

Palestine on Fire

Reporters from different areas of Palestine have preferred to call what has engulfed the autonomous region as war rather than mere agitation.

The raging battles in Ramalla and Nablus and Bethlehem between Palestinian masses and Israeli soldiers were gaining in intensity all the time yesterday and no let-up can be expected in the coming few days.

The most serious eruption in Palestine since Yasser Arafat got kind of self-rule for his Arabs was occasioned by an archeological project involving tunnels under the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex.

This latest violent outburst in Palestine once again proves what a dangerous powder-keg is this old Semitic internecine hostility and that Netanyahu should have been the last man to have an effective spot in the scene.

In Bosnia the west led by America saved the Muslims in spite of age-old equations that say Christians cannot help Muslims against Christians.

Why this Move?

We consider the decision of the finance ministry to shift the custom's valuation department from Chittagong to Dhaka as ill advised.

All indications are that we are going to witness a significant expansion of our port city in the coming years. With the expected rise in foreign investment, the setting up of a separate EPZ for the Koreans, and possible one for the Japanese, etc.

With all this in view how could the finance ministry decide to shift the head of the custom's valuation department to Dhaka escapes our logic.

As it is, too many things in Bangladesh are Dhaka centred. In fact there has been a long standing grievance of the people of other urban centres, not totally unfounded, that too many things are based in Dhaka, and that this trend should be reversed.

We find the above decision to contradict the recent policy speech of the Prime Minister made from Chittagong, where she pledged to make our second city a place of far greater importance than it has ever been before.

Self-killing, Lawfully

World's first living being has died in Australia's Northern Territory of his own volition and lawfully and with a doctor helping him to die.

The objections have not quite subsided in Australia itself. An MP is going to move Australian Parliament to throw this "territory" law out. And Cardinal Clancy, chief of the Catholic church in Australia has called the date of the death a "shameful day for Australia."

But religious dissent and resistance have hardly ever been able to thwart what man has been bent upon doing — from siring out-of-wedlock progeny to birth control.

Reflections on Rural Living Standards

One of the important indicators of secondary living standard is prestige items. These items include radio/cassette-player, television, watch/clock, bicycle/motorbike, ornaments etc. Access to prestige items by the rural households increased over the years.

etc. The CHRDR conducted survey data show that access to prestige items by the sample rural households increased over the years. For example, only 12 per cent of the rural households in high irrigated areas had a radio/cassette player in 1988.

Access to Prestige Items

One of the important indicators of secondary living standard is prestige items. These items include radio/cassette-player, television, watch/clock, bicycle/motorbike, ornaments

household member owned a piece of winter clothing. The CHRDR survey data tend to show that in 1995, one in every ten adult population did not own a minimum of two pieces of cloth in rural areas.

Beneath the Surface

by Abdul Bayes



irrigated villages, the deprivation is relatively less than that in low irrigated areas. Available data further show that one-tenth of female adults do not have access to the minimum basic requirement compared to about seven per cent of the male adults.

per cent of the female adults do not have any access to winter clothing compared to about 28 per cent of the male adults. In the high irrigated areas, the proportion is 12 and 18 per cent respectively.

Access to Tubewell Water/Sanitary Latrines

During the time of the survey in 1995, 94 per cent of the sample households reported that they used tubewell water for drinking purposes. This compares with a share of about 86 per cent in 1988.

Now, the issue that attracts attention is whether Narasimha Rao has become a spent force after relinquishing the party presidency. Certainly not, as he is likely to remain the leader of its parliamentary party.

The Congress and Politics of India

by Zaglul A Chowdhury

The question that comes to the fore in the wake of the resignation of the Congress president and choosing a new president in place of Rao is the extent this change or, for that matter, the chief of the Congress which is either the ruling party nor the opposition, will affect the course of Indian politics in the current phase.

for the president of a big organisation which ruled world's largest democracy for most part of its history as an independent nation barring occasional short spells that also proved not much successful when viewed from the point of stability of India.

Now the question that comes to the fore in the wake of the resignation of the Congress president and choosing a new president in place of Rao is the extent this change or, for that matter, the chief of the Congress which is either the ruling party nor the opposition, will affect the course of Indian politics in the current phase.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the charismatic leader of the Indian political scene was the prime minister of the BJP government but no major political parties except some regional ones like in the Punjab and Haryana states extended support which was not enough to keep the government in power at the Centre.

same initiative for all other areas of DCC till he is in the chair. The CAB (Consumer Association of Bangladesh) has also made a similar appeal to the authorities (DS-21 Sept).

A R Choudhury, Uttara, Dhaka

Agri-education

Sir, In order to bring about the desired change and development into our agricultural education system, all the agriculture colleges of the country should be given both academic and administrative autonomy.

Meanwhile, it may be mentioned here that there is a pro-

from under the feet of the ruling government.

The Congress had no other option but support a government since the Indian electorate is not prepared for another election after the collapse of the BJP government and the people would not have liked the Congress back in power in that situation with the support of other non-BJP parties since the last elections were a mandate against the Congress.

