

Govt Must Say No

Theoretically there is nothing wrong about employees of the autonomous or semi-autonomous organisations aspiring for pension schemes.

Indeed by this basic yardstick, to say nothing of the dire need to curtail the national budget deficit estimated at well over 6 per cent of the GDP.

A straight question to their demand would be why ask it of the government, just run the pension schemes on your own strength to do justice to your autonomous status.

What we are peeved by is the unfolding prospect of a flood-gate opening to pension demands with 35 other autonomous bodies itching perhaps to join the chorus.

Much as the service associations need to behave responsibly in the protection of their long-term interests, it primarily devolves upon the government not to be populist in financial matters.

Quality of Products

A serialised story on consumer goods in a Bangla daily confirmed the doubts in public mind about the quality of many daily essentials.

Clearly, there is a general apathy towards maintenance of authorising records and documents on a continuing basis.

It has so far been able to cancel licences of only 142 companies and taken action against 24 more.

Once a licence-holder, a company becomes liable to legal measures for any violation of rules; but those manufacturers giving a damn to BSTI approval are going merrily about—uncensored.

The harm caused by substandard, spurious and adulterated products can have a disastrous impact on the nation's physical and mental health.

Protecting Haor

A report from Sunamganj carried in this newspaper yesterday concludes that a higher embankment is the right answer to the yearly loss of Boro paddy.

We do not know if solution to the problem in that district is so simple. Construction of stronger and higher embankments compared with those erected every year is not an impossible proposition.

Any haor protection scheme must seek expert opinion for yet another reason: the consideration for environment. The Chalan Beel can be a guide in this regard.

THE perception of terror was once the domain of the unknown, of animals in the jungle, of spirits in the night.

The Communist led regime in Kabul countered Pakistan support for the mujahideen in the early 80s by a spate of bombings in the major urban cities of Pakistan.

The sudden arrest of the three of the 1975 coup leaders is said to be linked to the anti-state conspiracy as Bangladesh prepared to mourn the murder of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Security sources said the conspiracy was unearthed at the nick of time and security has been tightened further for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, cabinet members and her close relatives.

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam, Bir Uttam, confirming reports of the plot to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told this writes on Friday that action against the three coup leaders (called by one party newspaper 'freedom fighters') were based on sensitive intelligence report and the whole affair will be made public once the vigorous investigations now underway, was concluded.

The tail and the ever smiling minister has not changed since the first time I met him in 1965 in Lahore, Pakistan.

The probe reports on the conspiracy should be made public as soon as possible.

government officers once again will likely be implicated in the polls scene not as a servant of the Republic but agent of government (previously of a neutral government).

In such case, ID card is an ideal solution. As per last CEC, ID card could be issued to all if 6th JS poll held during April '96 or later.

Another uncare area is the 'Sukma Karchupi' prone antiquated ballot paper. It is likely to have disadvantage as not being under neutral government.

But the DS has rightly mentioned that this time EC will have disadvantage as not being under neutral government.

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Terrorism, Law and Order

Terrorism has to be tackled differently from the normal means employed to maintain law and order. There is vast difference between terrorists and criminals. A criminal's mission in life is profit, as such destruction is a secondary objective, if at all.

Today the Rangers are still offered by the Army but with the Interior Minister as a strict pointman, the Army has restored its good name somewhat.

level of leadership at the grassroots level by genuinely free Local Bodies election, the government destroyed the much success it has had in the urban battlefield.

AS I SEE IT

Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi

countable, here he was decorated and promoted. His hand-picked ISI Det Comd in Karachi raised, funded, equipped, trained and directed the Aaqiqs, a faction of MQM dissidents from its previous core militant group.

How a government can countenance nurturing and protecting a terrorist group escapes logic and belief. The Dr Jaekyl and Mr Hyde existence of the State's intelligence functionaries who even as they carried 'Mehrabas' on their forehead indulged in orgies of wine and women in so-called safe houses symbolized affairs which continued till their wholesale removal from positions of authority soon after Gen Waheed took over as COAS.

forces of terrorism are not entirely crushed. By the ill-advised policy of not targeting all terrorist elements in Karachi, terrorism remains very much alive and well in the city.

Another round of urban terrorism is likely if a course correction to focus on all terrorists irrespective of political, religious or ethnic colour is not carried out immediately.

Of Conspiracies, Boats, Paddy Sheaf and "Psychological Itches"

On August 15, the national mourning day, Bangladeshis were joined in their grief by eminent world leaders, including President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. The question is would a personality like President Mandela join any ceremony that would bear the mark of "injustice?"

IN FOOL'S PARADISE?

by Nadeem Qadir

prints, our very helpful office boy Samad pointed to one picture saying, 'Sir, this is a nice picture.' Encouraged, I asked should I file it for AFP and he replied, 'Yes, it is nice.'

Off went the picture and eventually released on the AFP network. The day after it was front paged in Dhaka's The Independent newspaper as a match for their Hilsa fish story to my great surprise. 'Nice picture, but it could be taken as a political one,' commented a senior colleague.

'Political,' I wondered why and yes - it is the 'boat' - the Awami League's election symbol. So, does that mean we abandon all the boats across Bangladesh and opt for ferry service, but then one may find 'Koko' (?) story there too.

