

## UN Day

## Will UN Ever Get a Real Shake-up to Stand Upright?

by AMM Shahabuddin

*One western columnist rightly said that the UN "is the world's most complex bureaucracy, often sinking under the weight of inertia that results from a heavy mixture of nepotism, incompetence, administrative spats and clashing ambitions."*

THAT dream organization in the 35-story glasshouse at Manhattan on the bank of the East River in New York, which literally rose like the mythical Phoenix from the smouldering ashes of the Second World War, replacing its 'cousin' the League of Nations, today hangs on the threshold of the 21st Century, physically almost immobile and financially a broke. As the old adage says that "the empty vessel will never stand upright", but an "empty vessel sounds much". It applies well to the United Nations (UN) as it stands today. Its founding fathers must be turning in their graves to see this pitiable condition of the much-adorned organization which was established by them in 1945, after prolonged discussions at the San Francisco conference, mainly for the purpose of saving the world from the "scourge of war", and maintain peace, harmony and security among the nations of the world. It would be ridiculous to expect too much from the world body when it is economically gasping for breath and politically limping on borrowed crutches. Sheer rhetoric by the delegates from the member countries at the annual sessions of the General Assembly won't be able to rejuvenate it. Something tangible, rather than mere rituals, is necessary.

## Lost Identity

"The people of the world", is whose name the UN charter was drafted, observe religiously every year the UN Day on 24 October, when the world body formally came into existence, after the signing and the ratification of the charter by majority of the member countries, then 51 only, as against today's 185 members. We renew every year our vows to fulfill the noble mission for which the organization stands. But they seem to be hollow rituals when we face reality. That's why the UN today has lost its identity and is desperately searching for it to reestablish itself in its full glory that its founding fathers expected from it for the benefit of "the peoples of the world".

## Reforms Package:

## Highlights

At this critical juncture when the UN is facing financial bankruptcy and surviving on a hand-to-mouth existence, new hopes have been raised by the new UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan who had submitted a 90-page 'reforms package' for scrutiny at the current 52nd annual Session of the General Assembly, for overhauling the world body by improving its management and efficiencies, cutting costs and emphasising the UN's core mission. The highlights of the package are: (a) creation of a Development Fund of at least 200 million US

dollars, available for the biennium beginning 2002 for development activities with savings from the annual budget by reducing administrative and overhead costs in the UN Secretariat; (b) establishment of a cabinet style structure to prevent some 27 senior officials reporting direct to Annan. Instead four 'managers' would take charge of specific areas of peace and security, humanitarian affairs, development and socio-economic issues. Some four or five more 'managers' are to be added later. Finally, with an eye on the UN's chronic financial crisis, Annan has also proposed a voluntary revolving Credit Fund of up to one billion US dollars, enabling member states to obtain interest for pledging funds to plug gaps in financing. In short, Annan has proposed a big shake-up, ever done in the history of the UN, by ensuring to overhaul its 'entrenched' and 'bloated' bureaucracy, cut down budget to bring down over-head costs and merge some UN agency programmes to avoid over-lapping and wastage of money and thus put the savings into development activities in the poor developing countries.

## The Axe must Fall at Right Place

Undoubtedly, the Annan proposals are sound and are expected to have far-reaching effects provided the 'axe' falls at right places and at right times, instead of cosmetic surgery here and there. These proposals have got an added significance and an inherent strength because for the first time such reforms have received the strongest possible support from a US President. President Clinton in his recent forthright statement at the current General Assembly session had assured that America would pay its dues to UN of about 1.5 billion dollars, about half of total dues of 2.6 billion dollars, owed some 100 other member States. At the same time Clinton lent his full backing to Kofi Annan's reforms package and has urged other defaulting members to pay up their dues.

It is always the Republican-dominated US Senate that creates hurdles against payment of US dues. They bluntly question the wisdom of spending US taxpayers money on some UN programmes that look unproductive and wastage. Already unkind remarks have been voiced by some of the Republicans against the Annan plan as "remarkably modest", "representing the status quo". They are in favour of more drastic measures to put the UN house in order by closely shaving the all-powerful UN bureaucracy who

rules the roost. Senator Grams, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on International Operations, had opined that Annan was "stymied by bureaucratic interests trying to protect their turf". It would, therefore, depend a lot on Clinton how far he can persuade the hostile Republicans to follow his line of action both in the interests of America as well as the UN.

