Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

## The Unclaimed Responsibility

For once he could have tried a new tack. But he did not. To be precise he could not. Some people, a misgone minority has indulged in such an irreversibly passionate game of self destruction that even if he wants to, he just cannot step out of the familiar track of uttering simple but unheeded words of wisdom and correction. No man of conscience can; no person with an iota of patriotism can. And President Shahabuddin Ahmed too could not while speaking at the International Scout Moot at Sylhet on Saturday.

We are thankful to him because however repetitive he may sound but it is the voice of the nation's conscience that this fine champion of good sense and harmony harps all the time on with indefatigable energy.

The pity of it is every time Mr. Ahmed takes a course down the trodden line of correction we are ruefully reminded how little the response has so far been from those for whom the bells are tolled with such monotonous regularity.

It is indeed layman's knowledge today that students are getting increasingly involved in activities that do not behove them, thanks to a section of politicians who prefer self-aggrandisement to the interest of the country. The president could not have been more to the point when he observed that students today work for crime dons unhesitatingly. We all know why they do it. They do it because it comes within the package of today's student politics. With power and money replacing idealism it is only natural that the so-called godfathere are calling the shots today.

Happily this is a minority syndrome in our politics. Unchecked, this can however overwhelm us as Mr. Ahmed while urging the scouts to use their idealism and training as a defence, pointed out that dark possibility.

But the unfailing pointedness with which Mr. Ahmed repeatedly highlights the problem whenever an occasion presents itself can miff the small but powerful clique responsible for corrupting the youths. We urge the political parties to own their responsibilities in the over all deterioration of the profile of our students. While hoping that the sense of discomfort of the misguided and criticised minority will never grow so powerful to hold sway over our conscience we exhort them not to make a waste of the President's penchant for truth and wisdom.

#### Dengue at the Door?

The —aedes species among mosquitoes responsible for spreading encephalitis, yellow fever and dengue fever in humans, according to a recent report published in a leading vernacular daily has been sighted in parts of Dhaka. This brings city dwellers in the line of a possible health hazard. The threat possibly looms larger for a city like Dhaka which is caught in a serious problem with its increasing burden of filth.

Aedes is a rare variety among the urban distribution of mosquitoes. It looks like more or less like the culex, the type that carries the germ of filaria; it holds its body parallel with the surface with the proboscis bent down. The wings are uniformly coloured. But it is different from the culex in its silver thorax with marks and the spiracular bristle in the posterior. It is little unmanageable from the point of view of the city authorities like the corporation or the municipality because apart from floodwater, rain pools, marshes, aedes has a great fondness for household nooks and corners for spawning. All sorts of container are on top of its list of safe havens for laying eggs. From flower pots to car tire casings it can choose any ignored domestic corner for its biological continuity much to the peril of man. So mere gearing up the mosquito eradication drive by the City Corporation will not help us stay away from the harm's way. An all round civic awareness is necessary. City dwellers have to really step on the gas as far as their household cleanliness is concerned. This micro consciousness has to be extended beyond our common notional domain that mosquitoes only breed in watery and marshy or wet areas. The aedes larvae are capable of surviving long dry spells. As it is evident dry home does not mean a safe home. It has to be a clean home.

There is no reason to panic but there is no way it can be trifled with. Dhaka was once in the grip of dengue — in 1964. Not long ago, dengue spread in epidemic form in Delhi where around seven hundred people died of it.

## Shake-hand Diplomacy

Whatever may be the high and low in their bilateral atmospherics or domestic political temperatures, whenever Indian Prime Minister IK Gujral and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif meet they invariably display warmth and cordiality between them. So long as they click inter-personally and keep meeting whenever an opportunity presents itself, hopes can be nurtured that something good will emerge from such persistent diplomacy at their high level.

Although their Edinburgh contact, second in a month since their New York one, on the sidelines of the UNGA session, has not marked any step forward in coming to grips with the substantive bilateral issues, we share the view that 'every meeting they hold is important'; for it gets them that much closer to a better understanding of each other's perspectives. Even the generalisations they are keeping to may have an important bearing on their future relationship. At Edinburgh they have agreed to keep the momentum going in their efforts to bring about a definitive improvement in their rela-

tions. On the fringes, an important decision has been taken to facilitate direct contact between senior citizens of the two countries.

