

Nawaz Says It

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a major development of relations with Bangladesh has made a categorical announcement that 'Biharis' stranded in Bangladesh would now be repatriated to Pakistan. Quite sagaciously he has done so in Islamabad on his return from the Three-Nation Business Summit in Dhaka. The Pakistan Prime Minister has gratifyingly left no shadow of doubt about his visualising a wholesale repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis — of course, under a time-frame.

We welcome this refreshing change in the outlook of relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh vanguard by Nawaz Sharif. To all intents and purposes this looks like a sea change from what had been a palpably demurring attitude of Benazir Bhutto's government to the vestigial remnants of our problems with Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif's excellent gesture comes through to us basically as a reiteration of the policy he had adopted on the question of repatriation during his earlier tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan. Yet there is more to this demonstrative consistency of this man; for he has had a greater electoral mandate this time around than before and has emerged squarely vindicated lately through a test of strength with the former President and Chief Justice. So that he is eminently in a position to fulfil his commitments on an outstanding issue.

The Pakistan Prime Minister's acceptance of the obligation is predicated upon this operative sentence: "as soon as sufficient money is collected arrangements would be made to bring the stranded Pakistanis back". For all we know, the Rabita Alam Al Islami which is based in Saudi Arabia, had once played an active role in raising fund for the purpose and is also currently gearing up efforts to do the same, according to Pak Premier himself. In fact, we urge the whole international community, the UNHCR and the OIC in particular, to come forward in aid of Pakistan for the sake of undertaking this human settlement process of enormous contemporary relevance.

Nawaz Sharif has befriended Bangladesh by committing to resolve the long-standing question and has certainly got his image move up the human scale in eye of the rest of the world.

Troubled Chittagong

Chittagong seems to be under the spell of an evil. Nothing is going right there. Country's premier port has been in the limbo for a long time. In addition to that, law and order situation has deteriorated drastically in the port city. Violence related death has shot up there at an alarming rate. Thirty-eight lives, reveals a Star report, have been lost over a period of ten weeks. An assortment of unfortunate occasions have led to this irreparable loss. If our indiscretions and unfeeling politics took the stage as the ambassador of death first then the failure of the law enforcing agency to tackle social evils like extortion has certainly been the most abetting factor of late.

The business community in Chittagong seems to be the most vulnerable group. An organised gang is sponging businessmen with impunity. They are holding people to ransom and, when refused, are killing their 'targets' wantonly. This has been going for a long time.

We condemn the failure of the local administration to tide over this spate of violence that has gripped the people of Chittagong so terribly. Let alone the peace, security in the local context, what message are we giving to the world in view of the relentless government bleating about Bangladesh being some sort of a haven when it comes to investment? Is this the sanctuary we are trying to 'sell' to the world?

Law and order is essential for development. All our slogans for development will end in mere sound and fury if our premier port city remains caught in a cycle of violence round the year.

Problem in Chittagong has become too chronic and expansive to be a source of headache for the local authorities only. We feel time has come for the Ministry of Home to play a more assertive and cooperative role in this matter. A solo initiative on the part of the Home Minister would be a most welcome move to start with. From the reports published in the press so far it appears deterioration of law and order in Chittagong owes more to inefficiency of the local police force than sudden emboldening of the criminals. An administrative jolt in the law enforcing agency can bring a wholesome change.

Good Little BOI Initiative

Farooq Sobhan's appointment as the executive chairman seems to have added a spring in BOI's (Board of Investment) stride. Under the leadership of the former foreign Secretary, the government agency primarily assigned to lure foreign investors has shown a welcome understanding of a few home truths. First impression often proves to be the determining factor in the future of any relationship, business or otherwise. And no place is better than country's international airport to do justice to this notion. And by setting up a counter at the Zia International Airport BOI has just done that. These little responses to common sense psychology can contribute significantly towards improving Bangladesh's business profile to the world.

