Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka, Friday, September 1, 1995

# Loan Defaulters' Candidacy

Public opinion, as reflected through the media, has grown palpably articulate on the question of disallowing loan defaulters from being candidates in the next General Elections We are glad that the Election Commission's antenna did not miss it and, being seized of the issue, it is sending a proposal to the govern ment seeking its cooperation to keep delinquents out of the electoral race.

We are wholeheartedly for this initiative to bear fruit in the firm belief that an embodiment of a concrete step such as this one, in the Code of Conduct, is worth so much more than pious platitudes and vaguely-worded resolutions in

defence of fair polls.

Simply stated, wilful defaulters are no respecters of law and we cannot have citizens who are not law-abiding as candidates for the most crucial of our polls - the parliamentary elections. At the local bodies polls we have stringently applied a standing rule that bars defaulters from contesting in the UP or municipality elections. In the national elections, there is a far greater justification for the proven financial law-breakers to be kept out of the race. There are plenty of reasons why we should refrain from applying two sets of rules for elections in the same country. First and foremost it is a fundamental question of financial probity, accountability and transparency pertaining to someone we are going to choose as our law-maker. So, why be on a wrong boat from the beginning by allowing a delinquent loanee to be a candidate for the national poll with all the chance in the world of his stonewalling recovery of loans when elected?

Then, one tangible way of combating the tyranny of black money and muscle-power at the polls will be to keep the wilful defaulters of huge bank loans out of the electoral gambit.

Soundings made to different political parties on the question of disallowing candidacy to loan defaulters have evoked a sort of mixed reaction - ranging from enthusiastic greetings to a dubious rejection. One standard remark has been. We have no loan shirkers in our party.' BNP and Jatiya Party appear to be somewhat lukewarm to the idea. Awami League is said to be in favour of this. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was right when she told the OCAB members that a consent by all parties would be required to enable adoption of such an electoral regulation. She being in charge of the government, can we expect her to lead the way?

# Make It Work This Time

At long last, the Western powers have seem ingly risen to the occasion. The NATO jets have been engaged in massive air operations against the Serb artillery positions around Sarajevo. For the first time there has been bombing backed by heavy artillery fire from the UN Rapid Reaction Force in retaliation against Monday's mortar attack on the Bosnian capital's market-place.

Now that the NATO has made its intention clear, the Serbs can no longer hope for a greater Serbia. In fact. Croatia initiated the process of stifling that Serbian dream and the NATO can give a finishing touch to the operation. We have pleaded earlier for such decisive actions to eliminate the Serbian threat around Sarajevo. It is, after all, a moral position from which no defenders of democratic principles, justice and human rights can and should retract. To distinguish between the civilian population and the UNPROFOR when both come under Serb attack, was to shirk that moral responsibility.

Attacks such as the recent ones could very well be carried out immediately after the Srebrenica debacle and the massacre of civilian population that followed it. A recurrence of the tragedy could at least be avoided in Zepa. Better late than never. That will now be the consolation for the Bosnian Muslims who have paid a needlessly heavy price for their independence.

The Serbs' immediate response to the bombing has been one of defiance. But developments elsewhere suggest that a disunity between Serb political leadership of Radovan Karadjic and military command headed by Ratko Mladic may make the task easier for the NATO offensive. Moreover, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic appears to have taken a Uturn from his earlier hawkish policy on Bosnia and Croatia, favouring a US initiative for peace. So, nothing in fact is going right for the rebel Serbs at the moment. Still the air strikes need to be carried on till they are humbled into recognising both Bosnian and Croatian states.

# Game with a Future

A relatively new game, handball, has done for the country what the more popular and traditional sports like football and cricket have so far failed to do. It is for the first time that both boys and girls have emerged runners-up in a Commonwealth competition with the highest

representation so far. Bangladesh was charged with the responsibility of organising the tournament virtually at the last moment. On that count, the host country has responded quite admirably to

make the tournament a success.

The championships of both girls and boys have deservedly gone to India. Particularly, the Indian boys were technically superior to the rest of the participating teams. Four times champion Nigeria and last year's champion Britain capitulated rather meekly — one failing to capitalise on its advantage of greater height and the other on its physical conditioning. One illuminating fact is that the sub-continental supremacy in handball has at least been tentatively established through this competition. If the gains achieved in Dhaka would be repeated in Britain next time, we will then have reasons to be confirmed in the supremacy. Of course, in the context of the Commonwealth.

