

A Breakthrough

The Awami League government under Sheikh Hasina must be credited for having shown a lot of courage, commitment and willingness to take risks in solving the several decades old problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area.

After a preliminary study of the contents we find the agreement to be a good one: for although the accord gives almost sweeping powers to the Regional Council it does keep levers and provisions for the government to act in defence of national integrity if and when threatened.

The government evidently has been more than generous in accommodating the demands of the tribals as is evidence by a high degree of autonomy granted to the Regional Council.

The accord of such a vital national importance can not go undiscussed in the Jatiya Sangsad. We request President Justice Shahabuddin to whom it has been submitted that he either has it placed before the next session of Parliament or concerns a special session of Jatiya Sangsad for the purpose.

Good Augury for Pakistan?

With President Farooq Leghari stepping down, politics in Pakistan seems to have wriggled out of the impasse it entered as a result of an expansive struggle for power involving both the executive and judiciary.

An act of deceleration as it is, the move however does not address the inner contradictions of Pakistan politics. Although fears of an army take-over are not completely ruled out, this institution that has time and again, directly or indirectly, controlled the course of its politics in the fifty years of this country's history, has so far maintained a dignified distance.

Calls for a Change

There was obvious substance in one organisation's slogan on the occasion of the sixth International Day for the Disabled yesterday: disabled have to be honoured as human being.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed summed it up precisely in his message on the day when he said that we have to treat the disabled as our family members.

The social welfare directorate's performance in rehabilitating the disabled in the society has been rather appalling. We urge the government to give serious consideration to the directional wisdom and recommendations that are going to emerge from the second South Asian Conference of Community-based Rehabilitation Network for the Disabled.

INFANCY or childhood for a man is a continuing and fast period of learning. In the process, his success in learning traits promptly gladdens the heart of the watchful.

While treading on its rough surface, one is sure to experience some jolts and jerks. As long as it does not jolt the traveller and lead him to abandon his project, the destination will eventually be reached, despite some delay.

The journey on the road to democracy for Bangladesh is, indeed, an uneven and appears to be somewhat time-consuming one. The rough surface is interspersed with deep and dangerous potholes which sometimes become extremely difficult to negotiate.

far and wanted a face-saving formula. Many things were suggested: reconstituting the central cabinet; the DMK supporting the government from outside; dropping the DMK ministers for 10 days and Finance Minister P Chidambaram submitting the resignation on the basis of Jain's adverse remarks.

In the last session, it was the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This time it is Congress. There is no issue involved, no principle at stake, no basic question for debate. It is just power politics.

The BJP to oust the government. The communists' reasoning for his resignation was to avoid bitterness with Congress as it would be needed in certain states to defeat the BJP at the polls.

The BJP to oust the government. The communists' reasoning for his resignation was to avoid bitterness with Congress as it would be needed in certain states to defeat the BJP at the polls.

To the Editor...

For peaceful UP elections

Sir, With the UP elections, there is an imminent threat to public peace and law and order, especially at places where there are goons already in existence and at places where they have been imported.

As such, it could be expected that untoward incidents could be minimised — but what needs to be ensured is the neutrality of administration. It has been observed in the past that the law enforcing agencies have been kept at bay by vested quarters and brought in when harm is already done.

Newspaper reports indicate that there might be undesirable incidents at places, thereby making the nation incur loss of lives and property. All we would, therefore, request the authorities to remain firm, strong and neutral and arrest anyone who violates the law irrespective of his party affiliation.

F Ahmed, 5, Bank Bhaban, Minto Road, Dhaka.

Silent taxation

Sir, Prior to coming to power, the present ruling party promised to the nation for accountability and transparency of their administration. They also promised for sovereignty of the Parliament.

Against this backdrop, I think there is no necessity to place the details of the national budget in the Parliament for long discussion and spend huge amount of money from national exchequer. Without any new tax proposals, it may be

Violence in Politics Jolt, Jerk and Jab for a Democracy

The journey on the road to democracy for Bangladesh is, indeed, an uneven and appears to be somewhat time-consuming one. The rough surface is interspersed with deep and dangerous potholes which sometimes become extremely difficult to negotiate.

broken or damaged? It appears BNP supporters later came in and a fierce battle ensued. The BNP leader herself remained in a state of seizure for three hours during which all attempts to contact senior officials of law enforcing agencies went in vain.