## UN Bureaucracy: A 'By-word'

But the question arises why this US distrust of UN bureaucracy? These are valid reasons for such a long-standing distrust expressed by the Republican senator against the UN bureaucracy for mishandling and wrong use of funds. That's why the Republican had consistently and persistently opposed payment by USA of its dues to the UN. Actually, the UN bureaucracy has become a proverbial by-word in the corridors of the UN. It's they who run the 'show' without any 'show-cause' notice from any quarters. In the past the Secretary-Generals, however powerful they might have been, became pawns in their hands, except perhaps Kurt Waldheim, who is considered as the 'least popular' Secretary General for his drastic reforms measures. But he lacked the most needed support from powerful quarters, as Kofi Annan has been lucky to enjoy from the US President Clinton. So Annan would be under pressure from the US congress to make drastic cut in the strength of the UN bureaucrats to put them in their proper size. It would be a hard and challenging job on the part of Annan. But the most relieving feature is that he enjoys the 'blessings' of Clinton.

The UN bureaucrats, on the other hand, would fight to their last ditch to oppose the reforms and to sabotage them from inside to protect their vested interests. But the hornet's nest must be broken. Incidentally, one western columnist rightly said that the UN "is the world's most complex bureaucracy, often sinking under the weight of inertia that results from a heavy mixture of nepotism, incompetence, administrative spats and clashing ambitions." They often "sit through endless administrative meetings", but not to discuss great problems of peace and war, but bureaucratic bickering about hiring of some body's wife's nephew. What a

mighty picture of the ruling snobs in their den!

And that outspoken Canadian, General MacKenzie, who was the first Chief of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Bosnia and secured the Sarajevo airport from the Serbs for safe landing of incoming humanitarian shipments, blasted the UN bureaucracy, including then Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, for lack of vision and proper planning before thrusting UN troops to the field "to be killed". And jokingly, he said to pressmen in Canada, "Don't get into trouble after 5 pm New York time, or on Saturday and Sunday, because there is no one to answer the phone". And finally, the Canadian General hit the bull's eye, as to why the USA refuses to pay its UN dues, saying because it "knew well how the money is being wasted by the civilian bureaucracy in New York". Hence the Annan reforms plan has a positive role to play to remove the misgivings about the free-for-all UN bureaucracy. Then only nor-

malcy will return with regard to both US regular contributions and pay-up of the dues of about one and a half billion dollars.

## 1985 World Bank Reforms Disaster

The General Assembly members should therefore be quick to support the US-backed Annan reforms proposal to put the UN financing and work programmes back on track, by dealing properly with the wild 'white elephants' that are playing havoc in the UN. But one thing must be remembered by the Secretary-General that the 'axe' should not create panic among lower level officers and ten thousand staff members of the UN Secretariat and in the fields. Whenever the question of cutting the staff comes, it is they who are made "scape goats". The disaster of the so-called 1985 shake-up in the World Bank is still fresh in the minds of all. That shouldn't be repeated in the UN in the name of 'reforms'. In the case of the World Bank, every employee

was asked to resign to get new appointments which were given from top down. The result was the bungling of the highest order. Not surprisingly, new recruits were from some bureaucrats' "underlings" (often friends). To quote London Economist, "Cronism thrived, staff morale plummeted, and the bank remained as inefficient as ever." So repetition of this black precedent should be avoided while giving a new shape to UN administration.

## Political Reforms: A Must

Mr Kofi Annan, however, has left out from his 'reforms package' the urgently needed political reforms for the smooth functioning of the world body in the political sector. It's a happy sign that President Clinton, in his recent speech at the current 52nd session of the UN General Assembly, deliberated the issue in right earnest. And as a first step, he suggested the enlargement of the present 15-member Security Council, the most powerful evocative body of the UN, of which five are

veto-wielding Permanent Members — USA, UK, France, Russia and China. Asia, being the largest in population, has the poorest representation. Hence number of both the non-Permanent and Permanent members should be raised to give proportionate representation to all regions. It goes without saying that Asia should get at least two more Permanent Membership besides the present member China. And of these two, Asia's economic giant, Japan, has almost been assured of a 'slot' in the proposed expansion of the council. And as for the second seat, there may be several aspirants, including most prominently, India, Indonesia and Malaysia.

But the question would remain whether the new Permanent Members would be given 'veto' powers to make them of equal status with the present five other Members. If not, then all the Permanent Members, both old and new, should be stripped of their 'veto' power so that all of them can speak on the same 'wave-length'.

