success in the Frontier Province was equally impressive because the politics of that province has been dominated for too long by regional parties.

One wonders how and why Sharif was able to capture the imagination of the voters and pose an impressive challenge to Bhutto whose crowd-pulling capacity was unquestioned. The PPP, it was generally accepted, was the only 'national' party in the country with support in all the four provinces. The main reason for Sharif's success, in my view, was his courage in

## Pakistan Takes a Giant Step in Establishing a Stable Democratic System

challenging Ghulam Ishaq Khan the old and wily bureaucrat who manoeuvred to get in his grip all the dictatorial powers that the late Gen Zia-ul-Haq enjoyed. When he dismissed Ms Bhutto in 1990 she acquiesced in the decision. She did question the legality of the action but she dared not defy the President. Though Sharif reportedly came into politics as the blue-eyed boy of Gen Zia-ul-Haq and enjoyed Ghulam Ishaq Khan's blessings, he refused to meekly accept the letter's power to dismiss the Prime Minister at his pleasure. Sharif's speech to the nation on April 17, 1993 after his dismissal was, I believe, a great act of courage which catapulted him to national leadership. Common people all over country must have viewed his defiance of the President with admiration. His electoral success in all four provinces of the country broke the PPP monopoly as a so-called national party. The bureaucrats in Pakistan will probably get the message. They cannot, holding the coattails of the military, usurp power from elected leaders with impunity. In this connection one may recall the dismissal of Khwaja Nazimuddin by Ghulam Mohammad in the early fifties as the beginning of the rise of the military-civil service alliance in the country.

The second point to note is that the Jamaat-i-Islami has been wiped out as a parliamentary party. How did this happen in an Islamic Republic? Obviously the Pakistani people have seen enough of the abuse of religion for political gains to be fooled by these Islamic parties. Clearly the people do not want a theocratic state. They have rejected fanaticism. In the perspective of long term trend in politics, this is perhaps the most significant development. According to available data, the religious parties, all together, polled less than 7 per cent of the votes in the National Assembly elections. In the 1970 elections (when Bangladesh was part of Pakistan) these parties won 8 per cent of the votes. Of course it does not mean that religion is no longer going to be used for political purposes. Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League

has still not been able to completely jettison its legacy of religion-based politics. But the rejection of the Jamaat and its spurious claims to speak in the name of Islam is a testimony to the sound common sense of the voters. Politicians in other parts of the region should see that the voters, even in an Islamic state — are turning their back on extremism and obscurantism. The people of Pakistan must have seen through the unscrupulous game in which religion was used time and again, to further the political interests of an ambitious leader or a party. Even a military ruler such as Zia-ul-Haq made use of religion

mandate to any party and therefore there may be political instability. However, even without disputing this view one might say that this election has set in motion for the first time a cohesive process of nation-building by creating two national political parties. Except for Beluchistan where the picture remains blurred, the alignment of political forces in all the other provinces has taken a national character. Ms Bhutto's good showing in the Punjab and Nawaz Sharif's successful inroad into the interior of Sindh are clear proof of this most healthy trend. Indeed, if this trend continues, something

like Pakistani nationalism may eventually grow to bind the country together. But this is yet in the future. There are a few questions which must be addressed by the new government quickly to restore peace and stability in the country. What will be the fate of the Mohajers who boycotted the election? The country's principal metropolis Karachi has been in a state of turmoil for too long due to ethnic tension and conflicts between the Mohajers, Sindhis, Pathans and Punjabis. Wise leadership will not permit this festering sore to slow down the nation's integration and progress. Pakistan's foreign policy stands at a cross road. Having been allied to the United States for four decades, it has at last reached a point when it has to make a choice. During the Afghan civil war Pakistan's friendship was vital to the United States but that compulsion does not exist any more. In fact, the US has already shifted its attentions (as well as its priorities) elsewhere. Under these circumstances the US will not connive at Pakistan's nuclear aspirations as it did during the Reagan era. Ms Bhutto's reported declaration very recently that she would continue the country's nuclear weapons de-

velopment programme raises the issue to the top of the agenda. Will she allow this issue to destroy a relation that has been the linchpin of its foreign policy since 1954? Equally important, will she seek an accommodation with India over the Kashmir question? Given the strong separatist sentiment sweeping that troubled land, it is not entirely in the hands of the Pakistani authorities to control or direct the course of the bitter conflict. These are serious and urgent questions on which Ms Bhutto will have to take early decision. She will also have to review the reforms that the caretaker government of Mr Qureshi carried out. Will she really scrap some of the important reforms such as the imposition of taxes on landowners? Neither the World Bank nor the donor community will support such a policy.

