Dhaka, Wednesday, January 26, 1994

The Eye-opening **US Trade Show**

The fact that there has been an unbroken chain of annual US trade shows in Dhaka since 1992 is proof enough of a sustained interest on the part of US business houses in the market potential of Bangladesh. They have netted sale orders through these fairs on a modest but increasing scale indicating in the process that there can be give-andtake between two unequal'economies.

Bangladesh has trade surplus with the USA. The US imported \$ 832 million worth of goods from Bangladesh in the calendar year 1992 as against her exports to Bangladesh valued at \$ 188 million. The US' trade deficit with Bangladesh could have reached \$ 1 billion in 1993 mainly because of garment imports from Bangladesh. Notably the bilateral trade has not been of the conventional nature of business transactions, strictly speaking. The US exports are mostly aid-financed supplies of commodities to us. The only purely commercial sales to Bangladesh public sector over the last one decade included DC-10s, oil and gas drilling equipment and telecommunications equipment.

Thus while the Bangladesh side of the trade has been markedly private sector-operated that on the US side, namely her imports, happened to be at the state-to-state level. From this standpoint the US trade shows in Dhaka have recorded a significant contribution by bringing US business houses in touch with their counterparts in the Bangladesh

private sector.

All this is greeted as a positive development. But as our market is being prized open; however modestly, by the U.S trading houses, would n't the US investors perhaps attach a similar value to our market for the sake of making new investments here? A proportion of goods and services generating from joint industrial ventures in Bangladesh could feed the US market. In addition, the US could make business with the rest elsewhere Afterall, our macro-economic environment has been eulogised by the American-Bangladesh Economic Forum which together with the US Embassy in Dhaka staged the US trade show. And for all know, the constant pointer to our bureaucratic 'interventions' is being addressed with some seriousness as well. The EPZs are where they get all the advantages encapsulated. If the US is to be a good partner in progress for Bangladesh it cannot turn a blind eye to the possibility that the very macro-economic management by Bangladesh which has received the US' unreserved appreciation will itself be jeopardised if fresh investments continue to elude us. It is not by virtue of goods on display that one gets a grip on the technology, for a real transfer of technology to occur there has to be direct investment in a country.

But the US investment in Bangladesh in cumulative terms amounts to only \$30 million. One should think, the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation could be relied upon to generate insurance support for any fresh US investment in Bangladesh. Apart from this technical advantage of basically US origin, from the Bangladesh side the package of incentives is there for the taking. bruin a way of course, the \$ 3.5 billion that the

USAID has provided in bilateral assistance to Bangladesh to-date constitutes that country's investment in Bangladesh. But the point we wish to make is that the humanitarian approach coupled with the angle to help strengthen democracy in Bangladesh should mature further along give-andtake lines with a solid foundation laid through investments and technology sharing.

Going beyond the trade show which gave us so much food for thought, we are for more of it here in Dhaka. Bangladesh should also stage trade exhibitions on a reciprocal basis abroad, whenever and wherever she can. These fairs are a useful part of a growing world-wide economic culture. They fling open doors to many uncharted possibilities.

Good Luck Cricketers

Two consecutive days' cricket fete has given ev-, eryone something to savour. For the cricket-minder, it is a wondrous thing — if not the ultimate ever to happen to this nation with hardly any sporting glory to its credit at the top level of international competition. Even for the cricket-uninitiated, the creditable show by the Bangladesh boys against the world champions of instant cricket has served as an ego inflater. Nor are the enthusiasm and pride misplaced. Quite evidently. Bangladesh cricket has come a long way by this time and its early flowering was becoming discernible with the national team shaping up for and with friendly cricket tours abroad.

Those foreign visits were not particularly indicative of the national side's maturity but the experiences gained in the process have richly contributed to putting up a brave performance against Pakistan this time. Hopefully, the exposure to the cricketing stars has immensely helped our team's preparations for the more competitive occasion in Kenya where Bangladesh will vie for one of the three places to move as a qualifier to the next Cricket World Cup. On the current strength, Bangladesh side will reasonably be eying the number one spot in Kenya.