Between India and Pakistan technicalities often assume the importance of substantive issues. The Edinburgh meet failed to break any new ground because both sides could not decide whether Kashmir problem would go to a separate working committee as Pakistan wants or be dealt with as part of the general agenda which India favours. The whole world is waiting for India and Pakistan to constitute the eight working committees they stand committed to be forming soon, so that real work can begin to devise a mechanism for durable peace.

### INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE

# Janata Dal Experiment of Coalition Government

With the breakdown of the dominant party system, India, now obviously entered a transition period of fluid, fragmented political formation and unstable governments. The current government of NF/LF is only a phase in that process ... More than one development since the Lok Shava elections illustrate the fragility of the alliance. A mortal blow has now been afflicted to the Front with yet another split in Janata Dal...

body politics, particularly the linguistic re-organisation of the states in 1956 and later the redrawing of some states borders bringing territorial boundaries into close alignment with their socio-cultural coordinates thus sharpening political awareness of the educated regional elite. While the country's minority, hitherto considered merely vote bank, started realising their political clout. The unprecedented rise of the 'dalits', the backward castes and other deprived also significantly contributed towards the change. If the changes were somewhat hazy in the late-'60s' its contours were clearly identifiable after another 20 years. The Janata interregnum of the late-'70s was more of a backlash to Ms Indira Gandhi's emergency notwithstanding Janata Party's stupendous success in breaking Congress

TN the past, the Congress

Acharacter to the peculiar cir-

cumstances under which it was

formed during the colonial pe-

riod. Due to the presence of the

imperial power the primary

aim of Indian nationalists was,

at that time, to attain first the

independence and the Congress

from its inception in 1885 de-

veloped into a broad national

movement which enabled the

party to be synonymous with

Indian state after indepen-

dence. No other political party

in India, born before or after its

independence, could claim such

legacy. As a result, the Congress

was able to occupy the nation's

entire political space for almost

a century and monopolised

democracy of the world - in

spite of its resillience, institu-

tions and democratic traditions

- there could not be a inter-

party transfer of power, an es-

sential ingredient of democracy

• for long 30 years after indepen-

dence. The opposition parties,

such as Jan Sangh, the

Swatantra, the Socialist and

the Marxists could seldom de-

velop into all-India parties

with bases in all the major re-

gions — what to talk of reaching

even the margin of power. Nev-

ertheless, the party system in

India started undergoing a pro-

cess of change right from the

time of its independence

marking a steady movement

away from a single Centre to-

wards a multiple poles in the

states. The emerging region-

based multiparty system which

was for the first time evident

during 1967 election was

largely an outcome of that pro-

Congress monolith was perhaps

a logical development in a fed-

eral society of highly pluralistic

composition and was also part

of the wider process of

democratisation since inde-

pendence. But the changes wit-

nessed then and in a larger de-

gree today did not come about

easily. It followed a series of

metamorphoses in the country's

N a spectacular stance of her

spot, Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina in one such event on

October 11, at the AL party

office was visibly shocked and

moved beyond measure when

she heard the woes of two

brothers Al Amin and Tahajjud

Hossain of Bagherpara in the

district of Jessore. Reports have

it that Al Amin recently

returned from Malaysia with

stante camings. The musclemen

in the area demanded a

substantial big amount as toll

from them. On their refusal to

give in, the musclemen attacked

their house at dead of night on

Sept. 23 last and gouged out the

eyes of two brothers. The

question that looms large in

public mind is, as the Prime

money could take any one to

such a low ... . "Is it possible that

a human being can be so cruel",

tics has simmered in the coun-

try for quite some time. But in

recent times hatred, animosity,

rivalry and greed for money

and power have touched new

heights. That in turn have

sparked more killings and

atrocities. Report carried by the

media in the recent past indi-

cated that some unidentified

terrorists who came by a mi-

crobus killed one Shafiqur

Rahman (35), an activist of

Awami League near his Mal-

ibagh Chowdhury Para resi-

dence in the city on September

11 last. Shafiqur Rahman, it

was learnt, owned several busi-

ness establishments in Dhaka

- Pagla, Fatullah and Mun-

shikhola. The OC's of Siddhir-

ganj, Fatullah and Narayan-

ganj thanas alleged, after he

was killed, that Shafiqur Rah-

man was a terrorist and had

made a fortune through looting,

Killing and hijacking. People

wonder, as the police now tes-

known terrorist could not be

nabbed before allowing him to

shot dead by unidentified as-

sailants, Narayanganj Police

further alleged that Shafiq was

involved in a rowdy incident in

the Prime Textile Mills at

Narayangani some ten days

back. With all these crime ac-

tivities of a dreaded terrorist

now coming to light, people

After Shafiq alias Meser was

meet such a tragic end!

tify without reservation, how a

The sequel to factional poli-

the Prime Minister retorted.

