

Inequities in Labour Market

Once again the World Bank has released a very useful report. This time it deals with the labour market, and brings out the inequities and segmentation that exist in it.

How could such inequity exist? The simple answer is that the urban based labour force is organised, and have the capacity to impact upon the government through strikes and hartals.

The World Bank's report puts a straight question before us. How long are we going to pander to the demands of the minority urban labour force at the cost of the 90 per cent rural labour?

The consequences of government intervention in the labour market is now clear. Time has come for us to shift our policy to benefit the majority of the labour force, who are in the rural areas.

A Study in Incongruity

There is a most elevating news from a very unlikely place. Rajshahi University is to set up two new post-graduate institutes under its fifth Five-Year Plan programme.

The touch of the visionary is also there in the thought of having a department devoted to population science and human resource development. And the other new department that has been planned — that of genetics and molecular biology — is such without which a modern university is inconceivable.

If all goes well three other institutes will be built — with forestry, education and English language as their subjects. We congratulate the university for such fine forward-looking exertions, albeit still on paper.

On the same page of The Daily Star that the elevating plans were published there was a bigger and bolder news dwelling on the plight of 56 thousand applicants for three thousand places in RU first year classes.

High-minded plans and very very mean state of affairs combine to make RU a study in pathetic incongruity. Politics specially of the fascist persuasion is culprit number one.

Cruelty to Children

This is as unkind as can be. This is cruel. This is decidedly criminal. A Bengali national daily on Sunday frontpaged a picture of a boy child — hardly 12 — lying naked on a road in drenching shower.

Such a ghastly example of cruelty to children is totally unacceptable. When the nation is in the process of enacting capital punishment for persecution of women and children, what should be the punishment for the perpetrators of this mindless cruelty?

Can we appeal to the police to go into the matter and prosecute the culprits? Their crime has not quite amounted to any bodily harm of the victim.

Let the police prove to our nation that the person of all our citizens is inviolate — and that this specially applies to our children, by taking action in this case.

'Untimely deaths seem common — but I don't remember hearing of a timely one'

In his sudden demise Attorney General Aminul Haq again proved that he was never afraid of death — as he was wont to say. He died in harness — a fulfillment almost of his last wish.

Very often Aminul Haq used to quote a phrase, "the worse the society, the more law there will be. In Hell there will be nothing but law, and due process will be meticulously observed."

Upon my return from Oxford I tomorrow You must. We have a lot to talk. The brief meeting in his house at Chitra, 25, New Elephant Road, was almost like a world restored.

In the absence of any insight, paucity in forethought and lack of produce by the powers that be, the Bicipians could afford to make a scapegoat of the local political and law and order situation.

Then again the officials (under the protection of the winged bird with no flying experience) are so overawed by everything phoron that they hardly can find the right

Logic of Law

chanced into him at a reception on January 26 — after a gap of almost ten years. A man with deep seated eyes, his face was unmistakable.

buildings around. The mosque, then was the only point of reference. Numerous houses have come up, shopping arcades abound and thousands of people milling around make the place almost unrecognisable.

The modest study lined with books was impressive in its simple

ENCHIRIDION

by Waliur Rahman



ity. The Attorney General of Bangladesh was innately shy to be so identified. He always wanted to be known as a simple citizen of a country born on the blood of million martyrs.

A warm cup of tea marked the renewal of a friendship which moved me and restored the confidence which perhaps I needed. He was very proud to point at a framed picture hanging on the wall. It was that of his

brother Sergeant Zahurul Haq. Very often in his conversation he would bring up his brother, and his memories, which to him and to the listener, was the story of Bengal and the quest for identity of a people, a nation.

His two juniors, Advocates Obaidur Rahman Mostafa and Farid Ahmed were close to him and imbued in full the integrity and character of the Attorney General. They impressed me with their seriousness of purpose and action.

On the Eid-ul-Azha day his lady wife personally entertained us. She sent her domestics on leave.