We would like to interpret this as a kind of warming up in actual terms of the relevant agency to the government's agenda for establishing the country as an investment destination. Manned by BOI officials this counter, reportedly will work round the clock to provide services to the foreign investors. We hope the counter delivers the job in giving a real boost to our investment aspiration. The decision of distributing fliers containing business info in the Bangladesh-bound flights of different airlines is also a step in the right direction.

There may not be any guarantee to other variables like political stability to make sure that foreign investors remain focused on Bangladesh unfailingly but certainly a great deal can be done by way of giving a push here and nudge there. We look forward to more BOI activism.

A Shattered Dream of India's Rise to Power

Although India has a tremendous capacity for national regeneration and renewal, the current political decline in India together with enormous domestic problems and hostility from outside for her stands on nuclear issues make the realisation of the dream of the nation's founding fathers extremely difficult.

nationalists aided by the imperialist powers in a bitter struggle to wrest power in China. In contrast, India, by then the largest democracy of the world, was already a darling of the west and the country was hailed as a new and major voice in the world. Notwithstanding the partition of the subcontinent, even a truncated India was revered in the international arena and her political ascendancy was meteoric while Pakistan was despised as a theoretic state of gross political aberration. Even when People's Republic of China liberated herself in 1949 it was India which practically held China by hand and brought her into the Afro-Asian community. Henceforth India scaled new heights as leader of non-aligned movement and as the catalyst or participant of many global events of consequence. It was when China was still looking for a window to the world.

Today fifty years hence, whereas America and other western countries view China as a power in its own right India is nearly always seen as one part of a troubled subcontinent or at the best a powerful rival of Pakistan in their bitter struggle over Kashmir. Instead of being a global power she remains at the most a regional power embroiled in managing her relationship with a bunch of 'recalcitrant' neighbours. In the meantime a new centre of power with Japan as an economic superpower and East Asian tigers forming a prosperity zone in the pacific put up formidable challenge to India's aspirations. A prosperous and reunified Germany also comes up as an independent pivot of power in Europe on the same counts as those of Britain and France. It is still undetermined as to where India stands during his post Second World War and post

cold war power configurations across the world.

India once wanted to be considered in the same league as the western powers. Now she is not equated even with China and often held at par with Pakistan much to the disdains of Indians. India was clearly outstripped by China when the latter afflicted her southern neighbour with a crushing defeat in 1962 Himalayan war. Two years later when China exploded her first nuclear bomb, Nehru died broken hearted with his world view and the vision of India as a great power lying in tatters. Now onward it was China's turn to be on the ascendancy. With her finger firmly fixed on nuclear button she was admitted into

in the US Congress. He made a reference to the house of being honoured with the presence of greatmen in the past that included Nehru of India. Today an Indian Prime Minister has to wait for the US president's convenience to have a 40-minute meeting which does not get a line in American press or a blip on American television. When the heads of state of two important countries meet usually the strategic issues figure prominently in the discussion. But the Prime Minister primed with strategic ideas seemed to be summarily disposed off after Clinton's pet sermons on the critical importance of India's economic reforms vis-a-vis global economic opportunities. The failure to use Clinton-Gu-

that India had at the most, a South Asia policy or a Pakistan policy. She has so much overplayed the security threat from Pakistan that her much superior status has been forceably trivialised. As a result the international community tends to see her as an entity comparable to Pakistan. Now she cannot even regain the respectability of being looked upon as a potential contender of China. She wants a permanent seat in UN Security Council but sets no moral standard of her conduct in the region where her smaller neighbours were twisted, cajoled or intimidated for decades on petty issues — let alone a display of her magnanimity for the weaks.

It is not thus surprising that India's passion for rise to power has now turned into paranoid sense of insecurity — particularly at the spectre of a resurgent, fast growing China. Insecurity in other sense arises also from her nagging doubts that the outside world persistently refuses to accord India her due. China's indifference coupled with her steady progress on all fronts visibly wounds the pride and psyche of India's governing elite and fuels India's drive for her apparently purposeless, expensive defence build-up depriving vast multitude of her population even of the basic needs of life.

