

Child Labour

The top US Labour Department official Andrew Samet's Dhaka mission, we are glad to say, has helped clear the air on the child labour issue.

In the first place, it was nice of him to assure his Dhaka audience, at the end of the visit, that his mission was neither intended to be investigative nor recommendatory.

The transparently gradualistic approach taken by the USA on the subject is a welcome development. It is being manifested on two levels; one being global and the other country-specific.

Andrew Samet dropped a hint that the USA was going to take the issue of child labour to the World Trade Organisation, which has only recently replaced the unwieldy GATT in the wake of the Uruguay Round of global trade negotiations.

Bangladesh stands committed to the elimination of child labour as a signatory to the Delhi Declaration.

Accordingly, the BGMEA which accounts for 60 per cent of the country's garments exports to the USA, is getting ready to phase out child labour by July 1, 1997.

Eliminating Source of Arms

The unearthing of two arms factories in the city on Tuesday is a clear indication that clandestine manufacture of weapons is related to their indiscriminate uses we find nowadays.

In fact, the uncovering of two arms factories could just be a tip of the iceberg. It is unbelievable that the ingenuity of our Zingira people has not yet caught up with the foreign brands of those lethal weapons.

Already society is in the grip of a sense of perpetual insecurity because of the murderous mood of the arms-wielding criminals. Spotting even one or two of the arms factories sends a chilling message to the common people.

Making any concession to criminality does not pay. We are instead paying a high price for turning a blind eye to the arms-wielding students and thugs. To free society from lawlessness we are being a witness to now.

Workers Deserve Better

Four trade unions and federations of the jute and textile industries observed yet another round of their strike and other agitational programmes. During the 96-hour programme two persons were killed and scores wounded.

Here the point is why things are left to pile up without even making an attempt to address them in time? This government has time again done this to invite troubles for itself and the country.

We do not say all the demands made by the workers have merit. But certainly there are some genuine ones which can surely be taken care of. In an earlier editorial we made it clear where the workers stand unjustified in their claims and where reforms should be brought about.

A conference on peace and cooperation on South Asia tends to degenerate in polemics by Indians and the Pakistanis against each other.

Indeed, there was an earnest effort to find a common ground. And they came to the conclusion that if they wanted to raise any structure of relationship, the contacts in the different fields would provide the brick and mortar.

The conference knew that both New Delhi and Islamabad had stalled the travel of Pakistani participants. New Delhi, because the Indian High Commission at Islamabad did not either give visas.

I can neither understand nor appreciate Pakistan's policy of keeping the peoples of the two countries distant.

STANDING on the ruins of the devastated Chechen capital of Grozny, killing some thirty thousand or so innocent men, women and children by indiscriminate bombing.

It is not well with the Yeltsin front. So far Chechens have proved to be a hard nut to crack. The Chechens have turned the tide of the war by boldly resisting the Russian onslaught.

Yeltsin might have forgotten that mere occupation of the presidential palace in Grozny would not be able to crush the spirit of the Chechens to fight to the last to establish their independence on a solid foundation.

The resistance is increasing every day. Thus what happened to the mighty Soviet army in Afghanistan is going to be repeated in Chechnya.

Whatever propaganda might be orchestrated on behalf of the Russian army's action in Grozny, the holocaust is unpardonable.

To the Editor

BAU incident

Sir, The recent happenings on the campus of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) is indeed unfortunate and unexpected.

Incidentally, on February 7 I went to BAU with our Principal M Q Zaman, Prof Md Shadat Ulla and Scientific Officer Chowdhury Abdulla-Al-Farooq on some academic business.

Well, as we had also witnessed, the students were agitated when it was reported that some unruly employees

The Problems They Face

The bureaucrats, whether in the home ministry or in foreign office, are out to damage India's image in their pet game of tit-for-tat.

Islamabad on Kashmir, it will be because of Indian public opinion, which the Benazir Bhutto government is trying to alienate.

