

Primacy of the Economy

A World Bank report reveals that in 1995 Bangladesh pulled off a record Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of 125 million US dollars.

The cautious optimism is bred by two factors. Firstly, we are yet to become a home to FDI in the sense that India in particular and Pakistan to some extent have turned out to be.

Bangladesh's privatisation programme and legal reform in the financial sector have lacked the locomotion of a robust political will drawing on a bipartisan consensus.

When the portfolio investment and the ODA are slumping, FDI is our only hope. To attract more of this there is no alternative to placing the economic agenda ahead of politicking.

Cricketing Disgrace

Never before did crowd-trouble bring a World Cup cricket match to a premature conclusion and more importantly to such disgrace.

Apart from politics in sport, there are other more genuine reasons why the aberration of sporting behaviour has to be condemned.

The players did very badly and on a given day the better team can only hope to win.

For once the Eden Gardens crowd has been carried away to commit a despicable act. Let this not happen anywhere in the sub-continent in the future.

A Monstrous Act

It is baffling to know that a man with a past record of a scout leader and a chief of a boys' club could kill five or six-year old school children in a frenzied outburst of temper.

The question is why did he commit such a monstrous act? The man no longer lives to answer the question for he killed himself soon after shooting down the children.

Even his loneliness and frustration do not quite explain his weird behaviour. Was he jealous of the blissful life of the children?

The tragedy that befell the Scottish town has shocked people the world over, because the incident points to the defects of our social system.

Total Rejection of Hamas' Peace Offer was a Mistake

TERRORISTS' bomb is perhaps more dangerous than nuclear bomb because the former is used by terrorists to kill people and the latter will probably not be used ever again.

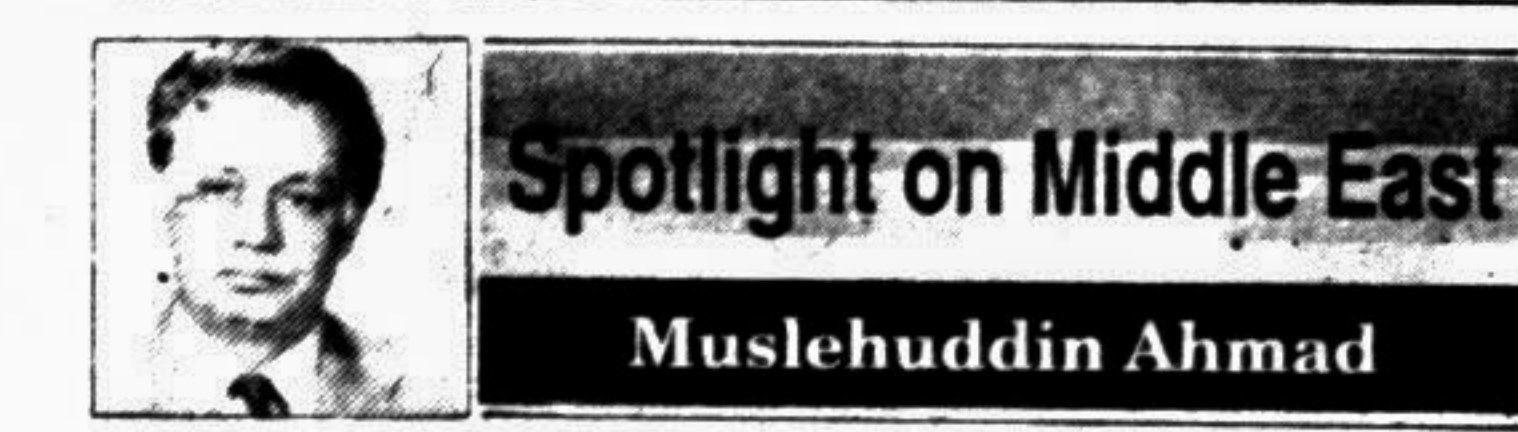
The fact that Yahya Ayash was not the only bomb maker was clear when another suicide bomb exploded exactly one week after on March 3 in Western Jerusalem on the same No 18 bus line killing 19 Israelis and injuring many others.

was about to disrupt the Palestinian election that took place on January 20.

The fact that Yahya Ayash was not the only bomb maker was clear when another suicide bomb exploded exactly one week after on March 3 in Western Jerusalem on the same No 18 bus line killing 19 Israelis and injuring many others.

Israel rejected Hamas peace offer saying it would not deal with a terrorist organisation. For decades PLO itself was considered by Israel as a terrorist organisation but Israel did deal with PLO and signed a peace agreement.

Hamas peace offer had several important implications for both Palestinians and Israelis.



Spotlight on Middle East Muslehuddin Ahmad

(1) The most important one was that this could lead to permanent halt in terrorism in the area against civilians and civilian targets - attacks, if any, against military could be effectively dealt with by Israeli military or even be later negotiated for total halt in Hamas terrorism.

the peace process. The suspension of the peace process would mean playing into Hamas hand.

The war declared by Shimon Peres on Hamas to improve his political image at home may temporarily halt terrorist attacks as main leaders will either be arrested - already three leaders listed by CIA are in custody of Palestinian authority - or go underground but this will further deepen the animosity between Israelis and Palestinians and force more young Palestinians to go for suicide bombings.

Israeli action against Hamas and mobilisation of Israeli forces within West Bank villages proved to the Palestinians that the present peace process brought nothing to them in terms of their self rule let alone freedom.

KZ should Meet SH

IT is the nature of my job to remain secretive. And, not a lot many people really know who I am.