## Military Staff Committee to be Revitalised

But political reforms shouldn't stop with the expan-

sion of the Security Council. The next most vital issue would be to reactivate the 'almost dead' Military Staff Committee which was originally set up by the founding fathers under Article 46 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter to take full leadership and responsibilities in peace-keeping and peace-making operations. The tragedy is that during the last 50 years of its existence, the Military Committee has never been given the opportunity to play the vital role for which it was created. If Clinton takes bold initiative to revitalise this moribund committee, it would take off much of the present load from US shoulders and it won't have to field its forces, along with other NATO forces, under American leadership, where a volatile situation arises. Bosnia is a case in point.

Let President Clinton prove his mettle again to put the UN in its full glory, regaining its lost identity, ready to take all responsibilities to cope with combustible situation, like Bosnia. Let the multi-national NATO forces, led by USA, be placed under the UN Military Staff Committee, alongwith UN logistics to work under UN flag, wherever necessary. Thus Clinton can revive the world body from the sad history of paralysis. The "go-decision" lies with him.

## BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

## Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Prosecution Witnesses

Continued from yesterday

Cross-examination of the 26th prosecution witness in Bangabandhu murder case, Naik Gunner (ret'd) Jamrul Islam, began when the court resumed this (Wednesday) morning.

Following are excerpts from his examination by advocate TM Akbar, defence counsel for accused Lt Col (LPR) Muhiuddin:

Q: In how many places sounds occur when a cannon shell is exploded?  
A: I don't know as I never exploded cannon shell.  
Q: When did you get the charge of ammunition store?  
A: In February, 1975.  
Q: What was your duty time there?

A: From 6 am to 6 pm with a two-hour recess.  
Q: Did you go on retirement while discharging that duty?

A: No, a havildar replaced me five to six months before I went on retirement.  
Q: Was there any roll call during your service there?

A: Yes, a havildar called roll every evening.  
Examination by advocate

Sharfuddin Mukul, defence counsel for accused former state minister Taheruddin Thakur:

Q: Where is the Army Headquarters situated?  
A: In 1975, it was inside Dhaka Cantonment.  
Q: 2 Field Artillery was under which brigade?

A: Under the 46 Brigade.  
Q: Was there any other regiment under that brigade?

A: Yes, but I can't mention their names.  
Q: Was Cold Shafat Jamil Commander of 46 Brigade at that time?

A: Yes.  
Q: Besides uniformed personnel, were there any intelligence people in plainclothes in Dhaka Cantonment?

A: Yes, DGF and FI personnel discharged their duties in plainclothes.  
Q: When were you promoted to the rank of Naik?

A: In 1974.  
Twenty-seventh Prosecution Witness

Following are excerpts from cross-examination of PW-27 Havildar (ret'd) Harunur Rahsid by advocate Gazi Zillur Rahman, state defence counsel for absconding accused Lt Col (dismissed) Khandakar Abdul Rashid:

Q: Did you know CO Rashid saheb?  
A: Yes, I knew him.  
Q: Did all the four batteries fall in together?

A: Yes.  
Q: Did all go to airport from the fall-in?

A: I can't say about other batteries. My battery went.  
Q: Were there other batteries personnel at the airport when you left the place?

A: Yes.  
Q: By how many vehicles you moved from the airport?

A: By only one car.  
Q: Did you know why Rakkhi Bahini will attack the army?

A: No.  
Examination by adv Abdur Razzaq Khan, defence counsel for accused Lt Col Sultan Shahriyar Rahsid Khan:

Q: You gave a statement to CID 31/10/96.  
A: Yes.  
Q: You were carrying an SLR with how many ammunition?

A: 10 rounds.  
Q: Did you tell that IO that you didn't have to use bullet?

A: I can't recall.  
Q: Did you see many army personnel at Balurghat?

A: Yes, I saw.  
Q: Did you also see Lancer Bahini?

A: Yes.  
Q: They were in different uniforms.  
A: The Lancer were in black, uniform while others in khaki.  
Q: Can you say how many Lancer members were there?

A: 100 to 150.  
Q: How long had you been at Balurghat?

A: Less than half an hour.  
Q: The army personnel were in how many rows there?

A: There were not in rows.  
Q: Besides Lancer, how many army personnel were there?

A: 60 to 70 Artillery people.  
Q: Were you not intercepted while entering the Ganabhaban?

A: None intercepted.  
Q: Did you see other soldiers at Ganabhaban?

A: No, I didn't notice.  
Q: Did you notice the soldiers' barracks there?

A: No, I didn't.  
Q: Where did you listen to radio at Ganabhaban?

A: Under a tree on the ground.  
Q: Did you hear from radio that army had captured power led by Khandakar Mushtaque?

A: I can't recall.  
Q: You told the IO that you heard from radio that army led by Khandakar Mushtaque Ahmed captured power.

A: I can't recall.  
Q: You didn't tell anybody earlier... did you tell the court today for the first time that soldiers were bluffed on August 15, 1975?

A: I can't remember.  
Q: Do you know there was martial law in the country from August 15, 1975 to April 9, 1979?

A: No, I don't know.  
Q: Can you say if "Senabhaban" is inside the Dhaka Cantonment?

A: I don't know.  
Q: The then Army Chief General Shafiqullah resided in the cantonment.

A: Yes.  
Q: The Headquarters is near the signal gate.  
A: It is on the south of the CMH.

Q: The signal gate is on the north of the CMH.  
A: Yes.  
Q: The EME workshop is north of that.

A: Yes.  
Q: And then Balurghat, if you go further north.  
A: I can't recall.

Q: You gave a false witness hiding the truth.  
A: This is not true.  
Examination by adv Khan

Saifur Rahman, defence counsel for principal accused Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooqur Rahman:

Q: You didn't tell the court everything of what you told the CID. It means you are an untruthful man. Isn't it?

A: I can't say.  
Q: Would you have raised protest if you realised that you had been bluffed?

A: I was an ordinary sepooy.  
Q: I questioned you considering you a man, not a soldier.  
A: I was an ordinary sepooy.

(Judge: Usually what do you do if you realise that you have been bluffed?)  
A: Usually, I raise protest. But an ordinary sepooy, while in service in army, can't raise protest against his officer.

Q: You know punishment is awarded if anyone in army is found guilty.  
A: Yes.

Q: During training classes, you have been taught what is allowed in army and what is not. You also passed the training.

A: I took general training of a sepooy. I didn't learn law. I took the training meant for an ordinary sepooy.

Q: Did you violate rules in your long service life?  
A: My senior officers can say.

Q: Even brigadier and colonel ranking officers were hanged in 1981-82 for crimes in army.  
A: This is not known to me.

Q: Many sepoy of Dhaka Cantonment were hanged in martial law tribunals. Do you know it?

A: I don't know.  
Q: While joining the service, you didn't care many big incidents in the cantonments.

A: I was a soldier. I don't know.  
Q: Do you know that a sepooy revolution took place in Dhaka Cantonment in November, 1975?

A: Yes, I know it.  
Q: While joining the service, you took oath that you will protect the government. Correct?

A: Yes.  
Q: Mention the names of the artillery personnel who were posted at Kalabagan.

A: Siraj, Jalal and me.  
Q: Did you see Rakkhi Bahini?

A: I never saw Rakkhi Bahini.  
Q: It means you have no idea about them.  
A: I knew there is a force

named Rakkhi Bahini.  
Q: Did you know whether it is good or bad?

A: I had no idea about that.  
Q: Where is the transit camp, where were you brought after being repatriated from Pakistan? Inside the cantonment or outside?

A: I don't know where. We were taken there after disembarkation from flight. Later we were given leave with Tk 200.  
Q: When did you come to CID office with police guards?

A: I didn't go there with police guards.  
Q: Did local police give you any paper for your identity?

A: Yes, I went along with the paper.  
Q: Did you show the paper after coming to CID office?

A: Yes.  
Q: Did they keep the paper or return it to you?

A: They kept it.  
Q: Thana police told you to reply to questions of CID, otherwise you will be an accused. It depends on your reply whether you will be a witness or an accused.

A: They didn't say like this.  
Q: Did you not consider Rakkhi Bahini as rival?

A: No, I didn't.  
Q: Hearing firing, can you identify the type of arms?

A: No.  
Q: Can you identify the arms if you hear firing of small arms?

A: No, I can't say.  
Q: Do you know the incidents of the case for which you came to give witness?

A: I came to give witness as I know the incidents.  
(As Khan Saifur said mind it, prosecution side asked if he is threatening the witness. Saifur with a laughter replied that "I have to see dictionary to find out the meaning of threat).  
Q: You were involved in that incident.

