

Shock Therapy to Bosnia

US President Bill Clinton has, as expected, vetoed the bill approved by the Congress to unilaterally lift the arms embargo on Bosnia.

The veto has, therefore, come about at a most inappropriate moment. Already the successful Croatian military campaign has shown how hollow and bankrupt the West's position on former Yugoslavia has been.

The Croatian offensive gives a clear message that a parity of military strength between parties would have a better chance of forcing upon the aggressor an internationally mediated peace formula than all the power-packed diplomacy.

The Serbs have been receiving weapons from different sources apart from their huge stockpile from the arsenal of former Yugoslavia.

Utilise the Respite

The political parties are playing with fire. This impression has gained ground following two latest developments in the election-related atmospheres.

The Ishtiaq formula, developed on the basis of certain basic concessions having been already traded off verbally between the ruling party and the opposition, banked on the by-polls 'as a way out' to get an agreed number of politically neutral persons elected uncontested to form an interim government to conduct the general election.

At any rate, the well-meaning formulae were given with an eye to resolving the crisis at the earliest under the discipline of a time-table.

By the present sights and sounds, the opposition and the government, far from readying themselves for talks, are hardening their positions towards each other.

Good Tiding

In conflict-management, the Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat have set something of an example for negotiators acting under severe constituency pressures.

But this is a teething period that Israel and the PLO must go through as one-time arch enemies. The settlers' protestations have thankfully so far remained within the bounds of non-violent gesticulation reflecting a qualitative difference from the abrasive shoot-outs and bomber attacks of the earlier days.

In their latest ice-breaking accord, Arafat and Peres have resolved some contentious points between them, such as those that have defiantly revolved around the question of extending Palestinian autonomy to the West Bank after its establishment in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho township.

I was taken aback by a snippet I read in the Daily Janakantha of 9 August, 1995. To put it briefly, it was the sad story of a cow which was electrocuted suddenly and unexpectedly while going from Swarighat to Khilgaon with a load on a push cart.

I have chosen to write on the subject because I cannot forget the incident. Accidents can, of course, occur at any place and at any time. Human error, act of God or a combination of several factors may cause a sudden accident.

Even before the King confirmed Banham's Ministers, MPs from his own Chart Thai Party and his coalition partners were publicly denouncing him.

Main cause of the row was in-fighting over who was to get the powerful Interior Ministry job, which controls the police department and all local administration.

One contender, Narong Wongwan of Chart Thai, failed to win a seat — though that is no bar to ministerial position in Thailand — and has been accused by the United States of involvement in the narcotics trade.

Sanoh finally agreed to take the Public Health Ministry, but his brother, Vitaya, also a Chart Thai MP, launched a vehement public attack on Banham.

When this happens, neither Sanoh nor Vitaya are likely to set aside their aspirations without a battle.

Narong's Therd Thai faction claims to control 35 of the 92 Chart Thai MPs (the coalition won 233 seats out of 391 in the 2 July election); and one of its key figures, Suchart Tancharoen, has been given the post of Deputy Interior Minister.

The faction hopes he will run the Ministry's day-to-day operations while Banham is busy as Prime Minister, allowing him to pave the way for Narong's renewed claim.

Banham's agreement to handle the portfolio only temporarily indicates how carefully he has to balance the groups within the party.

The Story of a Dead Cow

Accidents can, of course, occur at any place and at any time. Human error, act of God or a combination of several factors may cause a sudden accident. But an easily avoidable error or neglect of duty is not a justifiable cause of accident.

country's reaction to such a report is just indifference. The authorities would probably say: why fuss over a dead cow? As if they would have taken notice if the victim, instead of a cow, was a human being.

Such a vital function that it is difficult to accept such absence of responsiveness nonchalantly. Recently we have had frequent power cuts in our area — two or even three times in the day. The explanations that were given, when requested, were that either the wire had snapped

Asian countries but neither the transformers or the wires behave in such errant manner in those countries. In Bangladesh a special curse seems to be attached to these instruments.