Finally, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner rescued the seized and harassed lady. The police on duty when Begum Zia came to the hospital stood as bystanders and took no action to control the unruly hooligans.

ultimo, to the same city. Chittagong. This time the purpose of her visit was purely non-political. She went to visit the places devastated recently by earthquake and provide solace and succour to the victims.



Currents and Crosscurrents

by M M Rezaul Karim

Finally, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner rescued the seized and harassed lady. The police on duty when Begum Zia came to the hospital stood as bystanders and took no action to control the unruly hooligans.

with the blood of their martyred leader Rajiv Gandhi." But why did he not say the same thing in the same language at the same pitch earlier?

Bad in Intent, Bad in Politics

Congress, wanting power desperately, did not think over the repercussions of singling out the DMK for the LTTE mess. Indeed, the Jain report's sweeping remark against the entire Tamil community has become an emotive issue, which may even revive the demand of Dravidian Nadu, not raised for nearly 30 years.

opened to Congress. It could take the first step as it did when it withdrew support from the Gujral government.

There was also pressure by Congress leaders and the communists on Prime Minister Gujral to resign. He did not agree because he wanted Congress to defeat him in the house with the help of the BJP so that it would look that it has aligned with the BJP to oust the government.

In the game of one-upmanship, certain situations develop in such a way that the party which sets the ball rolling to gain the advantage comes a cropper. This is what has hap-

pened to Congress. It could take the first step as it did when it withdrew support from the Gujral government.

pened to Congress. It could take the first step as it did when it withdrew support from the Gujral government.

Now everything is coming out, bit by bit. Most of it brings no credit to Congress. What is being defended by the party in the name of national interest is

Dravidian Nadu, not raised for nearly 30 years.

The World Tamil Organisation has already said in a letter to Congress president Sitaram Kesri: "As a member of the Tamil community spread through several countries of the world, we wish to state something which most Tamils feel but are too timid to state. That is, that in India Tamils are treated as step-children or as second class citizens.

Congress, wanting power desperately, did not think over the repercussions of singling out the DMK for the LTTE mess. Indeed, the Jain report's sweeping remark against the entire Tamil community has become an emotive issue, which may even revive the demand of

Dravidian Nadu, not raised for nearly 30 years.

The World Tamil Organisation has already said in a letter to Congress president Sitaram Kesri: "As a member of the Tamil community spread through several countries of the world, we wish to state something which most Tamils feel but are too timid to state. That is, that in India Tamils are treated as step-children or as second class citizens.

Dravidian Nadu, not raised for nearly 30 years.

The World Tamil Organisation has already said in a letter to Congress president Sitaram Kesri: "As a member of the Tamil community spread through several countries of the world, we wish to state something which most Tamils feel but are too timid to state. That is, that in India Tamils are treated as step-children or as second class citizens.

Congress, wanting power desperately, did not think over the repercussions of singling out the DMK for the LTTE mess. Indeed, the Jain report's sweeping remark against the entire Tamil community has become an emotive issue, which may even revive the demand of

Dravidian Nadu, not raised for nearly 30 years.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

interference in the affairs of sovereign neighbouring country. How can the accusation against Pakistan for training and arming terrorists in Kashmir hold water when India was doing the same thing? Should it be declared a terrorist State?

Congress, wanting power desperately, did not think over the repercussions of singling out the DMK for the LTTE mess. Indeed, the Jain report's sweeping remark against the entire Tamil community has become an emotive issue, which may even revive the demand of

involvement in the economic and industrial activities of our country. Unfortunately, the bleak scenario in politics gives rise genuine fears in the minds of the common people of grave situations with grave consequences.

Abul Ashraf Noor, Uttara, Dhaka

Promotion to senior posts

Sir, The Prime Minister has asked the Establishment Ministry to promote officers to senior posts in the Secretariat against the existing vacancies. It is learnt that the dealing officers in the Establishment Ministry themselves are candidates for promotion and it is alleged that they are twisting and manipulating seniority lists to their own advantage.

Anwara Begum, Mirpur, Dhaka

A new name for Patenga Airport?

Sir, We are upset by the rumour that the name of Patenga Airport of Chittagong may be changed as some quarters are suggesting.