However, the danger of being oversure about the success of our football is not a distant memory and therefore its lesson as well should not be missed in cricket. The consistency of a good performance is what favours cricket more than any other sports. Clearly, the investment made in this kingly game has already started paying dividends. Along with hockey, cricket appears to be pointing to brighter prospects and hence these two games deserve as much patronage as is possible within our means.

If the performance of our team against the one day cricket's world champions is any indication, the odds are certainly in favour of us. However, the high altitude of Kenya may cause some problems to our cricketers. An indication of the team's greater maturity is the undaunted approach to batting in the face of a mammoth total. On the same token, with a modest total to defend, the team gave a good account of itself by not allowing the Pakistani batsmen to make a cakewalk of the whole show. On both the accounts of chasing runs and restricting the other side, the Bangladesh team has done a commendable job. The Bangladesh cricketers' performance becomes even more sterling considering the way they batted and at the same time kept their wickets intact. The loss of only five wickets on each outing against the fearsome pace and deadly spin bowling cause us to salivate for success. We wish our Kenya-bound cricketers godspeed.

subsequently in the problems

peoples of the world. Whether these problems involve security, the environment, poverty in developing countries. or the depletion of natural re-

The United Nations was created in October 1945 in order to solve such problems, and the approaching occasion of its 50th anniversary presents an opportunity to strengthen its capacity to do so.

Presently the specialised United Nations agencies - with the exception of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) - are limited to an advisory role. The governments of member nations cannot be forced to implement UN resolutions:

As a result, the world today is effectively a political anarchy. The dramatic change in UN peacemaking activities, with the deployment of peacekeeping forces to former Yugoslavia and Somalia and the organisation of elections in Cambodia. clearly illustrates how reforms are needed in implementing UN resolutions.

In the past, the United Nations usually deployed pea-

T THEN one reads as of

'Satidaha' he becomes terrified

A young woman, who was

married to an old man to

become a widow-soon, was

given bath, dressed nicely, and

taken to the funeral place in a

procession. Sometimes she vol-

unteered(?), sometimes she was

forced to lie with the corpse of

her husband and got cremated.

What a cruel act it was indeed!

ritual and praised the woman

who was non-resistant and

curse the other who failed to

show respect to the cause of

sacrifice. Raja Ram Mohan Ray

termed the ceremonial sacrifice

of human life as barbaric, cre-

ated public opinion against this

long practised atrocity. He faced

tremendous opposition from the

religious and even some intel-

lectual groups but was finally

successful in saving the com-

savage perversion.

this part of the world.

clergyman and the kings.

munity from such shameful

buried alive in Arabia and in

other parts of the globe. The

sacrifice of boys and girls to

satisfy the deity was usual in

species for the satisfaction of

imaginary power. Human lives

had no value whatsoever to the

tude of life have changed very

rapidly. Sacrifice of human life

for the satisfaction of supernat-

ural power is now considered

an act of pure insanity.

However, still me often come

across some news that an indi-

vidual or a group of people laid

down their lives under the in-

fluence of some cult leader or

so. This is obviously treated as

crime and considered as vicious

madness, and dealt with ac-

cordingly, where and when pos-

sible. The proposition of sacri-

ficing life for cause whatsoever

changes in the attitude towards

life, now the question of impos-

ing capital punishment has be-

come a debatable issue. What

was normal and usual fifty

In the background of

is no more accepted by civilisa-

Values pertaining to the atti-

Human beings killed its own

Once, the female babies were

The processionists enjoyed the

today about the rituals

that were observed in

ECHNOLOGICAL devel opinent has contributed to almost inconceivable changes in the structure of the global commonwealth and that need to be solved by the

that the times demand a World Government. cekeepers to supervise cease fires only if it was invited to do sources, all require global soluso by all parties to a conflict. tions and global cooperation. That role is useful but not

> could protect a victim from a criminal only if both sides agreed, it would be powerless. The need for changes in re-

always sufficient. If the police

more active role in peacemaking is mirrored in other areas of the organisation.