A question that is in many people's mind though few would like to openly pose it is whether the Pakistan's army generals are genuinely committed to a democratic system of government. Have they decided to go back to the barracks permanently? The record is so bad that skeptics think the current phase to be just a classical "retreat". No one, I am sure, really knows the answer to such a question. Perhaps the answer will depend not only on the extent of ambition within the top brass but also on the performance of the politicians. Ambitious men in uniform will always be there but whether they will succeed in staging successful coup d'etat depends on several factors. Will the politicians play the game according to the rules? Will the elite in the bureaucracy and the business community join hands with the military? Will corruption in the government go beyond people's point of tolerance? Will some ambitious or disgruntled politicians establish secret links with men in uniform? These are the relevant questions for all the countries in the Third World going through the delicate and difficult process of establishing democratic system of government. It is not an easy process and Pakistan seems to have passed an important hurdle in flying colours. They deserve our good wishes for every success in their struggle for democracy, stability, peace and prosperity in the years ahead.

### ON THE RECORD

by Shah AMS Kibria

to tighten his grip on power. Today the Pakistani people expect modern and progressive leadership to give them an efficient and forward-looking administration. This, I believe, should be the most important message that one gets from the trouncing of the Jamaat-i-Islami and its allies.

The 1993 election in Pakistan was held under a genuinely neutral caretaker government. Some of the previous elections were held under caretaker governments but their neutrality was questionable. In fact ministers under those caretaker governments sometimes ran for election and, given the absence of a tradition of clean and fair elections, did not feel constrained to avoid using their official power to win election. This time no one questioned or doubted the neutrality of the Prime Minister Mr Moeen Qureshi. The success of the experiment of holding elections under a truly neutral government both in Bangladesh in 1991 and in Pakistan in 1993 should be a lesson for all. This may be the only feasible option that we in Bangladesh have until the democratic traditions of free and fair elections take firm roots in the country.

Many observers were concerned that the 1993 elections in Pakistan did not give a clear

mandate to any party and therefore there may be political instability. However, even without disputing this view one might say that this election has set in motion for the first time a cohesive process of nation-building by creating two national political parties.

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### IN MEMORIAM

## When He was Needed Most

— A M M A'bad

The perfect gentleman, a perfect journalist, and a great editor... He set new standard for



journalism in Bangladesh after his return to his homeland in the late '80s. He was the Guru to a new breed of journalists.

He had an English prose style which reminded the readers of Lin Yutang's description "flowing like the stream, and floating like the clouds".

He had a mind of his own, which he conveyed effortlessly and gracefully, as a friend or as a critic, without provocation or causing offence.

The country lost him when he was needed most. Perhaps he had intimations of his last journey. He passed away in one of his beloved cities. May his soul rest in peace!

**C**ANADIANS are launched on what will probably be the most confusing general election in the country's history. There are several reasons for confusion. The first is that there are five political parties that will win enough votes to affect the result in many of the 259 seats. Usually Canadian federal elections are a fight between Conservatives and Liberals, while the New Democrats have sometimes held the balance of power. But now a new party, the Bloc Quebecois, is tipped to win at least half the 75 seats in Quebec. Another newcomer, the Reform Party, may also take a fair number of seats in the two western provinces, Alberta and British Columbia.

So it is quite likely that, after the voting on October 25, neither the present Conservative prime minister Kim Campbell nor her Liberal opponent Jean Chretien ends up with a majority. Deals will have to be made if Canada is to have a stable government.

A second reason for confusion is that, while opinion polls show that the issue worrying most voters is unemployment, Campbell, who has talked least about creating jobs, has pulled her party into leading position. In the first week of the campaign she warned Canadians she did not expect the present unemployment rate of 11.6 per cent to drop much before the year 2000. She added that her priority is to reduce the deficit, which means cutting government spending — and therefore

## Canada Faces its Most Confusing Election

Clyde Sanger writes from Ottawa

Canada is facing a general election that may result in a coalition government. Kim Campbell, who took over as Prime Minister from the unpopular Brian Mulroney only months ago, may be elected without a majority of seats. Usually Canadian polls are straight fights between Liberals and Conservatives. Now five parties are in with a chance of winning a number of seats. The country's first woman prime minister may have to make concessions to form an alliance with one of the two other main parties.