Advocate Aminul Haq was essentially a contemporary man. His determined approach to the legal issues of the day might not have endeared him to everybody, but that was him.

Playing Western music to this chap from Philadelphia is like Clinton

An Apple a Day Keeps the Tourists Away

I never happened the way its authors contemplated. The bird simply never took off. For about quarter of a century, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation's feathered logo has been the sole witness of several abortive attempts to make the tourism industry in this country flourish.

artefact to lure fellow humans from abroad. So, they go on these learning trips abroad and return with the ideas which foreigners are using to entice Bangalees.

keep away the foreign exchange. For God's sake! You can't outdo the tourists in terms of swanky bars, discotheques, fashion shows, ... But, try dauber paani. Introduce an Am Kathal Festival where people have to pay to wear lungi and squat on the floor to relish in these truly Bengali dumplings.

Actually, tourism has always been heading in the wrong direction. So, the bird never had a favourable wind

BPC has most often been offering tourists the very things they are running away from. Unless the visitors can find something unique in Bangladesh, they are cheaper off staying home.

Stop serving imported apples to these imported people. This guy at

the table could be owing the biggest apple farm this side of California. He is perhaps vacationing to see anything but an apple. And the first thing he encounters is this waiter with a banana-type grin pouring out the Apple a day keeps the doctor away poppycock.

Tourists are looking for something new, some adventure, something to write home about. For those interested in climbing, we have tall buildings where the lifts are either inadequate or not working. People interested in weightlifting could be asked to carry their luggage at Kamapur and Sadarghat.

Offer them bed and breakfast in a mud house in Mymensingh. Queen Elizabeth II (as far as memory goes) was on the tree-tops of some Kenyan jungle when she ascended the British throne.

For tourism to flourish, this land has all the resources. BPC should cultivate the one they lack — imagination.

Pinch of Salt

by Chintito

crooning Bara manush kore amine bhoote dhoreche to Rina Laila in the White House. For all your know this Phil could be a pop star who has just had enough of it and was looking for some shade under a coconut tree beside some dried up river of Bangladesh.

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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.

Rain/flood water conservation

Sir, After liberation, Bangladesh experienced the worst drought in 1978. The Government of the day made certain short term measures. These, however, were rudimentary and failed to achieve any long-term solution.

Back in 1978 an American water resources expert visited Bangladesh following the drought. Among other things, the expert advised the government to take steps to conserve surface water available in abundance during the rainy season.

It is a natural phenomenon that in our country there is plenty of rainfall during the monsoon period. A great mass of water from the adjoining states of India flow through our land.

The people should no longer allow such gross negligence of the political parties. If they do not come up with definite agenda on vital national is-

For understanding students' apathy towards learning history and culture of their own country, there are many variables that must be taken into account of which the school curriculum, be it English or Bangla medium, is only one, otherwise a piece of research is bound to suffer from serious error like unreliability.

It is surprising that a survey research was done so perfunctorily and in an unauthoritative manner.

Nazma Yeasmeen Haque
Radiant International School
Dharmondi, Dhaka

Karachi is burning

Sir, I was a student of the Karachi University in 1964-66. Pakistan was at war with India in 1965. Karachi being an important port city of Pakistan was the target of attack.

The people of the densely populated city passing their days with great anxiety. We are also shocked to see the scale of violence everyday. It is the Muslims everywhere Bosnian, Ethiopian, Sudan, Algeria, Afghanistan, Mindanao, Palestine, Chechnya and now Pakistan are being gunned down.

Islam is the religion of peace and justice. It is only Islamic teaching which can stop this type of mindless violence. I appeal to all Muslim leaders to exert their influence to stop these killings.

Mahbubul Haque Chowdhury
Kalabagan, Dhaka

'Jeepney' in Dhaka!

Sir, It is encouraging to learn that a new mode of public transport will start plying in the streets of Dhaka city within the next few weeks.

popular but also cost-effective and viable in metro Manila and other cities of the Philippines. In fact, such a cost-effective and viable transport should have been introduced here long before to mitigate the acute transport problems faced by a fast growing city population.