The advantages of the game is that it can be played in a small place and the goal-scoring spree can be a great crowd-puller. The more this game spreads in the country, the better for its prospects.

Teaching (IASTT).

was mid-August in 1947. Now 48 years ago but the memory of those days is as clear as that of yesterday's happenings. My parents, two brothers, and lived in Sialkot City, Pakistan We had a flat, which overlooked a quiet street. My

lather, a doctor, ran a small

clime below. Aren't you leaving?" some of our Hindu and Sikh friends would ask us whenever they came to say goodbye before migrating to India. "No, we have decided to stay back. was our reply. Indeed, we had. We felt assured by Quaide Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah's statement that Hindus and Muslims were now either Indians or Pakistanis, equal citizens of the state.

Sialkot was a peaceful town, which had known no communal riot. The Diwali, the Holi and the Eids were common festivals and our social contacts were daily, I had grown up to be 22 in that atmosphere of togetherness.

Some tension, however began to build a few days before mid-August, following the influx of Muslim refugees who told and retold the tale of their sufferings at the hands of Hindus and Sikhs in India. They were angry and even talked of retaliation. Still the life in Stalkot flowed undisturbed, as usual.

We were having lunch on August 15 when there was quick shuffling of many feet beneath our flat and fullthroated slogans: khon ka badla khon se lenge (blood for blood). By the time we peeped from our windows bolted for security reasons, only the tailend of the receding crowd was visible. We learnt some one had been stabbed. This was Sialkot's first communal incident as far as its people could re-

order of human relations

at macro-level, taking

the shape of what is often

called new international

order, the position of South

Asia needs to be re-apprised

and redefined. For in a

process of systemic change

affecting nation-state

relations South Asia cannot

be viewed as an isolated is-

land, an exclusive region or a

world on its own. Indeed, no

region in the contemporary

international system can

form an exclusive self of its

own. The question that

comes up, first of all,

whether the world order that

came into existence after the

collapse of communism has

come to form an interna

tional system. The concept of

a 'new international order' so

often articulated these days

in systemic terms has to be

addressed in this context and

its relevance to South Asia

It is so often suggested

that the collapse of commu-

nism and the disintegration

of the USSR facilitated the

emergence of a new system

embodying the vast network

of worldwide human relation-

ships at all levels; but to

many the new international

order is illusory and stillborn,

for the 'pillar' role in the new

order is yet unknown.

Questions are still being

asked whether international

relations has become

'unipolar' or has assumed

characteristics of multipolar

change and carry the neces-

sary power parameters.

However, the division of the

international system along

the old Cold War line has dis-

appeared with the change of

role perception. There has

also been a disappearance of

the old ideological divide.

which, coupled with the dis-

appearance of old interna-

tional alignment pattern,

conditioned global security

notions, leading to open

market and/or marginalised

economic approaches, initia-

tives and policies. The

emerging issues of market

orientation, democracy, hu-

man rights, re-emergence of

religious fundamentalism

have all become issues of

worrying concern of one type

been a renewed attempt in-

ternationally to strengthen

collective security, with new

ground rules of interaction

still being framed. There is

also a new window of oppor-

tunities offered as a result of

It is true that there has

or another.

has to be judged.

I Saw Murder and Worse It was not possible to prevent reprisals when killings continued in India. We, the non-Muslims, felt guilty but still thought it unjust that the sins of Hindus in India should visit us.

member. A few of our Muslim friends came soon after and drove us to a house in the cantonment. This belonged to one of them but was vacant. "The refugees are spoiling the peace," they said. "You stay here till the madness subsides." We began to live there. They would supply the ration, milk and other necessities but felt annoyed whenever my father offered

As days went, the cantonment also became unsafe. Stories of atrocities were fouling the climate. It was not possible to prevent reprisals when killings continued in India. We, the non-Muslims, felt guilty but still thought it unjust that the sins of Hindus in India should visit us. We expected things to settle down. Little did we realise the enormity of the situation in the subcontinent while living in Sialkot.

Cries of a boy woke me up one morning at our cantonment house. "Forgive me." and "I apologise" was all that I heard but did not know why he was saying so. The boy was imploring my father in the presence of three elderly persons. It turned out that the boy. Bashir, had thrown a stone at my father the evening before when he was returning after treating a patient in a Muslim locality. My father had once saved Bashir's life. The elderly persons were his father and two uncles. It did not take long for all to embrace one another.