Against the backdrop of visas, the conference discussed the flow of labour from one country to another in the subcontinent.

I recall how well Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Bhartiya Janata Party leader, went down in Pakistan when he, as foreign minister in the Janata government (1977-79), liberalised visa for its nationals.

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Colonial War

That the war in Chechnya is a "colonial war" has been accepted by all right-thinking people except some western vested interests who have been trying to prop up Yeltsin as a great reformist and a democratic hero.

Thus the war in Chechnya is a colonial war. He further said: "Chechnya is not a part of Russia proper but an area conquered by Czarist Russia in the middle of the last century."

Now, it is sincerely expected that the students and employees will remove all the hostilities and develop family-type relationship since BAU campus is a single family of teachers, students and employees.

What's in a colour?

Sir, Colour of a human is only skin deep, but its impact was no less powerful than the blizzard; power that dominated centuries of earthly life with all terrors imaginable until recently has changed its course late this century toning down

sciences, pointed out how the Indians and the Bangladeshis stole into and accepted low wages — and ignominy — for employment. The same holds good for the Bangladeshis as for India is concerned.

How to effect economic cooperation also came up for a long discussion. Dr Mubashir Hasan, a former minister in the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto government, admitted that the Pakistan government, because of cussedness, was not taking advantage of Indian markets.

A professor from Calcutta said that the businessmen of India and Pakistan were already meeting in London and devising means how to bypass the governments and politicians.

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Between the Lines

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

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ready meeting in London and devising means how to bypass the governments and politicians. It was estimated that the illegal trade between India and Pakistan was to the tune of \$1 billion and between India and Bangladesh \$3 billion.

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UN Role: What Shape?

On this burning issue of Chechnya, the UN should adopt a clear-cut policy, as dictated by its Charter. It has a number of glaring precedents to guide its policy on Chechnya.

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of accession in 1947 when the state's maharaja gave India the three subjects, defence, foreign affairs and communications. He wanted Jammu and Kashmir to be a federal structure, with porous border between the Indian part of the state and the one under Pakistan.

There was such a heated discussion that Rehman Sobhan, chairman for the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, intervened to say that India appeared oblivious of the pressure that the Big Powers would exert on it to relent on Kashmir if it did not do voluntarily.

Talking about Kashmir, I am reminded of an interview with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He told me that support to the right of self-determination did not mean that we shall export revolution. This position does not exist and it will not exist in the future also.

The proposal by Ved Bashin, editor of Kashmir Times from Kammu, was to go back to the original instrument

and that "glass house" at Manhattan, called the United Nations, want to initiate action to save an independent country from the aggression of a colonial power?

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Art Buchwald's COLUMN

SINCE the O. J. trial will be going on for such a long time, I decided to hire my own legal expert to sit in my living room and discuss the case with me.

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as "the people of Kashmir launched their freedom struggle" the people of Pakistan would "go all out in support and assistance they would not hesitate to shed their blood for the people of Kashmir."

I asked Bhutto if he would accept a Trieste-type solution for Kashmir. The Trieste Agreement (October 20, 1954) provided for the partitioning of the Free Territory of Trieste between Italy and Yugoslavia along the existing demarcation line between the two, with minor changes.

The participants were keen on silencing the gun in the valley. Yasin said he had already ordered ceasefire unilaterally. But it was apparent that he had no control over other militant outfits.

Yasin told the conference that there was no let up in violence and the talk about the lessening of militancy was meant to hoodwink Indian opinion. The question that remained unanswered was how to bell the cat, how to make India and Pakistan understand that the way out was conciliation, not confrontation.

and independence from centuries-old colonial rule. Chechnya has already declared its independence from Russia and was conducting its affairs independently for the last three years.

Chechnya has already declared its independence from Russia and was conducting its affairs independently for the last three years. During the last two months of ruthless Russian onslaught, the Chechens have shown their determination to carry on their struggle to the last.

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