A global hierarchy must be established with the same structures found in a well-governed nation. For example, you will find three major financial institutions in any well-governed country: a Central Bank,



a Development Bank and a Treasury or Ministry of Finance.

World Government, Not United Nations

As the United Nations approaches its 50th anniversary, 1969 Nobel Prize Winner for economic

science Jan Tinbergen argues in this special report from Rotterdam for Inter Press Service

In the United Nations, the IMF is comparable to a Central Bank and should be transformed into a World Central Bank. The World Bank is a development bank, and a World Treasury should be established to collect revenue to finance its

Similarly the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) should be transformed into a World Ministry of Agriculture. the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) into a World Ministry of Industry, and the International Labor Organization (ILO) into a World Ministry of Social Affairs, and

The question that arises is; Which level of government should be called upon to address a given problem?

The answer lies in what can be called the "theory of the optimum level of decision making," or what some have called "subsidiarity". There must be agreement on the interests involved must be attained, and at the lowest possible level.

The lower that level, the more democratic is the decision-making. But if a decision affects others, they must be involved or conflict may result.

For example, if industrial waste from one country contaminates another's drinking water, both countries must agree on how to eliminate the contamination and how to pay for it. If the two countries cannot agree, even with the help of mediation, conflicts can be submitted to the International Court of Justice.

If a national government ignores the judgement, economic sanctions can be applied, and if they are not effective, military intervention would be the last

The UN system can be transformed by changing the competence of existing specialised agencies and creating a few new ones: a World Treasury, a World Police, an Ocean Agency and a Space Agency.

The World Treasury would centralise the collection of all

tions, which is now done separately by each agency.

contributions from member na-

This would eliminate duplication, reduce the cost of collection, and facilitate the dispersal of available funds to areas where they are needed most ur-

The World Police would continue the activities of the blue helmets on a permanent basis. This would reduce the time needed to act and so more effectively discourage nations or political groups from aggres-

The World Ocean Agence would supervise the use of ocean resources, such as fishing and ocean mining, and would control ocean pollution and other abuses.

Similarly, the World Space Agency would supervise the use or abuse of outer space: aviation, pollution, emission of radio and television waves, observation of the agricultural situation by satellites, or military activities.

While many alternatives and better examples for a system of world governance are possible. what is most important is that we believe in the possibility of a world government. Without it we have no future.

JAN TINBERGEN is now Professor Emeritus of Development Planning at Erasmus University, Rotterdam.

Should Capital Punishment Continue? by Mostafa Ameen

years back is no more an acceptable proposition. And this is not only applicable in case of capital punishment but also to lot many acts in our social and personal life. Even fifty years before, in ru-

ral Bangladesh, use of gramophone music was feared a good enough cause for declaring a person outcaste. Society has changed and so is the attitude. On 27th of July 1993 most

of our national dailies gave wide coverage to the execution of Munir. In some dailies it was rather the only story with details of episodes and events with a taste of melodrama. Vis-a-vis the trend of change

in attitude. I have a strong conviction that one hundred years from now when someone will read the minute details of the execution ceremony of Munir. he/she will not consider us to be great

I have no personal sympathy for Munir. He has performed a heinous act. He has killed a person whom he made his partner for life. He must suffer for his barbarous act. No question about suffering. But do Rimas come back if we take the lives of Munirs? Life for life and teeth for teeth is a philosophy of vengeance. Munir has taken a life and so he does not have the right to live is a strong logic. Killing someone is insanity as no sane person will do that. An individual can be insane but as a society can we behave in the same way?