### Will Campbell pull it off?

- Major new factors in Canadian political scene are Reform Party in Western Canada, formed in 1988, and Bloc Quebecois
- 1988 election was won by Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative Party
- Of 17 million voters 75% went to the polls in 1988

Party	1988	1993
Progressive Conservative Party	43	30
Liberal Party	37	30
New Democratic Party	17	17

more jobs and social services. Normally such tough talk at election time would destroy a party's chances. The Liberals and New Democrats have produced detailed plans for creating half a million new jobs within five years, with large-

scale public works and a national child care programme.

So far this has done them no good. Campbell, prime minister for only three months so far, has scored as the most popular leader, even in Quebec though her French is less than perfect

and she has had to take lessons to improve it.

The Liberals are wondering what they have done wrong. They were comfortably 20 points ahead in opinion polls until June. They have picked an impressively strong list of candidates. They have taken two years to work out a sensible set of modern but middle-of-the-road policies.

The answer, although they cannot admit it, is that they chose the wrong leader three years ago. Chretien, now 59, had a fine record as a minister in high posts of the government of Pierre Trudeau up to 1984. But he is extremely unpopular in his native Quebec, where many have rewritten history and say he worked with Trudeau to prevent their own province having a special place in the Canadian federal system.

He also has a folksy way of speaking which, combined with a face slightly twisted through suffering polio as a child, fails to give him the image of a sophisticated leader.

Paul Martin Jr., a smoothly

successful Montreal businessman, who came second in the Liberal leadership contest three years ago and has been the brains behind the party's platform, would have had little difficulty leading the Liberals to victory.

Meanwhile Kim Campbell, the bright, witty and sometimes boastful lawyer from British Columbia, moved to centre stage, made lots of friends going to picnics and baseball games all summer, and let people forget her greatly disliked predecessor, Brian Mulroney.

However, the two nearest parties are threats to her Conservatives. While Mulroney, with a mixture of patronage and Irish blarney, made Quebec his own stronghold, she is in danger of losing much of it to Lucien Bouchard who quit the Mulroney cabinet in a bitter quarrel and set up the Bloc Quebecois (BQ).

The BQ is pledged to work for the separation of Quebec and its seven million people from the rest of Canada. It is unlikely to win over voters who

are not separatists but believe that the old parties have made a mess of the economy.

Meanwhile, Preston Manning, who is the son of a long-time premier of Alberta, has built up his Reform Party as a party opposing the kind of interventionist government Canada has had since 1945.

Kim Campbell, a fiscal Conservative herself at heart, has borrowed policies from the Reform Party, set her sights on a balanced budget and slashed the number of departments in the federal government.

The Reform Party, however, has a special appeal in western Canada which the Conservatives cannot claim. It stands up for them against the power which central Canada — Ontario and Quebec — has wielded for 126 years. Though never baldly stated, it believes French-Canadians have been given too much of everything, from political power to industrial contracts.

If Kim Campbell comes out top on October 25, but without a majority of seats, which of the two — the Bloc Quebecois or the reform party — will she try to recruit into some sort of alliance?

Either party has a narrowly selfish view of what it wants to do with Canada. If she has to make major concessions to win Manning's or Bouchard's support, the prospects are sad for Canada's immediate future.

— GEMINI NEWS

### To the Editor...

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.

#### Supply of fish

Since the last two years fish has become very expensive in the country. While the country has earned seven hundred crore Taka from export of fish in the last fiscal year, the local market is practically starving. Even sea fish which was relatively cheap earlier has become very costly and people are facing serious protein deficiency. To bring down fish price, it is suggested that ordinary varieties of sea fish like 'Lotia', 'Pua', 'Churi', 'Rita' etc may be marketed in sufficient quantity through the Fisheries Corporation, in handy packets, in Dhaka, Chittagong and other big towns. This is likely to have a sobering effect on fish price and may bring fish within the reach of common consumers.