A: I came to know.  
Q: Major Farooqur Rahman was in charge of the transit camp where you came after being repatriated from Pakistan.  
A: I don't know.

Adv Abdur Razzaq Khan, also the defence lawyer of accused Hon Capt (ret'd) Abdul Wahab Joardar, declined to cross-examine on behalf of him.

— UNB

Further texts of cross examination will be published as and when received.

## Tom and Jerry



IAN FLEMING'S

## James Bond



By Hanno-Barbera



DRAWN BY JOHN MCLISKY

## Metropolitan

## Enlargement of UNSC Dhaka to uphold smaller states' interest

Bangladesh will continue to play a positive and constructive role in the search for a broad agreement on the issue of enlargement of the UN Security Council upholding the concerns of the smaller and more vulnerable states, reports BSS.

This was stated by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad at a function in the city yesterday which marked the first-ever observance of the UN Day in Bangladesh co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN systems in Bangladesh.

Earlier, the UN Resident Coordinator, David E. Lockwood welcomed the guests and said Bangladesh as an active player in the UN system was playing a commendable role in various forums under the world's highest body.

"Bangladesh's active participation and effective role in UN peace keeping force, G-77, UN General Assembly and in other fields is highly appreciable," he said and assured of an increased consolidation of the existing relations between Bangladesh and the UN system in future.

## Health service facing setback due to lack of quality medicine

Speakers at a seminar in the city yesterday observed that health and medicine services are facing a setback due to the lack of quality control of locally manufactured medicines, reports UNB.

"Many drugs available in the market are not useful as they are produced without maintaining standard and quality," said National Professor Dr Nurul Islam while delivering the keynote speech at the seminar.

Defining safety, efficacy and usefulness as the three major criteria of quality medicine, he said integrated efforts of various disciplines are needed for manufacturing quality medicine.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof Dr M. Amanullah inaugurated the seminar on "Importance of Biochemistry in National Drug and Health Policy," organised by Bangladesh Biochemical Society at BCSIR auditorium.

Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury and VC of Islamic University Prof M. Qaisuddin were present as special guests while president of the society and VC of Agricultural University Prof Muhammad Hossain presided.

Prof Nurul Islam stressed the need for involving disciplines like Biochemistry, Microbiology, Pharmacy, Chemistry, Chemical Engineering and Pharmacology in the drug industry from the levels of manufacturing to marketing.

He said the biochemists can play an important role in very preliminary stage in medicine preparation through isolation, purification, clinical trial of raw materials upto the finished product.

"The quality of drug can be achieved if all the related disciplines work together in drug factory," Dr Islam said.

He said that an idea has been popularised that expensive drug means quality one which is not absolutely true.

Dr Islam suggested that Biochemistry along with other subjects have to be recognised in medicine industry and the revision of 13(1) section of 1982 Drug Control Ordinance is necessary. In the existing ordinance, only pharmacists have been given top priority.

## 'Advancement of women priority commitment of govt'

Bangladesh permanent representative to the United Nations Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury has said advancement of women is a priority commitment of the government, reports UNB.

He was giving statement on "Advancement of Women and Implementation of the Outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women" at the ongoing 52nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday.

Chowdhury apprised the committee of the measures being taken in Bangladesh for implementation of the outcome of the fourth World Conference on Women which held in Beijing in 1995 and for the advancement and empowerment of women in the country, according to a message received in the city yesterday.

Underscoring the need for the full implementation of the outcome of the Beijing Conference, he emphasised the importance of the availability of resources, particularly for the least developed countries.

## Seminar on Environment of Nepal held

Khulna University Environmental Science Discipline organised a seminar on "Environment of Nepal," recently in the Seminar Hall of the respective discipline, says a press release.

## Participatory planning workshop begins tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The Integrated Community and Industrial Development Initiative (INCIDI) begins a 'participatory planning workshop' in the city tomorrow, to examine the development initiative made by the Garo communities based in Durgapur of Mymensingh.

The workshop, scheduled to be attended by the Durgapur based Garo leadership and the INCIDI officials, would also discuss about the future course of actions for the socio-economic and political emancipation of the Garo communities, an INCIDI press release said.



Unruly students seen damaging vehicles yesterday near the Curzon Hall area of the Dhaka University as a sequel to police action on them while demonstrating in front of the Jatiya Press Club seeking an amendment to the 1982 Drug Policy.

— Star photo