In the May 13 tornado in Tangail I found majority of the survivors were injured by 'flying rice seeds' which the whirling winds found good use as a weapon against its victims.

I asked a colleague to take pictures of both the injured and the rice fields. The first one could not be avoided, but my

colleague reasoned the second could be looked upon having 'political angle' as the June 12 general elections were not far away. I was dumb founded. He was referring to the paddy sheaf as the election symbol of the Bangladesh Jatiyatobadi Dal (BNP).

Later, when I put the two incidents together I quickly solved a third puzzle. It's an oil painting by my sister called 'The Homecoming.' The painting, which hangs in my office room, shows paddy fields and Muktiyoddhas (freedom fighters) returning home on boats to Jubilant Bangladeshis. Some didn't like it saying it had a pro-Awami League slant.

So they overlooked the paddy fields and only focused themselves on the boats. It is simply an art work by an amateur artist who happens to be a daughter of a martyr.

The question is then what do we do with the 'Plough' (Jatiya Party) and 'Darl Pallal' or scale (Jamaat-e-Islam) Party. Replace them with tractors and spring balance?

The last of the psychological itches is supporting the repeal of the Indemnity Act that con-

stitutionally bars the trial of those involved in the 1975 bloody purge.

Many of my friends abroad were surprised when they learned that our constitution carries such a clause and said it was a shame for Bangladeshis. It is only human and natural

OPINION

Democracy in Action— Bangladeshi Style

Anam A Choudhury

Perhaps God in His heaven smiles and the whole nation turns still to listen the shouting match of our newly elected members of the national assembly.

Their rough delivery and lousy manner of outsmart and outperform each other have badly dashed the hopes and expectations of the electorate. They are fighting with the styles and not with the substance, commented a Western diplomat. Instead of debating national issues seriously, they confront this one of the poorest and most crowded countries of the world, our irate legislators are busy deciding whom to blame for their own failings.

Government policy to fight fire with fire to contain opposition parties may backfire and ultimately push them to streets, the natural political seed-bed to grow violence and derail democracy and development.

Among the House newcomers, there are many political businessmen. American 'pay your wife to stay faithful' policy may work wonder well in our country at this point of time. Our government can introduce a ban on 7th National Assembly, giving all the 330 Honourable Members of Parliament a luxury tax free car and a king size residential plot at Gulshan or Baridhara in accordance with their choices to ensure healthy and congenial atmosphere in our tastefully decorated Assembly House.

However, I like to remind our honourable members that our younger generation may no longer endure a political system that does not respond to the needs of the ill housed, ill-clad and ill-nourished ordinary citizens.

Nation needs an extremely clever long-term economic and political strategy for growth, and for its role in the South East Asia. While the European Union is looking forward to a federal future and Japan and high growth South Asian nations are trying to globalize economic and corporate activities and favour a border free world, we cannot sit back and keep our borders closed to our neighbours.

Enough is enough, millions of Hindus, Muslims and Shekhs were brutally killed during the past fifty years in the name of religion. We must come to our senses and try to cultivate the art of political compromise.

thankless job lest they seek out of the very laws they try to enforce. The major issue sub-writing Gen Babar's success is the high-handedness of the LEAs, particularly the Police. Five years ago they had been into the bunkers in fear, holed up in their Police Stations in sincere apprehension of life and limb while Rabin-Hood type militant gangs with wide public support provided rough justice. After all one man's terrorist is the other man's freedom fighter.

If immediate steps are not taken which are politically mature and economically of substance socially, the city of Karachi will return to another spasm of urban terrorism worse than what we have witnessed till 1985 but the mental alienation of the Mohajir community will never be reversed.

for anyone who believes in justice and stands against anything that is wrong to support the repealing of the act but that support is also considered pro-Awami League?

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The writer is the special correspondent with Agence France-Presse (AFP), Dhaka.

India, like Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura need free access to our sea ports, road and rail network to reduce shipping time and shipping cost.

As economic activities are now moving far beyond national borders thanks to the new found authority of the UN; Bangladesh should gladly provide port and transit facilities to India. In such a case transportation time for Indian goods from factory floors to our sea ports and from eastern states to other parts of India will be reduced from weeks to hours.

Thousands of new jobs will be created in service industries and whole region will be energised economically. This zone will become a low skill, cheap labour manufacturing base of East Asia.

India is deepening at an alarming rate, and such strategy may turn the tide in our favour. Our Government will also get a badly needed new lease of life. These sorts of regional cooperation for development will help overcome geographical isolation and consequently bring windfall dividends for both the countries.

According to Western political analysts, if India is to play a larger role in the world and wants to have more say in the world institutions, it must come to terms with its small neighbours.

If India adopts love-thy-neighbour policy USA, UK and France the champions of democracy will not find it easy to deny India, the largest democracy of the world (with total population of 950 million) its rightful place, a permanent seat in the Security Council.

Enough is enough, millions of Hindus, Muslims and Shekhs were brutally killed during the past fifty years in the name of religion. We must come to our senses and try to cultivate the art of political compromise.

Land locked eastern states of such as India needs Bangladesh.

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