Law has also inconsistencies in the treatment of crimes. If someone destroys the eye of another person the eye of the convict is not damaged. For causing physical injury no one is damaged or injured physically, imprisonment is considered to be sufficient punishment. Only in case of murder, life is considered to be the compensation and rightful punishment. If damage of an eye is compensated by imprisonment, why damage of a life cannot be compensated by imprisonment? Length of imprisonment is de-

pendent on the nature and seriousness of crime. For murder, section 302 of the Penal Code says "whoever commits murder shall be punished with death or transportation for life and shall also be liable for fine". Section 303 says "whoever, being under sentence of transportation for life, commits murder, shall be punished with death". If death is awarded for the first murder under section 302, there is no scope for the implementation of section 303; it simply becomes frustrated. If death is the punishment for the second murder under section 303, logically death cannot be the punishment for the first murder under section 302. There exists a clear

contradiction of law.

Those who may argue in favour of death sentence shall. in addition to the traditional notions of life for life, talk about the demonstrative effect: If taking life is paid by giving life. people shall feel restrained in taking life. The fear of punishment has definitely a psychological impact on the offenders But statistically it is not proved that murder has been low in a country where death penalty exists in comparison with a country where death penalty has been abolished. Even in the same country, in certain states, where death penalty prevails the rate of murder is not less that the other states where the penalty has been abolished. am referring to the United States. In the United States death penalty has been abolished in a good number of states. In other states the debate is on in favour of abolition. The abolitionists argue in the

above line. In Europe and other democratic societies, death penalty is gradually being abolished by legislative acts. Human rights organisations are also working for achieving this objective.

If death punishment is abolished there is no reason to think that people will go around

killing others. As to the argument of demonstrative effect we can say that the death of Dr lqbal could not save the life of

If death sentence is there. the same is also abused for political purposes. The abuse is very significant in the third world. Acts against the government are sometimes treated as acts against the state and opponents are often put to death The provision of death sentence in the Penal Code makes the job

Human issues are also relevant. Judges are human beings. They have their own values and attitude towards life. The values again differ from man to man. For instance, in the case referred earlier, the District Judge sentenced Khuku to death but the High Court set her free. This is very usual in the judicial system. The judgements of the subordinate courts are changed by the superior courts.

The question of advocacy is also very important and relevant. A good Advocate can quote sharp arguments and cite good precedences while, a weak Advocate cannot do that. It is a well accepted fact that Advocates have a vital role to play in a trial. Munir come from a rich background. He deployed our best legal practitioners to plead his case. Khuku also did the same. But what about a poor rickshawpuller who has been chargesheeted for murder? Can he employ a real good Advocate to save his neck? Normally no. If an accused fails to employ an Advocate, government does provide and Advocate. How serious and competent a government Advocate is, remains a real question. No one can rule out the possibility that if the Judge would have been different, Advocates would have been different, the judgement could have been different. That is applicable for all cases. When we are talking in terms of life,

should we not give serious considerations to these variables? Should the right of termination of life be given to human beings, who are subjected to values and conditions so diverse in nature?

Judgement depends on evidehces and witnesses. If a murder case is rightly framed by very powerful person or group of persons, for certain objectives and proved systematically, it is possible that one who was not associated with murder can get a death sentence. It also happened that the person who was claimed to be murdered appeared in public while the convict had already suffered. A human being is not above mistake and so is any judiciary. The life of a person should be kept outside the purview of human decisions.

in a drama serial of Bangladesh Television one character asks another, "What is the heaviest thing in the world"? The reply was, "the corpse of a son on a father's shoulder". Objective of justice is not to increase human suffer-

ing, if the same can be avoided Shohagi, my five-year old daughter asked me on 27th July whether hanging was painful? She also wanted to know whether Rima would come to life on the death of Munir? I asked her whether she liked the idea of hanging, she replied in negative. I consider Shohagi to be innocent. I have highest respects for her senti-

Strengthening the PSC Shahabuddin Mahtab

In The Daily Star (January 21st) a news item appeared, in connection with the calling off of the doctors' strike, stating "Within December 1994, the government would create 1000 new posts at the union level for the doctors and the Health Ministry would send a requisition for the vacant posts of the doctors to the Public Service Commission (PSC)".

The government also decided to create some 11,000 new posts for doctors which will be completed by 2003, while 2042 posts at different levels will be created by December this year.

The filling up of a very large number of posts of doctors will require very careful career planning and keeping in view an even flow of recruitment, so that frustration and vegetation do not occur in the medical services. Only the brightest of our children can get an entry to a medical college; and we have to ensure that they get adequate recognition, promotions and financial benefits.

The process of recruitment will play a vital role in the total

manpower planning of the Health Services. As of now, it will be quite impossible for the Public Service Commission with its present strength, to recruit the proposed medical officers with correct timing and in adequate numbers. This clearly calls for a special PSC. There is a similar situation in the BCS (General Education) cadre Because of the very large cadre strengths in the education and medical sectors, it is for immediate consideration whether we shall have some special arrangements for recruitment to those sectors.

Beginning from the time of the announcement of vacancies in the media, and the publications of the results of the suc cessful candidates, the total time taken should not be more than nine to ten months. As of now there is a very long time gap which results in anxious waiting and consequent frustrations. There must be a continuous and even flow, so that everyone entering a particular cadre has an equal opportunity to go up in the promotion lad-

Arambag-Segunbagicha canal

Sir, Kindly allow me to draw the urgent attention of the authorities concerned,, in particular, and nation as a whole, to the misdeeds being perpetrated by some interested elements, specially on

Arambag-Segunbagicha canal. The Dhaka WASA, is building roads and box culverts to save the Dhaka city from the regular geographical hazards, that bedevil the city life of the tax payers. But it is failing to work smoothly, because a large number of unauthorised buildings and illegal occupants are obstructing the work of the WASA.

Some have even built mosques on Government khas lands, obstructing the work of WASA. These illegal occupants are using Islam and mosques, purely for their gain and pur-

The Mayor of the city had condemned these activities as un-Islamic. The poor tax payers money is being wasted and squandered by the WASA by paying huge compensation money to the private land and building-owners, whose dwellings have been very questionably acquired by the ADC (LA). Instead of smashing the illegal occupants, the ADC (LA) and the WASA are following the path of 'least resistance thereby rather directly stabilising the anti-social elements inhabiting on the banks of the canals.

We request the Mayor, the DC, DLR, and the WASA to demolish, with an iron hand, the nests of corruption on both sides of the canals. Let us not commercialise Islam any way. The perpetrators need to be. punished: the innocents be saved and respected.

Sufia Khatun Road No. 10, House No. 6, Banani, Dhaka

Translation of 'Dahuk'

Sir, The translation of 'Dahuk' which appeared in The Daily Star on 3rd December last was read by many of us with excitement. But alas! it was difficult for us to relate the translation to the original, nor could we, frankly speaking, comprehend the idiom the translator, Mr Chopdar Abdus Sattar has followed. I don't pretend to be an authority on English nor can I lay claim to any superior knowledge of English grammar. But I had the impression that most of the passages in the translation

were gibberish. The translator may have congratulated himself upon being able to offer an English rendering of a' well-known Bengali poem. But what he has offered us is so bizarre a product that it is difficult to believe that any one well-versed in English could have been capable of it.

I apologise for my language. but can any reader defend the following: Might be I know thee

And thy physic having well complexion That is painted with a wonderful brush

But what about 'well' as an adjective qualifying complex-The translator also contains

such, expressions as 'bee of

day', 'dice of slyness', the

moon goes demolishing. I

wonder whether the translator

was attempting to create a new and original idiom of his own, not known to ordinary people

who have learnt English. As an ordinary admirer of Farrukh Ahmed, I feel sorry for him. A bizarre translation like the one I am discussing is positively a disservice to those we wish to honour.

Mesbahuddin Ahmed 29/1. Jigatala, Dhaka

It's always too late

Sir, Months before the announcement of City Corporation elections, the aspirant mayors and ward commissioners had reserved the walls of buildings in the cities with inscription "Site for....."

Within a week after filing of nomination papers of the candidates, all the walls of buildings facing roads, streets and lanes assumed an ugly look with indiscriminate writings and posters pasted on them. Even inner walls of outer verandahs and corridors were not spared. None dared to protest for fear of being assaulted and abused by the 'supporters'. Had the government issued necessary instructions just prior to filing of nomination papers, this could have been prevented to some extent. But it was not done so.