Although Nehru himself, cashing on the western sentiments against communist China, initiated the build-up soon after India's humiliating defeat in Sino-Indian war, his daughter Indira Gandhi is considered the real architect of modern India's world class military with an undisclosed number of nuclear bomb, indigenously designed or modified long range missiles, aircraft, tanks, artillery and defence electronics. India's fourth

largest military of the world owes a great deal to her for all the impulses she provided to its build up. Even India's military-industrial complex has now come off an age as evident from her ability to build launchers capable of putting a fully operational satellite into orbit late last year notwithstanding an US blockade of her deal for a powerful rocket engine technology from Russia some years ago. But the unfortunate part of the whole exercise is: To what purpose has this phenomenal military capability been built up? New Delhi has throughout been loathe to explain its defence aims. Also otherwise India has never succeeded in articulating or pursuing her defence goal in a coherent, disciplined fashion. Is it only because she is big?

While India's defence preparedness seems Pakistan-specific, she has at no stage abandoned its intention to achieve a 'symbolic power equivalence' with China obviously to approach a world power status. But as the experiences over half a century make it abundantly clear, the two would never go together. She has either to trivialise her position by targeting Pakistan and be happy at that or raise her sight to target China after amicably settling her differences with Pakistan as well as other South Asian neighbours. India has not done either. Instead, she is in a mad rush to augment her military perhaps to earn the dubious sobriquet of an 'up-va' with rockets — a term the Americans coined for the Russians during the closing years of the Union.

Although India has a tremendous capacity for national regeneration and renewal, the current political decline in India together with enormous domestic problems and hostility from outside for her stands on nuclear issues make the realisation of the dream of the nation's founding fathers extremely difficult, if not totally unattainable.

PERSPECTIVES

by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

highly exclusive nuclear club without much fuss. Her admission into UN Security Council was only matter of time. With Nixon's adoption of one China policy in 1972, China quietly slipped into the slot of Taiwan as permanent member of security council. Within a time span of less than a quarter of a century China was a bona fide great power. India, on the contrary, was left to lurch in her inability even to catch up with China in half a century — what to talk of ever catching up with elite old traditional powers of the west.

India's disappointment is revealed in more graphic term when it comes to the specifics. There was a time when John F Kennedy took pleasure in mentioning Nehru during his speech

journal meeting in September last year to discuss security issues or India's possible role in regional or global security is viewed in New Delhi as one of continuing sets back in her power projection. Only two months later when Chinese President goes there Clinton puts in elaborate home work on what to talk to him and media overflows with Jiang's doing and sayings. Many Indians are baffled now at such a precipitation of their national status. But the Indians are no less responsible for the decline in their fortune. For decades India has been so obsessed with sub-continental affairs that it had practically no foreign policy in global term excepted of an aspirant for a global status. Instead, its critics have said, derisively,

The New Faces of Terror

by Md Asadullah Khan

It would be appropriate to say that if political parties or some invisible "godfathers" are bankrolling terrorism as they did in the case of Tariquallah, Sweden Aslam, Joseph or Bikash, then there is very little left for the people to pin any further hope for peace, survival and development.

nience. That undoubtedly paid off for Tariquallah in as much as the fact that he rose, with an education of class V from a boatman to a moneyed man of uncounted treasure and assets. There were at least half a dozen criminal cases against him, as the police sources now allege, in arms act, extortionism, land grabbing, smuggling, murder and rape and women trafficking. He was allegedly involved in the killing of one Ratan, a businessman in Badamtoli area of the Dhaka city. Tariquallah's rise as a gangster and mastan was meteoric, unhindered and unchallenged either by the law enforcement agency or by the people in his area. As reports, reveal in fact, he unleashed a reign of terror right from the year 1975 till the time of his assassination. A focus on the reports may reveal how crime sets its trend in the society.