Minister echoed, if greed for

meet the people programme

to mitigate the sufferings of

the tormented people on the

The resultant crack in

However, in the largest

dominance over the polity.

party owed its pan-Indian

In the wake of the final phase of the breakdown of Congress system in the '80s, something more significant happened further transforming the socio-political landscape of the country. There was rapid increase in politicisation and democratic consciousness in the states, the entry of underprivileged groups in the political arena in still more large number and also an increase in the size of the electorate. The regional disparities and political mobilisation on the basis of territorial identities also generated fresh demands for further decentralisation. By the late '80s, the virtual abandon-

monopoly of ruling India.

ment of the Nehruvian consensus on both secularism and socialism led to the end of oneparty dominance and fragmentation of the party system resulting in a period of uncertainty and minority government. All these changes are reflected in the results of 1989. 1991 and 1996 Lokshava and state assembly elections.

In this emerging milieu the BJP, a splinter group of Janata Party which broke up in mid-'80s adopted rightwing Hindu nationalism as its plank after a

The party tried to present itself as committed to the secular nationalism in contrast to

assembly elections.

BJPs Hindutva stunt and committed more to social actions than Congress by lending support to Mandal commission recommendations. In spite of JDs success in 1989 election when it formed National Front coalition government at the Centre the party failed to create a strong national base. After a dismal performance Janata Dal underwent a massive split in

1992-93, the party further spilt with Mulayam Singh walking out to form his Samajwadi Party. Soon the trend spilled into other statics when in 1994 both in Bihar and Orrisa, JD's splinter groups brought Samata Party into being.

The National Front that

rules India today together with Left Front was not in existence even a year before 1996 election. The Front went into oblivion after the collapse of its government in 1990. Encouraged by Congress reverses in state assembly elections only in September 1995 the JD with the support of Telegu Desam Party and Left Front in West Bengal took initiative to revive the Front. It aimed at creating a 'third force' representing the non-Congress secular forces by including various regional groupings such as AIADMK, AGP, JMM, SP, BSP and others. It was, however, an impossibility to formulate a common minimum programme for so divergent groupings with their own political programmes and ideology. JD's ideological paper titled Towards New Politics. was rejected for differing views of the potential constituents on issues like foreign investment, the role of private sector and MNCs. Another document Towards New Politics — Agenda for a Third Force which was prepared by a group of intellectuals also could not satisfy all partners of the proposed front. Finally the JD, SP and left parties decided merely to adopt a joint declaration on a 'common secular democratic alternative

vided array of parties that could not forge a cohesive body right from the beginning, its greatest weakness being the lack of a leader of a national stature who could unite its disparate members. The Front's only hope was the possibility of a hung-parliament which it could exploit to form a coalition with smaller groups or with the help of the Congress to keep the BJP out of power, which in fact is what actually happened. In fact, all three contenders for power at the Centre; the Congress, BJP and the Front tried the same strategy in 1996 election and for variety of reasons, the power was finally wrested by the Front only with 111 seats in 545 strong parliament, thanks to the outside support of the Congress.
With the breakdown of the

The NF/LF had been a di-

programme'.

dominant party system, India, now obviously entered a transition period of fluid, fragmented political formation and unstable governments. The current government of NF/LF is only a phase in that process which is likely to persist for a protracted period. More than one development since the Lok Shava elections illustrate the fragility of the alliance. A mortal blow has now been afflicted to the Front with yet another split in JD, the core constituent of the Front. With Mulayam Singh since out of JD and now with Laloo Yadav forming his own RSD there is a void for the 'third force' in entire Hindi belt of the North where its backward castes built-up its power base. Nevertheless, the Front would in all likelihood continue to rule so long the Congress is not prepared, by capturing its lost ground, to withdraw its supports to the Front. By capturing power at the Centre, the Front has only entered its bumpy tracts of a long journey and many unpredictable dynamics of Indian multiparty politics during its transitory phase would determine how successfully the front can tread this difficult terrain.