Now, when only a few days have been left for polling, the Election Commissioner has requested the Dhaka metropolis and the City Corpns. to remove camps on roads and pavements and erase the writings of the candidates, which is bound to fail. He has also expressed hope that 'good sense' will prevail and the political parties will instruct their nom-

inees not to violate the rules. At least the Dhaka metropoli tan Police must be finding themselves between the devil and the deep sea. When the Election Commissioner slumbered away the time we can't expect to perform magic by the DMP or the candidates as the task of erasing wall writings and removing posters is time consuming.

I am not only afraid, but sure that it will take long time in demonstrating 'good sense' by the aspirant mayors and commissioners. Perhaps the Election Commissioner has tried to show his conviction that 'it's never too late', but our experiences have made us believe that 'it's always too late'.

K R Zakhmi Khulna

VOA special report

Sir, I would like to draw your kind attention to the special report of VOA broad cast on the new year's day over its Bangla service and published in your esteemed daily on January 4.

I am confused when I com

pare the VOA report and the Bangladesh Bank report of 1992-93 published in all papers on the 6th. VOA reporter comments that during last year, economic progress in Bangladesh was 'hopeful' new industries were set up, more job opportunities were created and both export and import trade had enhanced But according to Bangladesh Bank report, deficit in trade balance went up to 1848 million US dollar i.e. deficit increased by 289 million US dollar. Growth in the industrial

sector superseded that of the preceding year by only 0.4%. The report further says, "The production of edible oil, steel. cement, cotton wear, ci garette, sugar, cotton yarn and newsprint fell by 71.4 per cent, 33.7 per cent, 23.9 per cent. 22.2 per cent, 9.9 per cent. 4.1 per cent, 3.8 per cent and 1.6 per cent respectively."

VOA reporter Ziaur Rahman said that reserve of foreign ex change had increased to a record volume. If he had taken the trouble of asking any bank over his ISD phone he would have been told that 'it is because of total lack of investment in the country which is alarming and has been causing headache to all the banks.

An editor of another daily wrote in his column on 7th January: "The economy was not moving. Business has come to a standstill, industry is almost buckled on its knees and there seems to be no letup. I have not came across a single industrialist who has spoken well of the condition of his industry.

The large and small industries, trade and commerce, are all gasping. The handloom industry has come to a standstill. We have come to the painful con clusion that the government is neither capable nor can it trust its disbursement officers to give the full amount to the poor loanee. They should therefore, try to work out ar rangement with Grameen Bank or BRAC to see if they can help. One million handloom workers need immediate re lief." His observations have not been contradicted by any quar

in New York. Being involved in the welfare of the community, we are aware of who is who in our community in the US in-

cluding those in the VOA. Everyone has a right to have own opinion. But it is unfortunate and unacceptable if it is misused in his professional duties, particularly through a neutral and powerful foreign media like the VOA. We expect VOA to be absolutely honest and pragmatic in its analysis, like the BBC.

Ashraf Ahmed Brooklyn, New York, N Y. USA

Rickshaws Sir, A letter from Ms.

Lechner of the German Cultural Centre and the endorsement of her views in another letter on the rickshaws of Dhaka recalls to my mind a news item in a Bengali newspaper few days earlier. In that news we come to know that Prof. Wahhajuddin of BUET undertook a study and developed a modified version of rickshaw powered by recharge able battery. The news informed that the vehicle would cost Tk 30,000 and would run (at 15 km/hr) 200km by consuming 1 kw-hr electricity. Studies for further development (financed by a Canadian Research Centre) could not be pursued due to the negative attitude of a secretary who found no merit in research work. Ms. Lechner's objection to mechanisation can be overcome by eliminating the use of petrol/diesel engine in favour of electric (rechargeable) motor.

Richshaws are environment friendly but its development by retaining the main virtues is essential

M A Hag I am a Bangladeshi resident Green Road, Dhaka