Reports gleaned from the law enforcement agency sources reveal that Tariquallah, lately a BNP supporter and the first elected chairman of the newly constituted Aganagar Union Parishad in the Keraniganj thana had been a known terrorist. He had changed sides too often and at every opportunity moment to suit his needs and goals. In fact, lack of moral and virtually no prick of conscience in our political parties had kept them busy wooing criminals like Tariquallah and his likes and striking alliances of conve-

ntence. That undoubtedly paid off for Tariquallah in as much as the fact that he rose, with an education of class V from a boatman to a moneyed man of uncounted treasure and assets. There were at least half a dozen criminal cases against him, as the police sources now allege, in arms act, extortionism, land grabbing, smuggling, murder and rape and women trafficking. He was allegedly involved in the killing of one Ratan, a businessman in Badamtoli area of the Dhaka city. Tariquallah's rise as a gangster and mastan was meteoric, unhindered and unchallenged either by the law enforcement agency or by the people in his area. As reports, reveal in fact, he unleashed a reign of terror right from the year 1975 till the time of his assassination. A focus on the reports may reveal how crime sets its trend in the society.

After the shocking upheaval in the country in 1975, as reports reveal, Tariquallah became a member of the clandestine "oil-pilferage" group in the Sadarghat area of the Dhaka city. He made a fortune by selling pilfered oil in the market without any resistance from any quarters. His group ruled supreme right from the year 1977. He was implicated in a murder case in 1982 along with "Galakata Kamal". Kamal was

sentenced to death but Tariquallah escaped scot free and later he became the leader of the infamous and clandestine "Tariqa" group. His activities spread to menacing proportions in 1984 when he grabbed lands in areas adjacent to "Nagarmal Cinema Hall" in the city and set up brothels in that area besides having total control of the ferry ghats of Keraniganj and Sadarghat launch terminals. Incensed by his nefarious designs, people living in the precincts of Nagar Mahal Cinema hall at that time set the brothels ablaze when he shifted his trafficking business to "Agamash area". Most intriguing and shocking, during Ershad regime, Tariquallah's clandestine activities were bolstered by the ruling party through granting him license for three fire arms. Tariquallah unleashed a reign of terror in the Keraniganj area — during '88 election through murder and taking control of the election booths and hijacking of ballot boxes. In the 1988 election, Tariquallah aided his men, as reports are now available allegedly murdered at least 8 persons namely Balkuntha Bearer, Bashar and others in the Keraniganj area. Reports further reveal that since deserting "Jatiyo Party" in 1991, Tariquallah joined the then ruling party and collected tolls to the tune of Taka ten

lakh each months through granting route permit for launches and allowing docking in the Sadarghat and Badamtoli area. Reports further reveal that Tariquallah owns three "luxury entertainment gardens" in the areas namely Kaliganj, Aganagar and Ispahani premises and as a resort to keep law enforcement agency and other stalwarts happy he often threw "entertainment parties". "Tariqa Bahini", it is now known maintained a cadre force of 450 members equipped with lethal arms. Most shocking, Tariquallah and his cadre forces were so powerful that no FIR was taken by the police when Javed and Nurul were killed during Ershad regime believably by his men. Shockingly, the past government and law enforcement agency stood by silently watching these dastardly acts to rise to such a menacing proportion. People know and believe that crime breeds crime, and inevitably more criminal actions are plunging the society into chaos and disarray.

These dastardly criminal activities of a microscopic section of the populace should have alerted the politicians and administrators to re-evaluate the goals of democratic society. Every day concerns of security and safety of the society should not have been mortgaged to the ideology of power, wealth and

violence. Future problems, people now sadly but increasingly believe, would be fought between and against different organisations and criminal groups. The sooner this reality is understood, the better. It is in this light that our leaders, politicians and custodians of the society must take appropriate measure to curb terrorism, including trafficking of all sorts.