I remember of availing frequent jeepney service in the late seventies when I was a student of the University of the Philippines. An efficient jeepney service was in operation in the sprawling campus of the university in the Quezon city. The jeepneys were kept well decorated and often furnished with some musical system reflecting the taste and outlook of the owners.

The introduction of jeepney in Dhaka is an outcome of closer link and cooperation between the two countries of the South. There is no doubt that the nations of the Southern hemisphere can benefit themselves in terms of economic growth and development through transfer of technology and knowledge.

Md. K. M. Uddin
Zigatda, Dhaka

White paper and letter size

Sir, The Daily Star was being published partially on white paper for a long time. But since the 7th instant the daily has come out fully in white paper. This is indeed a welcome event for the readers.

But with the full white paper the letter size has become so minute that the naked eye is under pressure to recognize them. The size of the paper has also been reduced a bit. If the letter size does not return soon to normal, all the good qualities of the daily compared to other papers, I am afraid, may be lost.

Therefore, the editor and the publisher of my favourite daily are requested to do the necessary.

M A S Mollah
Member, BAAS, Dhaka

East-West Bid to Stop the Nuclear Traffickers

Thomas Land writes from Vienna

THE customs authorities of Russia and the West have joined forces in a top-priority venture to stop the illicit trade in plutonium and other materials used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

The scheme is being launched under the authority of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. It includes the establishment of a global database on the transport of such dangerous cargoes, practical assistance to Eastern European countries with traffic screening at ports and the strengthening of national systems for the accounting of fissile materials.

This is the biggest single cooperative venture linking the national security agencies of East and West since the end of the Cold War. The scheme is advancing despite sharp disagreements over the nature and extent of the illegal transport of fissile materials and the best means of suppressing it.

After a meeting of the board of directors of the IAEA, director general Dr Hans Blix said the agency's view was that the control and protection of nuclear materials should remain a national responsibility.

His initiative follows an accord by Russia with Western countries to exchange intelligence and synchronise customs and police action against the traffickers. This is a sensitive issue because influential voices in the Russian Ministry of Nuclear Power speak of a plot by Western intelligence agents to demonstrate Moscow's incompetence in preventing nuclear smuggling.

Nevertheless, Russia shares Western concern over the safety of the nuclear stockpile which it has inherited from the Soviet Union.

The widening traffic has led to arrests in Germany, Hungary, Turkey and elsewhere and the seizure of restricted fissile materials available to the highest bidder. Czech police recently arrested three men, including a nuclear physicist, holding a three kilogram consignment described as weapons-grade uranium. The first big trial of alleged smugglers is under way in Germany.

Specialists have warned ever since the implosion of Communist power that the remaining nuclear materials poorly guarded and hardly accounted for in the former Soviet republics may fall into the hands of international terrorists or "rogue states."

There is far more weapons-grade nuclear material at large in the former Soviet Union than anyone realises, cautions Vladimir Chernenko, co-spoken former director of the Chernobyl atomic power plant which exploded in 1987.