It was evident when Inderji Gupta was made home minister signalling the share of power at the centre for the first time by the communists. Congress was lukewarm to this proposition but Prime Minister Deve Gowda finally stood to his decision even though the Congress was not favourably disposed to this position going to its critic, a veteran CPI leader and parliamentarian Inderjit Gupta.

But the Congress remains a powerful broker in ruling the country and this is how the party that led Indian independence movement and remained at the centre-stage of national politics but currently on the wane due to many reasons still appears a factor in shaping the destiny of Indian nation.

vision for establishing a 'university for agriculture and technology' in Dinajpur in the Kudrod-e-Khuda Commission Report. The teachers, students, officers and employees of Maji Mohammad Danesh Agriculture College, Dinajpur, have been demanding converting of the College into a university.

On the other hand, the teachers, students, officers and employees of Bangladesh Agricultural Institute, Dhaka have been pursuing the authority to upgrade nearly a century-old institute, founded by the great leader Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Haq into a university.

In fact, what we feel is that the industry system of education can bring about desired changes in our agri-education sector and improve the quality of agriculture education in this country.

It is, therefore, sincerely expected that the government will take appropriate steps considering the greater interest of the nation.

A Zahidul Haque, Associate Professor, Hajj, Mohammad Danesh Agriculture College, Dinajpur.

saying the support will continue. However, it is not known for how long. The Congress holds the key on the fate of the government because it's withdrawal of support will automatically lead to the collapse of the government which is too short of a majority in the Lok Sabha by its constituent coalition partners.

Now, the issue that attracts attention is whether Narasimha Rao has become a spent force after relinquishing the party presidency. Certainly not, as he is likely to remain the leader of its parliamentary party. Rao won from two parliamentary seats in the last elections — one from his Andhra Pradesh and another from Orissa, Congress stronghold. Additionally, he also got his son elected from a constituency in the home state and all these helped him retain position as both party chief and

of households reporting to have used tubewell water stood at about 97 per cent in high irrigated villages compared to 85 per cent in low irrigated villages.

However, only one-fourth of rural households seem to have access to sanitary latrines in 1995. This compares with only 13 per cent in 1988. The skewed distribution of the access is evidenced by the fact that three-fourths of the large land owners reported to use sanitary latrines in 1995 compared to only 12 per cent of the landless households.

Housing The survey findings further show that about 15 per cent of the rural households live in 'thupri' (a match-box type house made of leaves). About one-fourth of the landless group live in such thupris. One-fifth of the rural households live in durable houses with one plus rooms.

School Attendance

The survey data show that 70 per cent of the population belonging to age group 6-10 reported to have attended primary schools in 1995. This compares with a share of about 51 per cent in 1988.

The attendance performance with respect to secondary schools does not seem to be that much encouraging. In 1988, 36 per cent of the age group 11-16 used to go to school, whereas in 1995, the share is only 39 per cent.

Health Status

During the survey, 87 per cent of the household members were found to be healthy while one-tenth reported to be often sick. In 1988, the same proportion reported healthy but the share of often sick was 12 per cent.

Conclusion

The preliminary results of the CHRDR household level survey data thus tend to point out that over the years, there have been modest improvements in the availability of some non-income opportunities to the rural households.

OPINION

Corruption versus Good Governance

Shaikh Md Wahid-Uz-Zaman

Broadly speaking, any immoral act can be termed as corruption. In Oxford dictionary dishonest or wicked behaviour has been termed as corruption.

Question may arise as to why corruption has become an all-pervasive affair in our society. It is complained that hardly anything can be done in a government office without spending money. The government employees and officials receive their salaries from the public exchequer built up with the tax payers' money.

These cadres of civil servants should be properly paid off by the government within the obvious budgetary limitations of the government. But before fixing up the package of emoluments one ought to be realistic and take into consideration the market prices of various essential commodities.

with a small family of four members only. Again, the top civil servants, the secretaries to the government get a salary of Taka ten thousand (supposedly, as per government pay structure) per month. I don't dare criticise their standard of living and how could they live with this money when a chauffeur of any foreign agency operating in our country draws more than that amount a month?

There is no doubt about the fact that in order to ensure quality in the administration of the country we need to attract the best talents and brilliant youths towards the civil service of the country. If we fail to do so our attempts to institutionalise democracy would be totally frustrated.

Only lip service would not do anything to eradicate corruption from our society unless our political leadership, the minis-

ters, the law makers come up and demonstrate honesty and austerity in their deeds. In the past, we have seen that one of the heads of the government in our country immediately after assuming power went to office riding a bicycle once in a week. He also declared a crusade against corruption in the beginning but eventually his regime ended up as one of the most corrupt ones in the history of our country.

We have achieved independence for about 25 years. Now the members of the public demand a welfare-oriented good governance. Moving from door to door for getting things done in a public office has to be stopped. Civil servants should behave like public servants as they are paid off salaries from the tax payers' money.