Much as you dislike it, I cannot be credited for innovating abbreviations. They have been here ever since someone wanted to cut short a conversation.

The chaps in the Army do it the best. They condense almost everything. The moment you walk into any cantonment, abbreviations pop up from almost everywhere.

We are always lovingly shortening each other's names. Like Salahuddin is Sallu and Suchorita is Suchi or, more tenderly, Shoe. No matter how small a name is, love can always truncate it further.

Next (under same democracy), need for a disposable NCG in the constitution is not fully understood. I hope the intellectuals and the constitutional experts would examine all the pros and cons, before the amendment, to avoid any misinterpretation and irritations thereof.

To the Editor...

Should an ad hoc system be included in the constitution?

Sir, Much dust has been raised and many graves have been dug by us, only for the idea of a neutral caretaker government (NCG). The combined opposition picked up this cue to push an apple of discord from the House of the Nation to the people in the street.

On these, a section of print media remained silent, another section perhaps fanned the flames of their masters' voice and choice, while others like The Daily Star tried to bring back the sanity, amity and the understanding among the involved paranoiacs.

It seems, NCG is frightening to one party and panacea to the others. In fact, it is an ad hoc arrangement. When a transition from one political system to another, or where a government has failed (for feudal, ethnic or any other political reasons), as an ad hoc arrangement, an interim government is installed for an impartially supervised poll.

Moreover, the hon'ble President was learnt to have assured the journalists that he would call all major political parties before the 15th Feb election and try to exert his influence upon them for an

abridgements, not so much as to make their work efficient as making their profession look impressive to the unsuspecting outsider.

There are, of course, useful acronyms such as RADAR (radio direction and range), LASER (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation), etc. But, somewhere along the line, we got carried away.

It may occasionally be necessary to camouflage the real appellation of a company because it is too, well, rather complicated. For example, the ad firm AAA may really be hiding the true Akkas Ali Associates.

Often the full title may be lost to an abbreviation which has become famous by usage. It might be awfully unfair on the rickshaw-puller to ask him how much he would charge for a ride to the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

Every profession has pre-selected acrostic version. It is good for business. If someone fancies MIT for his proposed school, all he has to do is enlarge it to Madaripur Institute of Technology. IBM could be someone's idea for Idrakpur Bachelors' Mess, and so on.

Light at the end

Sir, Thanks to the politician! There seems to be a spark of light at the end of the tunnel. All parties concerned showing their belated sensitiveness to the 'little people's suffering' deserve some appreciation.

The common people of the country know it well that the Constitution of a democratic country is generally flexible and is meant for welfare of the people, but in no way are the people meant for the Constitution.

As the nation prepares for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the great Liberation War, let us pledge to that "spirit of Liberation War" which had once united us to achieve a nationhood with a lot of gore and glory.

Let the President save us

Sir, Where are we going? What is our future? We don't know. We, the general people, have been facing a crucial and critical political situation. Our social, economic and educational life has become terrible for this 'man-created' problem.

Before concluding may I cite two specific examples: 1) The Ex-President Zail Singh of India refused to sign a controversial file moved by the then Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi.

2) The present Indian Chief Election Commissioner rejected the instruction of the government of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, to conduct election in the state of Jammu and Kashmir apprehending serious rigging and violence in the present situation there.

Our hon'ble President, and the Chief Election Commissioner may kindly do something to salvage the suffering public.

OPINION

Politicians

A Humain

A large number of opinions have appeared in the press commenting on the political confrontation, suggesting possible remedies, by going into the nuts and bolts of the issue - but quickly bypassing the main principle and the motivation of the campaign by the main group of opposition parties, who, suspiciously got together and hatched a plan, and suddenly, during the middle of the term, proposed a procedure, outside the constitution, suspending the next general elections.

The party in power has been made the scapegoat, where the real culprit, namely the society, has been ignored (what is visible is noticed - a tree is visible, not the roots). The removal of the party in power will not solve the problem. The malaise of corruption is deeply entrenched in the present society.

The accusation appears to be naive and opportunistic, and is devoid of statesmanship. The motivation, in the name of democracy and public interest, is suspect. The idea of a caretaker government may be all right, but the manner of implementing it is suspicious.

Now that the President has initiated dialogue with the opposition parties and the ruling party, people are hopeful that something will be done to break the prevailing political impasse. But it is frustrating that whatever is going on, it is for the sake of election and formation of government without visible concern for good governance.

It may be recalled that the present Government was fairly elected but people have been dismayed by its poor governance and failure in ensuring safety and security of life and property.

On the other hand, fairly defeated opposition parties also failed to take the defeat in good spirit and have spent the whole tenure engaging in bids to topple the government. They have totally failed to rise to the demands of the people.

Let's put aside the complex economic and political issues and take the views of laymen. What do we get?

1. Almost regularly somebody is getting gang-raped and the criminals are moving freely in the broad day light threatening the victim and her relations to refrain from any legal courses and the police plays an indifferent role (as reported in the newspapers).

2. Every now and then somebody is getting killed by miscreants (many a time by the well known goons and hoodlums) but reportedly they are not arrested or brought to book. Police inactions in such cases are regularly reported in the press.

3. Dacoities and hijackings are rampant but seldom one is ever caught for such wrong

clear to many how and why the street agitations are better than fighting inside the parliament.

If the constitution is treated in this manner, as is evident, then a precedent is created, which will be repeated later by other parties in the future. The opposition claim it is the view of the majority of the voters. Statistics can be made to lie.

People's Fate Remains at Stake

John Arun Sarkar

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