But the incident shook us. We thought that it would be better for us to spend some days in India till normalcy returned. Still it did not occur to us that even when there was normalcy, our return would not be possible. My mother and I went to the house which had not been looted yet. She changed her Kashmiri shawl with the comparatively cheaper Kulu one, and I replaced the hard cover. War and Peace. with a paperback. We also packed a few clothes, the ones we

I was lucky to find place in a convoy, which took the GT Road to Amritsar through Guiranwala and Lahore 1 had not imagined till I hit the road that thousands and thousands of people would be outdoors. It seemed a sea of humanity which was flowing on the two sides of the road. People from both countries seemed to have forced the exchange of population, a proposal rejected when the partition plan was spelt out.

How could have India accepted the exchange when its fight was against the

ent directions. Hindus and Sikhs towards India and Muslims to Pakistan. All of them were devastated, disheveled and dazed; pain was etched on their faces. They had seen murder and worse. Before their eyes, their close relations had been butchered or their womenfolk raped. They had been broken on the rock of history.

Men and women with their belongings bundled on their heads and their fearstricken children trailing behind - they were a tragic spectacle of force and submission, of savageness and shame. Dead bodies, burnt vehicles and torn pieces of clothes and utensils, strewn all over, testified the brutalities, committed in the name of religion.

I wondered where the rivers of humanity would end up? None probably knew; no one cared. How did it matter now when they had left the homes they had lived in all their lives and the friends they had cherished?

It was the same scene reenacted when I crossed into India. The victims had changed. Muslims had taken place of non-Muslims There was no difference in ferocity or cruelty. Both Hindusism and Islam have noble teachings and lofty moral goals. Yet what the followers did was a slur on their

Nearly 20 lakh people lost their lives and 200 lakh their homes and hearths.

Thousands of women were raped or kidnapped and thousands of children never found their parents. It was a tragedy that has found no faithful account. Probably, it will never find one because the sufferings of human beings can be felt only by the similarly placed people but they cannot be reduced to volume, numbers or walted

People, who once need in a country called Yugoslavia, can feel the hurt. But the scale of disturbances and uprooting is not even a fraction of what happened in the subconti-

The subcontinent was a victim of religious frenzy. I resolved to myself that when we build tomorrow's India. we would see that none was killed because he had a different religion. We would adopt a system which ensured equality and rule of the

The first thing I did after reaching Delhi was to go to Birla House where I saw Mahatma Gandhi from distance. I did not try to meet him. Mine was a quiet homage to a person who had fought all his life to free India, where Hindus and Muslims could live on equal looting and contribute their best to the country.

When he died within a few months of my deciding to stay on in India, I wept openly and unashamedly in public. This was my catharsis. my penance on behalf of the nation which did not come up to his standard of love. harmony and communal amity. Some one was quite right to remark that Gandhi was shot on January 30, 1948 but he died on December 6, 1992, when a mob of communalists demolished the Babri Masjid, a structure that represented our composite culture.

# **BETWEEN THE LINES**

We expected things to settle down.

# Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

thought we could easily throw away in India. Still we did not think that it was the last visit to our own house.

All five of us travelled separately through different routes. My parent came via Narewal. They lost everything they had while crossing a bridge for reaching the Indian border. They were accosted by a young man who snatched from my father the suitcase containing jewellery. cash and a few clothes. The young man melted into the crowd, never to be found again. My brothers took a train to Jammu. 25 kilometres from Sialkot. The train was attacked but they were among the few who survived

premise that a different religion did not mean a separate nation? Our independence struggle had Muslim leaders like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the forefront. They were as much engaged in the movement to oust the British as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel Rajagopalachari were. Could they or other nationalist Muslims be singled out after independence and banished from India? The very thought, now floated by the RSS and its parivar, is preposterous.

As I travelled towards Amritsar, I saw the caravans of people going in two differ-

# South Asia and the New World Order N the swiftly changing crisis of governance, but all

by Dr Abul Kalam

A conference (Towards South Asian Integration: Restructuring the Economy, Polity and Society) of the scholars from South Asia who worked as Visiting Fellows at the Queen Elizabeth House in Oxford under the South Asian Visiting Scholars Programme was held in Colombo between 4-6 August. The author, a former Visiting Fellow at Oxford, is the Bangladesh National Chancellor of the International Association of Educators for World Peace (IAEWP) and attended the conference as a participant from Bangladesh. This analytical report combines his personal reflection on the systemic change and its effect on the South Asian subsystem with the ideas offered by Dr Gowher Rizvi of the Asia Society, New York, and Dr S. D. Muni of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. growing global transaction ethnic conflicts and probgame. Being the poorest re-

and communication which may enable the community of nations to redefine relationships in problem-ridden areas such as demographic pressure or population boom, migration, environment, terrorism etc. as well as to identify areas of cooperation for human resource development involving economy, society, gender, market management, training in skills and technology, betterment of quality of life and so on.

