

Serbian Outrage

While the Serbian outrage in Bosnia continues, the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) members are busy interpreting the role of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) vis-a-vis their own troops.

Even though one of the powers capable of effectively dealing with the defying Serbs has shown the willingness to talk tough with the violators of all international rules and the Geneva Convention, others have tried to evade the issue.

That the sending of more British and French troops was a hasty decision cannot be in doubt. The additional forces do not know what they are there for. Their uncertainty can be their worst enemy.

When the major players are so inconsistent and unsure about themselves, there is little hope of bringing the Serbs to their knees. The UN secretary general has indicated how aggression could be met with aggression.

Economic Mirror-image

There has been a whiff of a positive change in the export-import imbalance as portrayed in the Bangladesh Bank Annual Report, 1993-94. The trade gap experienced in the 1992-93 fiscal year narrowed down modestly — but meaningfully — in 1993-94.

The aggregative uptick in the volume of earnings from the export trade is worth greeting unreservedly but a close look at item-wise performance unravels where we need redoubling our efforts to sustain the over-all buoyant export trend.

It is understood that import of capital goods and raw materials has shown an upward trend lately as an indicator of future stimulation in industrial productivity. But this fact is a bit diluted in view of lower tariffs accorded by us to imports at some expense to the growth of local industries.

Leftist Setback in WB

The CPI (M)-led Left Front in West Bengal has, by suffering a setback in the recently-held municipal polls, helped explode the myth of its electoral invincibility in the sprawling Indian state bordering Bangladesh.

In the first place, this has signified their declining popularity in the urban areas of West Bengal. Secondly, West Bengal Congress which had looked so very much divided raising the possibility of its being totally routed in the city council polls emerged unexpectedly victorious in some leftist strongholds.

The communists may have endeared themselves to the peasantry in West Bengal by a variety of agricultural reforms including land re-distribution and fixation of farming wages, etc. Anyway, the next state and national parliamentary elections are only a year away so that one does not have to wait for too long to get to know the left front's latest standing with the electorate in West Bengal.

FOR a very short period in the past, there was an attempt to involve officers in the development of their respective villages. The implicit idea behind this scheme was that although officers, in general, did not like to go out of their sheltered life in the cities and towns, they would not be able to resist the temptation of visiting their own villages with government TA/DA.

Unfortunately, this scheme was abandoned as quickly as it was taken up. There were, of course, complaints that some officers got involved in factional village politics and were settling old scores.

THE political air is thick with possibilities. Guessing games are on. Combinations and permutations are being thought of. The fear of instability has led politicians and constitutional experts draw on various methods of saving the Centre from becoming a plaything of forces which will not let it work unimpeded.

The one party that has so far shown little disregard towards entering into alliances with other groups is the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. It cannot be said whether this is a show of bravado before the electorate to say that it can form a government on its own or it is based on firm calculations.

The Congress has got so engulfed in inner fighting that at least at present it is oblivious of its fortunes in the parliamentary elections. It seems to have decided that the fight between Narasimha Rao, Arjun Singh and B D Tiwari is far more important than winning the 1996 general election.

To the Editor...

Make cheese with undistributed milk

Sir, A large number of new cottage dairy farms have come up during the past two years, spurred by the local loan incentives. While most of the farms can sell the surplus milk, there are many pockets and areas where the transport and distribution systems are not working properly.

At present, even our famous Dhaka Cheese cannot be preserved for long as no standard canning process has been evolved yet (the taste changes after a few days in the fridge). Therefore, the milk producers in the rural area have to be trained in cheese-making methods under technical assistance or NGO schemes.

We save the surplus unused milk, and get more cheese in the market (the current high price will come down). The school children can get calcium from cheese the year-round. How to make the administration cheese-conscious?

A Husnain Dhaka

War of 'Cadres' and Govt

Sir, Over the past couple of years or so the newspapers have been episodically reporting issues and demands put forward by Prokrihi and 26 other Cadres on the one hand and BCS (Admn) on the other. There have been allegations and counter allegations, not infrequently accompanied by veiled threats and ultimatums.

Developing One's Own Village

The officers would be required to teach in one of the village educational institutions most acutely lacking in teachers if they have no other skill. Those with specialised skills should help out the villagers in their respective areas — a doctor should open a free clinic and an engineer should help repair the village tubewell and culvert, etc.

I would strongly support the revival of this scheme. But this time in a well planned manner. In this regard, I would like to propose an outline which could be further strengthened and improved by others.

Firstly, this scheme should be tried out first on a pilot scale under the leadership of the Cabinet Secretary and a small cell composed of some experienced officers. In the pilot scheme, surplus officers, OSAs and some hand-picked volunteers should be utilised so that least disruption is caused to official work.