OPINION

Do I Love My Country?

Dr Sabrina Rashid

"I love my country". How many of us can say this without any hesitation or reservation? Most of us will, but is it true in the real sense — not just verbal? When we look back at our deeds — past and present. Our very deeds will tell us how much we love our country and want its well-being above our petty interests.

Did one ever cut down a tree that did not belong to him or her, did someone ever smuggle something into the country, ever get into the drugs business and crippled our youths, ever damage any government property — public transport, office etc., ever make money wrongfully from someone's post or position at the cost of the public or the government, ever misuse government property — cars or goods, ever take time or days off from job without proper leave, ever fail to discharge duties properly for which someone draws his/her salary, ever use one's post or position to manipulate something for personal advantage regardless of the loss it caused the government and the country?

If the answer to all these and many more such questions is an unreserved "no", then only one can say that he truly loves his country. Nowadays, our main problem is we love ourselves far more than our country. It may be true in other countries too, but the gap for them is marginal, between these two loves. Over here, it is an extreme. So much so that many are absolutely damn-care about the country's well-being. Their main and sole interest in whatever they do or pursue is with the view of personal gains only.

This is not a right or healthy feeling — after all we have but one country only, and if we don't take care of it, look after it, cherish it, we all will suffer one day, no bones about it. Most

Nur Jahan, East Nasrabad, Chittagong

the two major opposing political parties and the BNP bitterly termed it as an attempt on the life of their leader.

Outwardly, these incidents give the semblance of a normal scenario of conflicts between political parties as the people of this country are used to witnessing it. But a close examination of the incidents will expose an inherent similarity that does not augur well for democracy. Violence in political rallies are commonplace in our country and in the region. But forcibly disrupting a political rally and attacking the entourage of the head of a major political party endangering her life are infrequent. What is more dangerous is to put the responsibility of causing the trouble fully and squarely on the other party has been rare and creates a dangerous precedent for the nation. It represents not only an attempt to absolve itself of the guilt but prepares ground to institute cases against the grievous party. Some criminal cases are being filed, as one understands, against BNP supporters, while concerned Awami activists are roam around happily scot-free. Moreover, an attempt on the life of a political leader, however insignificant he or she

may, pose a serious danger to people's march on the path to democracy. How could one lend credence to the claim that the BNP will instigate violence to disrupt its own political meeting and cause troubles where the life of their leader herself would be in peril?

Earlier, the government banned holding of meetings on the street. It is an admirable task which the BNP government strived at but failed, owing to non-cooperation of the Awami League. Even the BNP's attempt to assemble people for holding a street procession has been thwarted by the police, obviously at the behest of ruling politicians. What is more fraught with danger is the recent practice resorted to by the ruling party to prevent opposition processions by fielding their own processions. This method is more likely to breed violence than not with the possible consequence of unleashing a multiplier effect. This method, therefore, needs to be shunned. If hartal, seizure, street rallies and various economically counter-productive methods are to be proscribed, is it not fair for all major parties to come to an agreement before the next general election? This would then be applicable equitably to all concerned after the election and none would be guilty of seeking undue advantage, as the Awami League is accused of now as the ruling party.

sinated in 1991) is something unusual to expect. Congress is in for a surprise.

The party may have put even its present strength of 146 in the Lok Sabha in jeopardy. It does not look like winning as many seats in the next election. Maybe, unwittingly, the party has played into the hands of such Congress leaders who wanted to see Keer down. An internal battle for supremacy within Congress may cost the nation dearly.

Whether the BJP is able to exploit the ground prepared by Congress is too early to say. But there is every likelihood that the BJP will emerge as the single largest party at the polls. The party is happy to witness the members of Congress and the United Front shouting at one another. And it wants the report to create more bad blood between the two so that their differences deepen still further before the next polls.

With its untimely move, Congress has effaced from the BJP face a substantial part of dirt that had smeared it because of immoral and manipulative politics the party played in UP and other states. If events are to follow the Gresham's law, the theory that bad money will drive out good, Congress has dealt a severe blow to liberal forces in the country. The party may drive out good.

Congress ultimately withdrew support from UF government late last month as the UF refused to comply with the congress demand for dropping DMK from the coalition.