Pragmatists now feel that

government should think about

making over the youth training

# PERSPECTIVES

by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

brief ideological experimentation. In spite of its phenomenal success within a short period of time, it however failed to emerge as an alternative to Congress. Now came in the scene the Janata Dal another constituent of Janata party and reorganised itself under the leadership of VP Singh in October '88 to occupy the vacated space of dwindling Congress party. The party's root lay in the BLD, a backward caste/rich peasant party in the North. The 80s witnessed a massive mobilisation of BC (backward caste) and OBC (other backward castes) all over northern India which constituted the Janata

Dal and its victory in 1989 state

1990 both at the Centre and in the states leaving the party with an ineffectual leadership and independent regional units.

Even with divergent views on major issues the factions of the party however retained the common slogan of social justice, implementation of Mandal report for backward castes and an opposition to BJPs Hindutva ideology. But the Janata slogans remained inconsequential because of innerparty squabbles leading to several more splits. After Chandra Sekhar's defection from the partly in 1990 the Janata Dal again split at the end of 1991 mainly in Uttar Pradesh when Ajit Singh was expelled from the party. In

# Terrorism: How Long Should the Society Suffer?

by Md Asadullah Khan

The present state of things that has rocked the society is anarchy. And anarchy, as all people know, is an excess of freedom, and absence of rules, ethics, morality. Those indulging and creating such state of affairs are psychic cases need to be sent to asylums, or they will one day turn the whole society into an 'asylum'.

only wonder how Shafiq could

remain at large. In another incident reported by the media on October 14 last, Musa Howladar, a grocery shop owner in Maddhya Badda was willed allegedly by some "mastans" of the locality in the early hours of September 11, just on some flimsy grounds. Reports indicated that mastans had given him a torn ten taka currency note after buying cigarettes which he refused to accept. This infuriated the mastans and they at first beat him but hardly satisfied with the punishment inflicted, they came back after half an hour and shot him at point blank range that ultimately caused his death before any medical help could be given. This leads us to ponder how small is the price of life! Shafiq and Musa killings are among the latest in Dhaka city of at least scores of people, either rogue or innocent, killed in the country in

the past weeks. Coming at a time when the Prime Minister has issued directives that terrorists, irrespective of their party affiliations, should be hauled up in an effort to create a peaceful atmosphere in the country, defuse political tensions and create a sound investment climate. these killings in the metropolis raised new fears that these terrorists were starting to operate. Shafique might well have been targeted for the clandestine activities he operated for a long period, which the police even failed to contain, but how come an innocent shopkeeper had to pay such a high price (his life) on such a flimsy pretext? Should we have to believe that the law enforcement agency has reasons of its own to fear vengeance from some unspecified quarters or some godfather who are more powerful and are

out to protect these terrorists? With incidents of two such killing fresh in the memory of city dwellers, the killing of another businessman Mohammad Hossain (31) in the Sutrapur area with subsequent robbing of Tk. 3 lakh came as a chilling

reminder of the vulnerability of people's safety and security on the road. Even if so called godfathers continue to operate these terrorist attacks from a safe haven they must harbour it in their mind, that assassingtions may have the effect of controlling opponents for the time being but it is a rare event indeed when they are solved. People only wonder how these spate of killings, extortion and terrorist activities could go on unabated even when the country's newspapers, the moral voice of the suffering community, are full-throated in their vilification of the activities of a handful of dirty goons. How could the whole society become captive in the hands of a limited number of monstrously dreaded gangsters? All these grotesque incidents send shock waves through the spine of an mprovised nation that has helplessly witnessed so much of these killing, robbing, atrocity and inhumanity in recent

These criminals are damaged", so says a social psychologist. "They are in pain inside acting out their pain, in most cases, on innocent victims. In the case of Maddhya Badda shop owner Musa killing, they picked a victim that was most likely to shock and outrage. That speaks of how deep their anger and despair, defiance of law and state power is. What distinguishes these hardened criminals is not their anger but

their lack of any moral faculty. The present state of things that have rocked the community and the society is a sort of anarchy. Anarchy, as all people know, is an excess of freedom. Anarchy is the absence of rules. of ethical limits, of any moral sense. These criminals, that we are bound to call them so, are psychic cases. They have lost, perhaps never developed, that psychic appendage we call con-

In the core of all such killings — rape, extortionism nay all such dastardly acts, there is one call that cry out for solution long since. We must all

science.