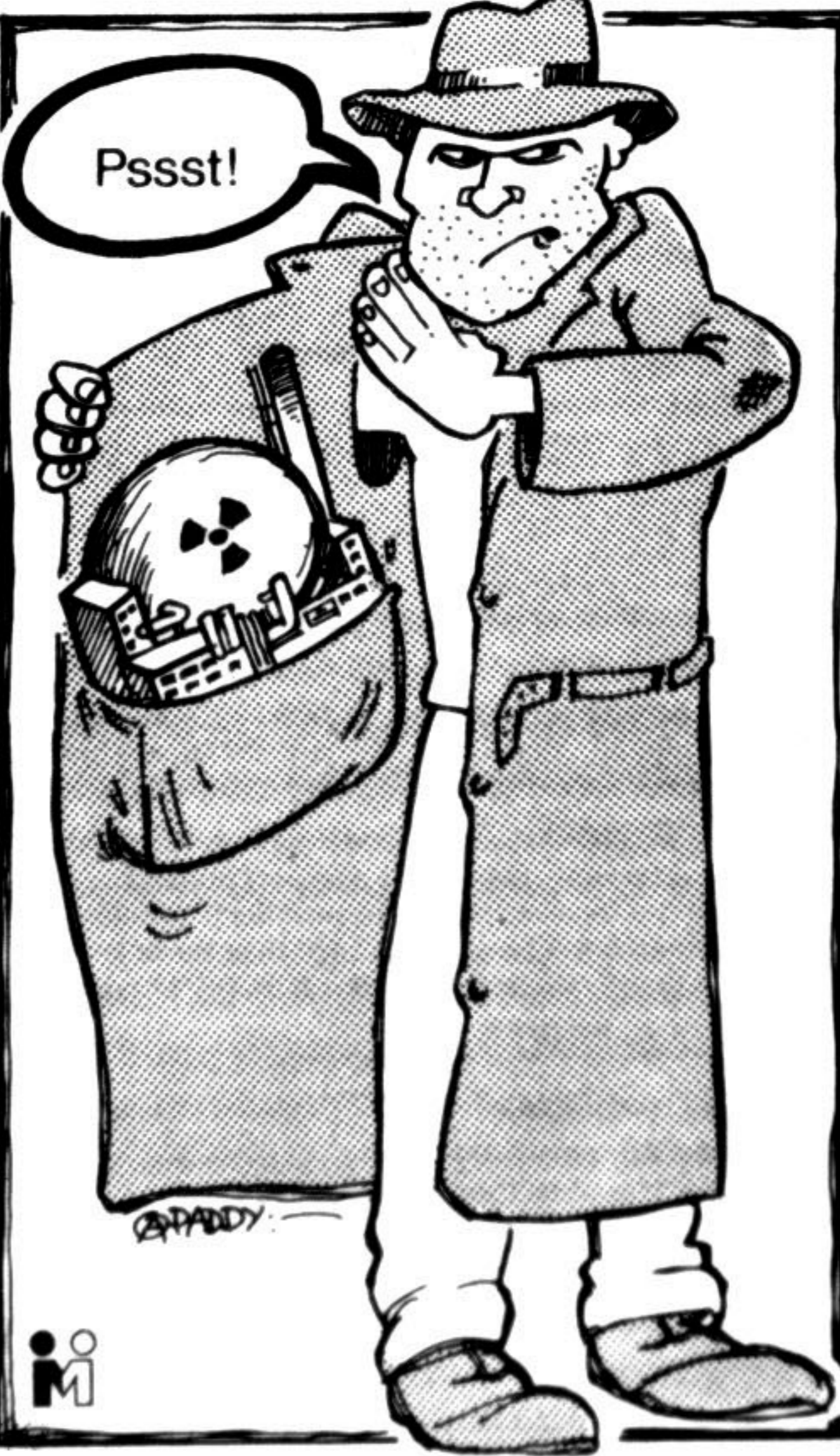
According to one authoritative estimate, up to 400 tons of plutonium and 700 tons of enriched uranium are stockpiled in Russia alone at various installations, in the absence of any reliable accounting system.

The scheme to arrest the trade in dangerous cargoes obtained by criminal groups involved the creation of a clearing-house for the exchange of secret intelligence, backed by a database on missing nuclear materials. Its establishment will cost perhaps \$ 10.5 million.

Most of the money has been raised already by Germany, the United States, France and Britain, the countries most anxious to confront the smugglers. A specialist unit to combat nuclear smuggling has been established within Interpol, the international police agency, comprising investigators from 24 European countries.

The customs authorities of some of the most affected countries, mostly in Eastern and Central Europe, but also in Sweden and Germany, have already introduced specialist training programmes, as well as radiation detectors for routine cargo tests.

The global intelligence clearing-house and database are to be set up under a resolution passed by an international conference at IAEA headquarters. It expressed "grave con-



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