It would be proper to suggest that in South Asia there has been some kind of reflection of the new international order and systemic change, with changing perception and disappearance of the old alignment pattern. Though strategically not projected as a 'priority region' in the new international order. South Asia does feature prominently in the negative context of sectarian ideology, nuclear proliferation and arms race, as well as in the positive light of market opening or perhaps meeting the service requirements of international peacekeeping.

In this changing context there is indeed a new window of opportunities offered to redefine relationships in areas such as population pressure, gender participation, migration, environment, terrorism, economy, market mechanism and so on in South Asia as well. Looked at the dimensions of prevailing conflict and tension in South Asia, there has nevertheless been an effort to maintain the status quo, with no overt threat to each other's security; there has also been an effort to contain internal vulnerabilities by a return or commitment to a democratic polity, even though the political system itself in each case still may appear fragile; that, again, by and large may be attributed to an incomplete process of de-colonization, mounting problems of nation-

lematic bilateral relations: vet most of the South Asian neighbours have sought to cope with the issues of economic concern. It is known that most conflict situations in South Asia offer some kind of reflection of domestic poli-

Despite the existence of conflicts, the conflictual parties themselves seem acutely aware of the fact that getting embroiled in further conflict would not serve their best interest or purpose. Hence, even in the most acute India-Pakistan entanglement over Kashmir both the contending sides continue to exert an element of cautiousness. aware that any kind of war adventure in South Asia is likely to be counter-productive and that there is an inherent danger of being drawn in a mutually suicidal process of a nuclear holo-

However, South Asia Itself is not oblivious of the global change and is seeking to repair their disrupted power equations, both India and Pakistan being active to counter each other in pursuing their subregional power aspirations as well as in seeking broader regional and international alignment. Pakistan, it is perceived, currently being propped up by the US in a new security role so as to confront the perceived western threat emanating from Iraq and Iran. Yet the strategic options for both the regional protagonists are limited and hence either powers should focus on developing positive links both within and beyond SAARC; at the same time, both should concentrate on overcoming their 'crisis of governance', while striving to build up a momentum in resolving bilateral and regional problems.

What is needed in South Asia, above all, is a determined effort to break the intellectual logiam and to avoid the situation of a zero-sum

gion in the international system, viewed in terms of density of poverty-stricken people. South Asia needs to cultivate cooperative relations more than others; the South Asian decision makers must calculate the cost of continuing non-cooperation and of prevailing state of mutual contradiction. The countries of the region need to gain suppliers' credit, at tract foreign investment and technology, help develop each other's purchasing power and transform their relationship from being competitive to one of complementarities.

In this context also, the Southeast Asian and East Asian countries could perhaps provide a useful model for the South Asian nations in avoidance of conflict as well as in expanding areas of cooperation; the latter could thus accept asymmetry where there is an unavoidable reality, whereas the actor whose power is one of asymmetric order may reciprocate by way of magnanimity. Unless South Asia can adjust itself to the new cooperative environment of the Asia-Pacific region and adjust itself to vastly changing global reality, it is likely to be left out of the widening horizon of an interlocking system of relationships in Asia and the

Whether or not there is a linkage of civilizational conflicts in South Asia, projected by Samuel Huntington as a post-Cold War global phenomenon, there is doubtless a fear psychosis involving the very big and the smaller neighbours of South Asia in a contentious perceptual frame of 'insecurity of the dominant community' threatening to tear up the larger India or a fear complex of the smaller neighbouring countries who see the danger of being engulfed as a result of doctrinal articulation of the perceived regional 'hegemony'. These

negative fear psychosis or fear complex involving the very big and the smaller powers can only be tackled by establishing civil societies in each of the state entity overcoming internal vulnera bilities — and by strengthening the people-to-people contacts. It is known that people tend to question both asymmetry and an emerging hierarchical order in South Asia, because people at large are opposed to both; for they counteract their aspirations, within and beyond their state

The countries of the region certainly do have their internal vulnerabilities or

entities.

these have external dimensions, and both internal and external problems often interact. For governments do often use or misuse the people and exaggerate the psychological component of external threat perception, thus causing unnecessary deterioration of mutual relations. Perhaps the countries of South Asia as a whole need urgently to overcome their crisis of governance, strengthen democracy, and ensure democratic accountability if they are to establish civil societies in their respective polities. To these ends, an ultimate definition and ordering of common objectives in terms of policy. strategy and tactics may be needed, with a composite ideology defined in the interest of nation-building and the evolution of a stable subsystemic order in the region. South Asia has little option but to ensure that it is not left behind as the world bevond moves on through accommodation, consensus and understanding towards progress and development.