Secondly, whether in the pilot or replication stage, officers should be sent only after thorough briefing. The briefing should be based on a well devised guide to action, spelling out not only what to do and how, but also the code of conduct to be followed in interpersonal relationships during the stay in the village.

Thirdly, during the replication stage, proper care should be taken in allocating the villages to the officers. For example, there should be no discouraged during the briefing. In fact, the evaluation of pilot scale operations should provide valuable materials for the briefing to be conducted during the replication stage.

Fourthly, since there are different perceptions of what constitutes a village in different parts of the country, there should be some clear understanding about it before sending officers to the village. One pragmatic approach would be to go by the villagers' definition of the area constituting their village.

Making Government Work

Chairman could be made the final arbiter.

Fifthly, the involvement of the officer with his own or his adopted village should be in two phases. During the first phase, lasting about a fortnight, he should be mainly required to carry out a rapid but highly participatory survey of the village according to a prescribed format and methodology.

Sixthly, the format and methodology should be drawn up by experts who have practical experience in this area. The main objective of this survey would be to determine the top-priority development projects from the perspectives of poverty alleviation, besides generating a set of reliable data on key indicators.

Seventhly, the data should be processed and analysed by the Statistics Division for use by relevant organisations and persons. In addition, the officers would be required to teach in one of the village educational institutions most acutely lacking in teachers if they have no other skill.

Eighthly, the officers should be required to stay in the village for more than 2-3 days in a month and their stay should include the weekly holiday, so that office work suffers least. They should also be required to carry some of the unfinished office work with them and complete these while travelling. However, before getting on with the more difficult work of the second phase, the officers would be required to submit their survey findings to, and hold consultations with, the Cabinet Division Cell mentioned earlier.

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Who will Fight Whom in 1996?

A N Dar writes from New Delhi

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ball was set rolling by N T Rama Rao at the time of his swearing in when he invited Jayalalitha to be present, ignoring the claim of the old National Front leader, Karunanidhi of the DMK.

But not everything is in her favour. From the DMK Mursoli Maran has served notice that his party will walk out of the National Front if the AIADMK is in it. The Leftists are said to be against letting the AIADMK join the National Front. So also V P Singh. The feeling in some of the National Front parties is that they should not let down Karunanidhi when he is out of power.

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Bureaucratic Mystique in South Asia

A K M Jalaluddin

What the CSPs were Taught — IX Fianceses, Girlfriends, Female Friends et al

HOW did the young men behave at the Academy? Director Majeed appeared to be a puritan but within limits.

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T & T's new policy

Sir, Thanks are due for your valuable editorial on the 23rd instant on T&T's new policy.

It is mischievous, something that it could 'milk' and it is a negative aspect. Moreover, it would be criminal to put any sort of restriction in the new stage of information age.

Recently, we are facing great mis-management in the telephone systems. Even the minister is not satisfied with the activities of the T&T. Subscribers are unable to maintain residential telephone due to ghost bills and other problems even in the case of digital telephone.

One would like to know what is the number of political parties in our country. There is no doubt that the number will be quite a noticeable one. We also have such coalitions of parties as 15-party, 7-party, 5-party, and so on and so forth.

engagement had taken place). I had my fiancee too, living in Dhaka. Naturally, I missed her. I told DDT about it — he was all sympathy for me. Could I be posted to Karachi for the district attachment (July-September)? Certainly, said DDT. Her father was serving in Karachi as a government functionary. But somehow the Karachi coalition could not be managed — she was not able to join her father in July-September because of her academic schedule.

My fiancee is in the city. May I have a day's casual leave tomorrow so that I can take her out? Hassan's candour was appreciated. Not only did he get a day's leave, his letter was posted on our information billboard for others to see (and follow).

Belal Khan got married in January 1967. He was so lovesick that he brought his newly married wife to his suite in the Academy. Belal Khan was the treasurer of the Mess Committee of which I was the President. We allowed his wife to eat in the Mess (or in her room — the choice was hers). The Directing Staff maintained that it was against rules to bring your spouse to the Academy.

We were all sympathy for him — we had attended his marriage ceremony in Karachi Intercontinental and met his gracious wife. So Belal Khan continued to flout the rules — with impunity and our sincere support.

Political parties

Sir, There are many countries in the world, including UK and USA which have only two political parties.

In the last general election of USA there were three candidates, but the political parties being limited to two, the third candidate had to fight the election as an independent candidate.

Had that been in a country like ours, he could have found a good number of parties and could fight the election as a nominee of one of such parties.

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