While earning foreign exchange through fish export is commendable, the question is — foreign exchange for whom?

If the common people go without essential protein, earning foreign exchange carries very little significance. Hence restricting export of fish to a certain extent for augmenting local supply may also be pondered over urgently.

Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury  
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

#### Tunnel for road crossing

Sir, These days it is not easy and safe to cross a busy road. Buses, trucks, cars, scooters and rickshaws go on plying one after another. A pedestrian has to wait and wait. But after passing of a considerable period of time when he is exhausted and frustrated he makes an attempt at the risk of his life to cross the road amidst non-stop movement of the vehicular traffic. This is happening almost

everywhere especially at Hatkhola, Mohakhali, Malibagh, Kakrail, Shishu Park Road, Baitul Mukarram-Naya Paltan, Shamoli Cinema, Dhaka-Narayanganj Road/Folder Street crossing, Press Club-Tophkhana Road, Nawabpur Road and so on. As such the number of road accidents is increasing day by day in the city.

How may zebra crossings do we have in Dhaka? Innumerable. But how many of these justify their existence and maintain their sanctity during traffic signal? Not a single one. Even if the vehicular traffic is stopped for a second there is hell of a traffic jam and the sufferings of the people know no bounds.

We wonder why Dhaka Municipal Corporation is always busy in demolishing and rebuilding road islands here and there. Can't it construct a few tunnels for convenient and safe crossing of the busy roads by the pedestrians on the one hand and also for the un-interrupted movement of the vehicular traffic on the other hand for the benefit of all?

If Europe can build a tunnel beneath the sea linking the United Kingdom with France for railway communication there is no reason why can't we build a few small tunnels for

crossing our busy roads by land?

We would request the Dhaka Municipal Corporation to move with the time, to meet the road traffic challenge of Dhaka city without further delay and to construct one or two tunnels for road crossing on trial basis first.

O H Kabir  
Dhaka

#### Nurses

Sir, I take this opportunity, as a subscriber of your reputed newspaper, to respond to Mr Sharif Khan's post-editorial "An Unhealthy Trend Prevails in the Health Sector for the Last One Year" that was published on 18th of September, 1993. As an humble officer of the Directorate of Health Service, I believe that it is our onerous and proud privilege to repudiate the stigma that was put on us rather slanderously.

Mr Khan quoting "sources" described that "the Health Directorate has a vast working field, it has its own problems which remain to be solved for a long time... there also were some indiscipline and corruption in the Health Directorate." If this statement is related to the title of the article then we

deduce that this apparently sweeping statement refers to the affairs of the last one year of this Directorate. For the learned readers of your esteemed newspaper, let us inform that in the last one year, one former Director General has retired at the beginning of the stated period, one Director General officiated temporarily and the present Director General has assumed the office three months back. Against whom this charge of indiscipline and corruption is labeled as the head of the institution? Does the source know the difference between indiscipline and corruption? Does (s)he know what transpired in between in this office? If there was any corruption did the "source" notify the law enforcing agency in this regard as a responsible and patriotic citizen, or any other responsible and relevant authority?

The most ridiculous allegations came from a syndicate leader of the Bangladesh Diploma Nurses Association. He bedaubed the Health Directorate as "corrupt and inefficient." Inefficiency depends on many factors, one of which is resource availability. But corrupt if there is any, let us know and see what actions we take. This top most mouthpiece of the association even does not know

how many physicians in fact this country has! Not 80,000 but only 20,000 is the number of physicians that this country has and out of them only 9,000 are serving in the government.

This leader laments that the Directorate "cannot solve the problems of 80,000 doctors... how can it do anything good for the nurses?" Doing good to any professional or any citizen, for that matter, is a multifaceted issue. This is a dilemma for any poor nation in general. Alas, if this naive leader could understand that complex cause and effect relationship!

Another lady of the nurses association comes up with the argument that since the (Civil) Surgeons do not like nurses" so the nurses will never accept any government order, which will make them suffer like that. The interesting deduction is, since these administrators (Surgeons) are close to the working places of the nurses so they are "pain in their neck." Since the Nursing Directorate has only seven managers/administrators out of 36 at the national level there is no way that they can monitor and supervise the institutional nurses. This makes everybody happy! And let them be happy with their own sets of rule and dictum!

A sensitive citizen