assume our responsibilities for being indifferent to the circumstances that breed crimes of this sort. We must look to the communities that know nothang but frustration. We had some of our past Presidents. and stalwarts of the past regimes indulge in corruptions. and immoral acts and then resign in the face of public protest. We had bureaucrats amassing wealth and siphoning that out of the country without accountability and with impunity. Many of our youngsters see that and act it out. Precisely speaking entire communities learn to find blame everywhere but in themselves. However, the terrorists must

be taught as to what incalculable harm they have inflicted on the society and they must be made to pay the price. If not taught they will continue to grow up in moral vacuum and moral vacuums produce moral

There is a distinct difficult situation for the administration to operate properly. Despite that fact that AL came to power through people's verdict, the governance of the country has fallen through because of opposition outcry right from the day it took the reins of administration. Ostensibly, the government has failed to seed changes that could win it something no previous regime could reap in over the last two decades

— the support of the people. The country is still in an appalling physical shape — both politically and economically. Most important, in the absence of any understanding on major. national issues with the main stream, opposition party, the threat of renewed strife, factionalism hangs over and with it the possibility of the resurgence of defeated forces of the liberation war who have started coming out of their hiberna-

Shockingly, beyond all national planning, economic reform measures and reconstruction activities were the sounds of a society falling apart. The mounting violence, killing, terrorism and extortion bids are no idle perception. Some 87 people about one third of them women were murdered throughout the country during the month of September. And in Dhaka City alone, as per report received from different Human Rights Organisations and police, 20 people were murdered during the period, which is almost double in comparison to that of the previous month. The incidence of mugging, robbery and extortion in the country, including in the capital city increased during the month of September. Some 87 women, about half of them minor girls were raped and eight kidnapping cases were recorded during this period.

and employment oriented job training to some NGOs who can run a private outreach for these high risk youths. The country now needs a lot of such programmes to give these youngsters an alternative to shooting. dope and killing themselves. In retrospect, one only sees that the cynical leaderships in the past have only heightened factional strifes, tensions, fundamentalist fervour and deepened corruption culture. "The state is seen as a vehicle for personal gain," says an octogenarian political leader. Seemingly, corruption is no stranger to this country. For years 'officials' and 'leaders' have stuffed their pockets with public funds and flown off to safe sanctuary with impunity. But even by Bangladeshi standards the socalled pilferage of public money by one ex-chief executive of the state is a shocker. He is stated to have stashed \$14 million in overseas banks at one time as disclosed in an affidavit in Pennsylvania by Saleh Nagvi, one top executive of the now-defunct BCCI Bank. All these revelations underscore the fact that there was never an understanding that the state must survive and is bigger than all of us. A handful of leaders of the past regimes created kleptocracies that siphoned resources from the crumbling infrastructures and instilled an ethos of corruption from high level bureaucrats to the lowest functionaries. If that is the show of patriotism we still have for the country, then if has really a bleak future and as a nation we feel extremely concerned.

#### OPINION

### A Post-mortem of Our Cricket

The three-nation cricket tournament in Kenya is just over. Bangladesh played four matches and lost all and except one the results were unbelievably disappointing. The glimmer of hope that grew in the minds of millions of cricket lovers of the country on 13th April in "Qilat Kilab" Kulalumpur, were razed to the ground with shock defeats in the hands of Zimbabwe and Kenya. Probably none expected Bangladesh to win against Zimbabwe. But humiliating defeats against Kenya in both the matches were far beyond the imagination.

How Bangladesh, which only 6 months ago beat Kenya and became ICC champion in a hard-fought battle, failed to score even 200 runs is a question that is haunting us. In the second encounter, the Kenyans restricted Bangladesh within 100 runs thus lost by 8 wickets. What a humiliating defeat indeed! This is not acceptable to even a person who has the slightest idea about Bangladesh cricket. Surprisingly, Bangladesh batsmen showed their batting power by scoring 257 runs against Zimbabwe, the better side in their first match but crumbled in the second match by scoring paltry 92 runs suffering the biggest margin defeat in 18 limited over matches.

