

Arshad-uz-Zaman writes from Istanbul

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More than three years ago, the Republic of Yugoslavia splintered and the noise was so loud that it could be heard from the farthest corner of the globe.

This major event of our times did not take place overnight but was in the works in the twilight of the rule of Josip Broz Tito...

No single event of our times has so dominated the world attention. For three solid years Bosnia is front page news and a must in the electronic media.

If Bosnian crisis is a global one in scope, for the Islamic world, it has a very special meaning. On 28 June 1389 on the Field of the Blackbirds in Kosovo...

This was 'ethnic cleansing' Nazi style. The Serbs have carried out their ethnic cleansing on the hapless Muslims of Bosnia for the last three years...

rape more than 2 million people are homeless. The number of killed or those driven from their homes are larger than any other event since the Second World War.

The international community and particularly the UN have been wrestling with this problem since the outbreak of the crisis. There is worldwide consensus that the Bosnian crisis originates from one simple fact - Serbs' insatiable appetite for territorial aggrandizement...

from Bangladesh. UNPROFOR, which has become a household name, has the unenviable task of performing a holding operation. This force will shoot if only shot at. The Serbs have had a field day mauling the poorly equipped Muslims...

Faced with this situation, European Union (EU) has presented a sorry spectacle of total paralysis. There have been mediators galore. Vance, Owen, Stoltenberg are household names...

suffering from collective paralysis.

The hope that was pinned upon the US seems to have all but evaporated. US, the sole Superpower, was committed to finding a solution. She was in a position to operate through the UN, as she had done in the case of Iraqi aggression against Kuwait...

Bosnian crisis has been a traumatic experience for the Islamic world. Here in the heart of Europe a tiny gallant nation of Muslims has stood up to Christian Orthodox aggression. Indeed in Europe this is the only state with a Muslim majority population...

and secular character of their states. Yet human rights are being daily violated before their eyes in Bosnia. The comparison between the energetic action by the US-led coalition to defeat Saddam Hussein and the passivity in the case of Bosnian Muslims, is too obvious to be missed...

Willfully the Islamic world has to channel its action through the UN, where the US has a decisive voice. On the other hand it is inconceivable that the World of Islam will sit by and allow the Muslims of Bosnia smothered by superior Serbian force.

If the Bosnian crisis has lingered so long it is because of the passivity of the West, who have no real stake in the outcome. They are playing the old European game of the pre-Second World War vintage. In the process the world is being made to watch daily an unending horror movie, which is played by real people.

Follow up on Euromoney

It is not often that we do a good job in attracting foreign investors to take a serious look at Bangladesh. But we did so in the just-held Euromoney-BOI conference in Dhaka.

It became obvious in the conference that the area where the potential is the highest for foreign investment is the energy sector. It is in that sector that we have the chance of moving fast, and attracting large investments.

We raise these issues because we feel there is a lot to learn from them. Now that the conference is over, we should learn from these criticisms and take immediate actions to make up for whatever was missed out during the conference.

Tribal Refugees

Our special committee on the CHT affairs may have come back empty-handed from the Indian state of Tripura but not without the satisfaction of having done its job well enough.

In the first place, there should not have been an interruption in the repatriation process as this had started, and was advancing, in pursuance of an omnibus agreement signed between the two sides...

Against this background, the basically integrated issues of return and re-settlement of the refugees can be treated as a purely humanitarian concern, hardly a matter for haggling on peripheral details or confusing these with politics.

Middle East Peace

The Arab-Israeli summit, hosted by President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo, on Thursday, was neither comprehensively Arab, with Syria going uninvited, nor was it solidly Israeli as Rabin headed a beleaguered minority government.

From this standpoint, the assemblage of Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin, Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein goes down well with the world. In a sense, it may even rank as something of a historical landmark in that the Middle East peace talks were thrown out of gear by suicide bombings of the extremists.

The Sonia Factor Continues to Rumble

Rahul Bedi writes from New Delhi

Indian Prime minister Narasimha Rao is having a hard time, with a poor showing in state elections, the resignation of his No. 2, and the dismissal of three ministers after corruption probes.



India's Sonia Gandhi, Arjun Singh: Waiting in the wings?

of the political legacy of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty which ruled India for 40 years.

Both offers, however, were politely declined - after a subtle interval during which she gauged public criticism.

hood, protected by Special Protection Group commandos. She regularly meets ministers and MPs and holds 'durbars' or private audiences with Congress workers twice a week.

Congress MPs say the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation is the ideal way for Priyanka, her pretty 24-year-old daughter, to enter politics.

Most visiting heads of state make time to call on Sonia in her well-fortified bungalow in Delhi's poshest neighbour-

Until then, however, Congress MPs say Sonia will continue to covertly exercise political power and continue to remain in the news.

But senior Congress people opposed to the perpetuation of dynastic rule say Sonia is currently inhibited from making any open political move because of investigations into a \$50 million kick-back scandal involving defence imports from Sweden which reportedly involve her Italian business friends...