Most people now say that the country is faced with a crisis of governance the root cause of which is the "flawed design" of our democracy. While committing ourselves to the dictum of development, taking measures that would enable us to ensure law, order and stability, we tend to think that everything is fair in love, war and politics. The resulting situation is that most people in the country are now deeply distressed with the failure of the state to fulfil their expectations of good governance. In such an atmosphere of despair, cynicism, fear and paralysing consequences, one can see the biggest danger of muscle-mani and terrorism creeping into the society and overtaking state power and running a parallel administration. People now learn with shock and trepidation that a list of only thirty "godfathers" prepared at the behest of the law enforcement agency can't be put-

violence. Future problems, people now sadly but increasingly believe, would be fought between and against different organisations and criminal groups. The sooner this reality is understood, the better. It is in this light that our leaders, politicians and custodians of the society must take appropriate measure to curb terrorism, including trafficking of all sorts.

That means law enforcers have given in to the extortionist forces who appear to be stronger by all counts! On the other hand our experience only shows that once an individual or a group of the business community pays a ransom, it only exposes its susceptibility to fear. And this is ceaselessly exploited by the extortionist group and the vicious cycle of threat and payment never ends. Thus by giving in to the extortionists' demands for tolls, we only perpetuate the problem rather than solve it. So some people now think that enough damage has been done and one cannot allow them to wreak more havoc in the country. But the question is: should the people follow the Badamtoli fruit merchants or expect the law enforcers to act, for whom they pay taxes?

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As far as my knowledge goes, the Health Ministry is entrusted to take care of this sort of social malady. So, the authority concerned must take strict measures so that these fake doctors cannot keep on practicing. Otherwise, innocent people will not only lose money but also put their lives at stake.

Shamim Ahsan
64/M R K Mission Road,
Gopibagh, Dhaka-1203

Special WC cricket

Sir, We know, the Special World Cup cricket tournament will be held in Bangladesh, instead of Sharjah, with nine Test-playing countries. It should be a good experience for our cricketers.

But Bangladesh does not have the chance to participate in the tournament! Why Bangladesh should not also be given an opportunity to play in the tournament as a host country?

Shohel Rana
5091 Zia Hall Dhaka University

A bag with a map

Sir, A lady's school-bag, with a map drawn on it, is being sold in Dhaka city has drew my attention, and as a conscious citizen, I am very much worried. It shows that Bangladesh is a part of neighbouring India. I think it has already tarnished the prestige of my beloved motherland. The authorities concerned are humbly requested to take a drastic step against those who are involved in such a deal.

Shubh Ahmed
98/1, East Raja Bazar Dhaka

To the Editor...

Agonies of an old man

Sir, It is hard to carry the load of worries and agonies in present times. Let it be expressed in the form of a short poem.

Hark! Dear,
Bangladeshi people
Corruption, injustice and
violence everywhere
My heart echoes the sound of
a great fear
Let the suffering humanity
find a loving care
You, she and I long for a lasting
peace to bear.

Abu Ashraf Noor
Uttara, Dhaka

Guarantee for pure water

Sir, There has been lot of talk about pure drinking water. The national radio, television, newspapers, seminars etc., has been regularly propagating the importance of drinking pure water by all, and serious health hazards associated to polluted water are being pointed out.

Nowadays a lot of companies are marketing bottled water which are supposed to produce pure water and each of them claiming to be the best. There is no follow-up from the government or checking these claims. As a result, consumers are totally confused. We want our government to verify these claims either through ICDDR,B, UNICEF, WHO, Micro-biology departments of universities or NGOs concerned and regularly inform the people about these.

This will eliminate from the public mind, any fear or panic, about various pollutants including arsenic in our drinking

water and protect them from wasting money.

Adv. Sheikh Aktarul Islam
Bangladesh Supreme Court
Room No: 26
Dhaka

Pay-scale for Pourasabha employees

Sir, The government has been pleased to announce the new national pay-scale for all the employees of the government, semi-government and autonomous bodies. The decision has been implemented in almost all the organisations but the employees of the Pourasabha, especially of the Jessor Pourasabha, have not yet got the same. The Pourasabhas are playing most important role for maintaining all-round welfare of the