Grave suspicion now lurks in the minds of many if Bangladesh cricket would meet similar fate as football in the international arena. The hard optimists, however, appear to hold that this is a temporary upset which usually happens in cricket since there are even 8

Md Eradat Ullah more records of defeat by wider margin. But why should we be complacent with such view? The government have given all possible facilities for improvement of cricket, to the

Despite, our players have performed like school boys, disgracing the entire nation in the eye of other cricket-playing countries. A single tournament has completely tarnished the image of our cricket that was built up over the years. Gordon Greenidge, the able mentor, has at last recommended for a thorough reshuffle of the team before it is too late. In our opinion there is no other alternative but to listen to the suggestions of

the coach. Bangladesh played in Asia Cup tournament in Sri Lanka a few months ago and lost all the matches. Nevertheless, none raised any question for obvious reasons. But here what plausible explanations would Akram Khan or Gazi Arshraf Lipu offer for childlike play of the team in general? Is it strang phoebia that worked to help them throwing away their wickets? Were Kenya's Martin Suzi or Asif Karim's spell were so deadly as to cause batting collapse in the Bangladesh camp? Certainly not. Is it the climatic condition or the wicket that our player found unsuitable for play? Nothing of the sort. It is nothing but lack of commitment and application of mind that caused the disaster. Most unfortunate and surprising is nobody showed any sign of

holding the fort or play the role

of sheet anchor in the face of quick fall. A player whatever his skill or reputation cannot deliver goods unless he is committed to the task he is assigned to perform. This is the fundamental prerequisite of everything. Bangladesh has definitely a good batting side, but due to lack of commitment and application of mind, careless play, they miserably failed to put up their best. The shortcomings in bowling and fielding are chronic and leave lots of room for improvement. It is not that by batting well a match can always be won. Rather a battery of good bowlers aided by good fielding are more counted as

match-wining factor. Yet, everything is not lost. I wish like others, I could only say that overcast gloom in our cricket is temporary and very soon our national team would be able to perform in keeping with the aspirations of millions. This may be possible, as Greenidge said, by drastic pruning of the present team as evidently some have reached their ceiling and by inducting fresh blood from among talented young cricketers. All that is needed is careful planning by following examples set by our neighbours, particularly Pakistan and Sri Lanka. But above all, the team must be imbibed with the spirit of commitment towards the game and nation as a whole. Then and then only Bangladesh cricket will succeed in tiding over the present

predicament. The writer is Former Commissioner of Taxes and currently works as Tax Adviser at National Bank Ltd.

# Seema Chowdhury

Sir, I am writing to you to express my concern over the custodial rape and death in custody of Seema Chowdhury, in Chittagong Jail on 7 February 1997. I understand that the four policemen who were accused of her rape were acquitted, although the judge at the time reportedly deplored the fact that government lawyers had presented weak evidence and witnesses, effectively allowing the police to get away with this

I understand that the Government of Bangladesh has issued statements to the effect that custodial rape and sexual abuse will not be tolerated, and perpetrators of such abuses brought to justice. It appears, from Seema's case, as though these promises have not been implemented.

As a concerned citizen, I ask you to publicise this case and promote free discussion within the press to explore the issues surrounding this death. It appears that the police, the court, the jail administration and the

hospital authorities have failed to protect Seema's human rights. It is time to bring to justice not only those who raped her, but those whose alleged negligence caused her death. Sue Lord 7 Faraday Rise, Richmond

Nelson, New Zealand

Sir, I am a member of the UK section of the worldwide nonaligned human rights organisation Amnesty International, and I should like, if I may, to tell your readers about Amnesty's deep concern over the rape and death in custody of an 18-year-old girl in Bangladesh, and the subsequent acquittal in court of the four policemen charged with her rape.

On October 9th 1996, Miss Seema Chowdhury, it is alleged, was raped by four policemen in Rauzan police station. There was an investigation, and these policemen were arrested and charged. Meanwhile, however, Seema was transferred to Chittagong Jail to so-called 'safe custody', but on February 7th,

1997, she died in suspicious circumstances. When the policemen were finally brought to trial on July 14th, 1997, they were acquitted. The judge himself took the government lawyers to task for their poor presentation of the case for the prosecution.

Amnesty International feels that the matter cannot be left there: Seema's attackers must be brought to justice and so too must those whose negligence caused her death. Furthermore, the Government of Bangladesh must be persuaded to investigate the failures which led up to both her rape and her death. While welcoming the Bangladesh government's public assurances that human rights violations will not be tolerated, Amnesty would urge them to take immediate practical measures to implement such

assurances. I am sure your

readers will want to support

Mrs Mary Lee 11, Meltonwood Grove Sprotbrough, Doncaster DNS 7 PT, England

this recommendation.