Besides, it works closely with the government and the Congress party, a factor which will further help Sonia fashion a constituency for her daughter until she comes of age and, as is widely believed by Congress party insiders, stands

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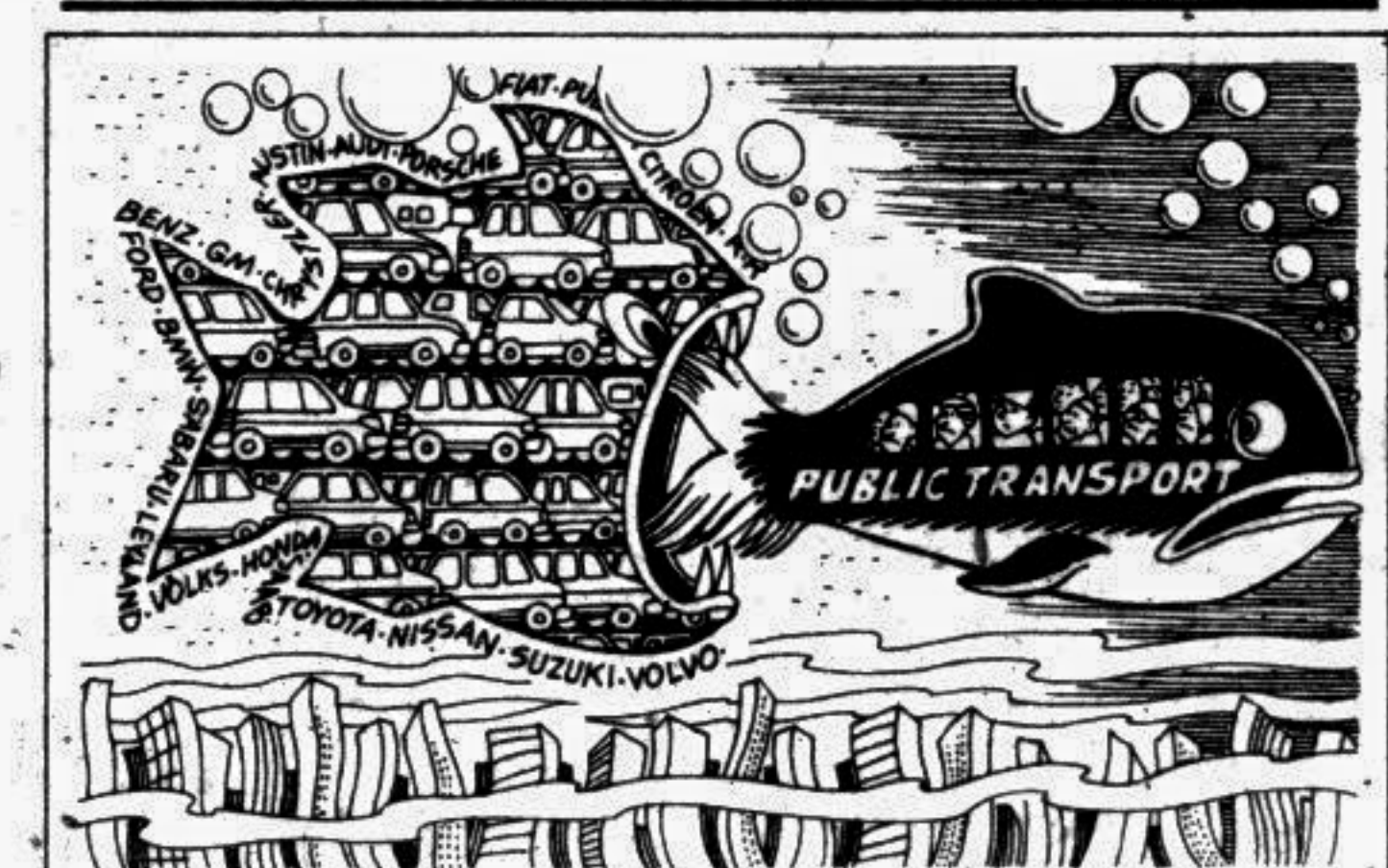
Asia: Backpedalling in Traffic

Asia's traffic nightmare, says Asia's economies could choke on their growth if they copy the West's unsustainable model for heavily-motorised urban development.

Western countries zoomed along this path till they saw that even current efforts to stabilise emission levels cannot keep pace with the number of cars being bought and used.

The average travel speed in Bangkok has slowed to two km an hour, but Thailand remains Southeast Asia's fastest-growing vehicle market.

Traffic jams and air pollution have often been seen as symbols of economic growth. But things have got so bad in Asia that cars have become a health hazard and are retarding growth.



Philippine markets - are making Thailand their production base. Honda Motor Co in late October said it would open a third plant there in 1996.

ASEAN comprises Brunei, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. Overall vehicle sales in the region are expected to double by 2000.

The solution to easing traffic congestion may not be as simple as building more highways, which just produce more traffic, because they encourage people to buy cars and travel more.

"I think they're backpedalling," Williams says, adding that bikes may cause some congestion but are not the main culprit.

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.

Quo vadis democracy Sir, I refer to the letter under caption "Quo vadis democracy" which appeared in your esteemed paper of the 19th January 1995.

Nehru accepting moral responsibility after a Railway accident in India. What a moral strength! Later, after the death of Pundit Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri was made the Prime Minister of India.

Ardha Satya

Sir, The series of punishments in the form of hartals and blockades being meted out to the hapless people of Bangladesh by the Opposition reminds me of an award-winning Hindi film 'Ardha Satya' or half truth. In that story the father, a retired havidar, wanted his college educated son to join the police which the son refused.