# **Buchwald's** COLUMN

# Hollywood on the Cape

T was just a matter of time before Martha's Vineyard replaced Hollywood as the capital of the motion L picture world. Steven Spielberg came here to make "Jaws," and he begat Mia Farrow, who begat John Belushi, who begat Spike Lee, who begat all the movie friends of

This summer the movie colony stars spotted on the island have included Michelle Pfeiffer, Kevin Costner, Ted Danson, Sharon Stone, Mary Crosby, Rosanna Arquette, Mike Nichols, Merv Griffin and heaven knows how many executives from the major studios.

Fruto, who wants to keep the island the way it was before talking pictures came, said he was scared silly. "I know they're all coming."

"How do you know that?" "Because their agents have told them that if they ever want to work in the movies again they have to go to the

Vineyard for the summer.' "You're panicking," I told him. "Oh, yeah? Then how come Michael Ovitz accepted the

job as manager of the Black Dog Restaurant?" "He probably considered it a challenge. He is one of the top Black Dog sweatshirt distributors in America, and he

was dying to get into the production end." Fruto was not to be mollified. "I suppose you haven't heard that the next 'Forrest Gump' film will be shot in part at the Chilmark Chocolate Factory, and Forrest will be shown as a lifeguard at the Lucy Vincent nude beach saving Richard Nixon from being eaten by a shark."

"That doesn't mean Martha's Vineyard is going Hollywood," I retorted.

"Then why did Walt Disney announce it was going to buy Menemsha and turn it into Disney Sea Land? And why does Kevin Costner walk on water every time he goes to the

Fruto was on a roll "Rumor has it that Rupert Murdoch has bought the Home Port Restaurant and will make it a studio commissary for 20th Century Fox."

"When it comes to resorts, no place can remain as it was in the past," I told him. "In days gone by, writers dominated the island - not movie people. The stars have a right to enjoy the fruits of our island as well as Princess

"I would agree - except their limousines can't fit on the

I said, "Fruto, if you see a movie star, just look the other

"I tried that at John's Fish Market, but Sharon Stone made me hold her swordfish while she put suntan oil on

By arrangement with Los Angeles Times Syndicate and UNB.

### **United Nations and** moral development

Sir, To cope with the present severe moral degradation problem throughout the world today, we extend our unqualified support to a much talked about issue, viz. "A Proposal to the United Nations on Moral Development Approach: A New World Order for Peace" initiated by an eminent educationist Dr. Abu Obaidul Huque, Professor and Director of Bangladesh Institute for Advancement of Science and Technology

It is a fact that morality is I the ultimate solution to most

contemporary world, like AIDS, poverty, population control, environment pollution, violation of human rights, terrorism, oppression on women, drug abuses, smoking, etc. We firmly believe that this proposal by Dr Huque to the United Nations on universal moral development programme is the key to contain all these social problems.

building, perpetuation of

We, therefore, urge the UN and its member states to take up this very timely proposal for the greater welfare of mankind. We further hope that the United Nations will arrange a world convention

of the burning issues of the on this proposal in near fu- Muslims confronting world's ture if they deem it accept-

A N M Saleh Assistant Professor Rajshahi University

### Let's help them Sir. Prime Minister

Begum Khaleda Zia deserves appreciation for her bold initiative in creating a Bosnian Muslim Solidarity Fund to raise money for helping the Muslims of wartern Bosnia Herzegovina. It may be indicated here that Bangladesh has already expressed solidarity with the Bosnian

worst ethnic cleansing by the Serbs. We sincerely and strongly

hope that the world con science would come forward to help the Bosnian Muslims save their lives from the hands of the brutes. Meanwhile as reported in

the press, an account, bear ing number 33004969 has been opened at Sonali Bank and people have been re quested to deposit their donations to the above account in any branch of the Sonali Bank. It's heartening. Let's have the zeal to help them!

M Zahidul Haque Asstt Prof. BA. Dhaka