What is exasperating is the indifference of the authorities. Take for instance, the bus service of Dhaka. An efficient public transport system is the key to the economic success of a nation.

or the transformer had burst. Of course, wires can get torn or transformers can burst nothing in this world is supposed to last for ever.

report, entrepreneurs are able and willing to place large number of new buses on Dhaka routes but they do not do it because of the toll collection by gangs of thugs.

operate under the banner and protection of the ruling party. Indeed it is no secret that there are often armed clashes between rival factions of mastaans for the exclusive right of toll collection.

According to a newspaper

ON THE RECORD

by Shah A M S Kibria



Ministerial Jostling Gets the New Man Off to a Fractious Start

Chadin Tephaval writes from Bangkok

The new Thai Cabinet has been described by one newspaper as being "stuffed with provincial barons, rabble-rousers and ambitious businessmen," and its factions have already shown their propensity for political maneuvering.

THAI Prime Minister Banham Silapa-archa's new coalition government has got off to a rough start.

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peace: Narong wants two-to-three months to clear his name, after which his supporters will demand that Banham hands over the Ministry.

Therd Thai has no real loyalty to Chart Thai since it merged with the party only when Narong's Samakkhi Tham Party was discredited in the 1992 Black May incident in which troops fired on pro-democracy protesters.

The order to open fire was given by leaders of the National Peacekeeping Council, which had staged a coup the previous year and whose interests Therd Thai was dedicated to support.

Therd Thai agreed to stay on with Chart Thai when outgoing Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai dissolved Parliament and the faction found it did not have enough time to form a new party of its own.

As well as dealing with faction-fighting within his own party, Banham is sure to encounter difficulties from the other coalition parties.

Some MPs from the New Aspiration Party (NAP) have denounced their leader, General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, accusing him of allocating Cabinet seats only to close allies.

In early July they warned that the situation inside the party could explode unless the NAP leader restructured top party posts.

The unashamed jostling for posts has reinforced the Banham government's negative public image.

Though the Prime Minister has promised that he "will not disappoint the people," the "godfather" reputation of some of his ministers is unlikely to reassure the public.

His administration's honesty will come under close scrutiny by the public, the press, academics and pressure groups.

Scrutiny will be particularly close because the government is responsible for several multi-billion-baht projects, including the



Thai Prime Minister Banham Silapa-archa. Rocky road

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.

The Holocaust in Japan

Sir, On 9 August, fifty years ago, the second Atom Bomb was dropped on the innocent citizens of Nagasaki only three days after the first bomb was exploded on Hiroshima.

Japan? Some of them argue that it was done to spare Russians, their next enemy.

Overnight the same people have changed their colours and turned into great humanists. They have become the pioneers and promoters of human rights who only see flagrant violation of human rights in the Third World countries.

War-mongering nations cannot sit idle. They would continue to fan the flame so that there could be another devastating global war. It would help them in selling their manufactured arms and ammunition and other military hardwares.

AMF Quadir Dhaka

Annual increment

Sir, Government has recently sanctioned ten per cent financial benefit to all Govt., Semi-Govt. and autonomous body officials. As a consequence many officials have reached the maximum of their pay scales and they would not get any more annual increment.

I, therefore, appeal to the Finance Ministry and the Cabinet to look into the matter sympathetically and allow annual increment to officials who have reached maximum of their pay scales.

Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury Dhaka Cantonment

Art Buchwald's COLUMN Selling Out

THE \$19 billion news concerning Disney and Capital Cities/ABC has the entertainment business agog. It is the largest transaction of its kind — until the next one comes along.

OPINION

Underground Car Parks

Here are some tentative sites where underground car parks could be constructed in the metropolitan area of Dhaka/Chittagong and other cities. If the land belongs to the government, construction can start immediately: