Dhaka Tuesday, June 16, 1998

Eyes Focused on the Visit

Sheikh Hasina's high-calibration visit to New Delhi takes place today. An extra-ordinary regional ambience created by the increased nuclear stakes lately acquired by India and Pakistan has propelled her to the Indian capital. Logically she has to round off her consultation mission by a visit paid to Islamabad. And this is due on June 24. Then follows the Colombo SAARC summit towards the end of this month.

Bangladesh is fully aware of India's global perception of the nuclearisation, or conversely de-nuclearisation issue and as a signatory to both the NPT and CTBT she should be only too keen to see a world free of atomic arsenals. Vajpayee can count on Bangladesh's commitment to such a goal. It will be nice to hear from the Indian Prime Minister now and his Pakistan counterpart later on as the Bangladesh PM visits him that their tests trade-off would not actually fuel nuclear arms race in South Asia.

This is a subject-matter of potential impact on the geo-political environment which in turn is likely to have implications for the sustenance and advancement of SAARC's much-heralded cooperation programmes. Frankly, we would like to see in Sheikh Hasina's visit to India the beginnings of a collective initiative emerging from smaller SAARC countries to persuade India and Pakistan to scale down their hostilities substantially. Bangladesh has a unique standing with India and Pakistan as a sobering influence. So she can lead the way.

The visit's high profile, however, can hardly make light of the bilateral concerns that are bound to engage the two leaders' attention in their first encounter since the induction of a BJP-led government in India. We have got Vajpayee's assurance for adherence to all the clauses of the Ganges water treaty. The BJP's electoral plank on the socalled migration issue better not be pressed to unsavoury lengths when both the countries are committed to keeping vigil on cross-border movement as it is. The severe trade imbalance suffered by Bangladesh needs to be corrected at the earliest.

In general, we are looking forward to bilateral relations of the short-lived Guzral days which were but reminiscent of 'beneficial bilateralism' introduced by Morarji Desai in 1977. Atal Behari Vajpayee was then the foreign minister.

For a Greener Valley

Yesterday was Kalidas's celebrated Ashadhasya prathama divas. How very poetic of the Bangladesh government to launch its three-month long tree plantation campaign on the first day of Ashadh!

It must be conceded that the nation looks much greener now than a decade or two back. If you travel by road, that is. The roadside plantation activity has yielded very visible eye-filling results. But if we fly over the nation, how will it look compared to, say, three decades back? Less green. Why? The unceasing plunder of forests that had continued throughout Pakistan's 23 years and reduced the tree cover from 25 per cent to less than 10 per cent of land area, continues with vigour in independent Bangladesh pushing the cover percentage to a dangerous low, such that cannot sustain well over 2000 persons-a-square mile-population. Increasing the green cover through effective and diversified afforestation activity is certainly an important way to counter the depleting forests. But without arrest ing the pace of depletion, this re-afforestation work, on however big a scale, will hardly give us the desired pace towards a desired forest cover.

The government is failing miserably in stopping forest depletion. It is not only fighting some thugs, it is engaging a much more powerful thing - a social force plainly called land hunger. There is no sign government cares much about this encounter, not to speak of fighting and winning it.

While recognising the services of the NGOs in greening back the country, we urge upon the government to better their post-operative care of the saplings they plant — as do the NGOs. What happens in Dhaka in the name of greening is despicable. If contractors are engaged to plant five crore saplings, who counts them before payment? And how many of these 50 million manage to survive? Far from a force tending and nursing them, there is perhaps no one to even know the number of the survivors.

It is a good sign members of the public are getting increasingly intested in trees. The tree fairs are a good innovation. Whetting the new-fledged interest. We strongly recommend to the government that in roadside plantations fruit trees be made a must for at least a decade. Some of them yield good timber in the bargain. And together with these why not plant avenues of Neem and Arjun and other trees of high medicinal value?

Police Press Releases

The other day a national Bangla daily reported on an aberration that probably tends to elude notice because of our habitual indifference to propriety. The press releases of the police public relations office are falsely adjectivised almost regularly. Arrested criminals are often described with such ridiculously hyperbolic words as Madak Samrat (drug lord), Heroin Samrat (heroin king), Peshadar Khuni (professional killer) etc. Such semantic pompousness does not border only on unprofessionalism but is also manifestly unlawful and self-demeaning for policemen.

Then situations are fictionalised just to add a touch of glamour to police's achievement. Often it is said police captured criminals after a two-hour long gun-battle when nothing of that sort happened in reality. Let alone the unethicality of the whole practice, this type of hoodwinking tactic chips away people's confidence in police which can only worsen a situation that is already quite bad.

We believe ridding police of these types of soft lapses calls for a grand and sweeping reform in the ranks of the guardians of law. It is a matter of culture. Under the present system police administration seemingly does not have in it what it takes to see through the thin line between law and its violation. Nevertheless, some departmental activism can bring in some immediate qualitative change in the situation. Let the police deal with facts and not fiction.

Nuclear Tests in India and Pakistan

More for Deterrence than for Defence? by Khurshid Hamid

(This is first of a series of articles by the author on the South Asian crisis. Others will follow in a next few days)

are the historical uses of power.

▼ NDIA has exploded five nuclear bombs and Pakistan ▲ followed in one-upmanship with six in the course of last month. (Some reports have said that these claims are exaggerated but this does not change the basics.) In the immediate aftermath the top leadership of the two countries have struck Disney-like in your-face eyeball-to-eyeball postures in their various statements. The general people of both countries have given more than ninety-five per cent support to the blasts, and have flooded the streets with I-couldhave-danced-all-night surge of

national pride. The developed world, led by Judge Dredd United States, have with varying degrees of hoarseness cried foul that the blasts were violations of nuclear power containment agreements the two countries were not signatory to, that it had shattered the laboriously engineered stable global nuclear architectonic structure, that it would impel other on-the-brink nuclear states to go atomic, that South Asia was presently exacerbated with rising tensions of nuclear madness and trigger-happiness, that it would jump-start an overt nuclear and conventional armaments race in povertystricken South Asia and with flashpoint Kashmir would eventually lead to actual shooting nuclear war in the regionand all these combined have suddenly made the world now a much more dangerous place to live in. Emphatic calls have been made for an immediate freeze on all movements towards deployment of nuclear weapons delivery systems. Some shuttlecocks of sanctions have flown in the air.

Underlining the oligarchic, monopolistic, anti-democratic. and fundamentally hypocritical attitude of the five declared nuclear powers and their fellow travelers in the developed world, and noting that nuclear tests do genuinely touch raw nerves in civil societies, cold analysis show up the West's raucousness as the doomsday soothsaying of the nursery parable of a piece of sky falling upon chicken-licken's head. One is almost waiting to exhale a silent hallelujah to nuclear India and Pakistan!

South Asia, the cradle of oriental civilization, with deep cultural roots, with sufficient modernization in its scientific

of history for ideological nation-states in a Westphalian world order of military preparedness, which still lingers unfortunately into the end of the millennium, and to deny this is to deny history.

and technological can-do-ness

and democratic governance.

has finally stood up, at least in

its perceived power of banging

on the door of the super-exclu-

sive nuclear club. South Asia

in the latter half of the nine-

teenth and early twentieth cen-

turies, had evoked keen interest

and respect among the Western

intelligentsia mostly through

the reportage of their fellow

academics and adventurers. But

during the last half a century

this interest declined and flick-

ered only among cultist minori-

ties, and South Asia was per-

ceived by the mainstream West

as a region of desperate over-

population, poverty, disease,

and endless feuding, and thus

was downgraded in their geopo-

litical priorities. The nuclear

tests have focused the West's at-

tention on South Asia as never

before, with an albeit unspoken

grudging respect, which is not a

bad thing in the long term. Fur-

thermore, once for the nonce

ruffled-feathers sanctions peter

away, the newly stable India

and Pakistan may become more

important players in interna-

tional trade and be recipients of

increased foreign direct in-

vestment. And who knows the

nuclear fission blasts may fuse

the special interest groups and

the broad masses in the two

countries towards genuine and

sustained patriotism, leading to

hard work and greater produc-

tivity, honesty in payment of taxes and defaulting loans, and

a true striding forward of the

two nations. Bangladesh by

virtue of her contagious prox-

imity should be a beneficiary of

what triggered India's nuclear

tests. Suffice it to say that it

was a combination of national-

istic, technological, and politi-

cal imperatives. India is a na-

tion of nearly a billion people, a

modern democratic state with

sufficient scientific and techno-

logical know-how and eco-

nomic, yes economic, level to

impel it to a catch-up drive to a

perceived power parity with the

nuclear states, even though this

means some self-abnegation for

its people. Such is the dynamics

Much has been written about

Again, just as France several years ago had to complete its series of nuclear tests to perfect its independent force de frappe based on a different technology than the West. India too had technological compulsion to conduct the series of tests to transform its nuclear capabil-

ity into road-worthiness. Finally, the actual timing of the nuclear blasts is always political. Witness the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the only two instances when nuclear weapons were actually used against an enemy, at a time when Japan was well on its way to surrender, was narrowly based on U.S. President Harry S. Truman's cold-blooded political calculus of discovering the real-life effectiveness of the atomic power tested only a few weeks earlier, sending shards of fear into the heart of the Communist Soviet Union, but above all the domestic political need to bring the boys back home before Christmas as he was facing elections next year. (Parenthetically, there is no gainsaying that in Hiroshima and Nagasaki the United States perpetrated the single most diabolical act in the history of humankind, but one is quick to add that in the rarefied real politick involving a World War the ordinary morality of man is as fissionable as the nuclear atom.) Similarly, India's nuclear tests are actually timed to serve the domestic political agenda of Hindutva nationalism or jingoism, depending on which side of the river you live on, to give a shot in the arm for Prime Minister Vajpayee's personal popularity and leadership as well as the political fortunes of the Bharatia Janata Party, to further coalesce the ruling coalition, to flex muscles before

nuclear China and to cow

Pakistan's nuclear tests

Pakistan, or whatever.

were essentially reactive in their timing, but identical clones of the afore-mentioned imperatives operated in her case too with only changes in nameplates. Bangladesh, had she somewhat more scientific, technological, and economic tester one, would be impelled by history to march along the same nuclear path, though she should not.

Economic sanctions, somewhat weak, unfocused and still ambiguous, have been slapped both on India and Pakistan. But sanctions in their inherent nature are ineffectual, particularly in the long run. In the present instance the main protagonists of sanctions, the United States, Japan and Canada, are still not clear in their minds about the extent of the economic strictures to be imposed on the two countries, while Britain and other West European countries have held back from imposing sanctions. Moreover in the current creed of the market place, the greed of the global businessmen will not let the market place clear the imposition of sanctions on such a vast and lucrative market as India and to a lesser extent Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan are self-sufficient in food and with sufficiently selfcontained economies to ride out the short-lived resolve of sanctions with varying degrees of self-sacrifice and slowing down

of their development. Kashmir has been dug out of the archives and attracted Western attention as a flashpoint for an atomic bang-bang, you're dead war between triggerhappy now nuclear India and Pakistan. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nuclear armament, and its accompanying weapons delivery systems. make the possessing states most acutely aware that the moment of deployment of their full resources and military power and the testing of their true strength will also be the moment of regional or global destruction. The irony is that this results in a moratorium condition rather than a poten-

tial state of war. In such an en-

Of the four accepted functions served by military might, that is defense, deterrence, compellance, and ennoted that after the 1965 and 1971 wars the two countries hancement of prestige, one hundred per cent weightage is attached to deterrence and enhancement of prestige, managed to accumulate more deadly arsenals than ever bewhich are the peaceful uses of power, than to defence and compellance or the actual deployment of arms, which fore, and the realization of this visible, concretized military might had led to constraints in vironment, of the four accepted their freedom of action, and functions served by military they have not fought a war in the last quarter century. might, that is defense, deterrence, compellance, and enhancement of prestige, one hundred per cent weightage is attached to deterrence and en-

hancement of prestige, which

are the peaceful uses of power,

than to defence and compel-

lance or the actual deployment

of arms, which are the histori-

the more than half a century

since the Enola Gray during the

hey-day of the Cold War the

United States and the Soviet

Union with their frenetic stock-

piling and their huge nuclear

arsenals both remained Gulliv-

ers bound in iron chains, the

world has enjoyed history's

longest-lasting moratorium

from large-scale wars, and not a

single nuclear weapon has been

detonated to destroy an enemy.

The only instance in which the

world came to the brink of pos-

sible nuclear war was during

the Cuban missile crisis in Oc-

tober 1962, and the archives

now tell us that nuclear shoot-

offs were averted when Khr

uschev blinked and not

Kennedy. Nonetheless the fact

remains that both the naughty

boys were arch nuclear powers.

have hitherto been responsible

and respected players in the

comity of nations and cannot

be termed as rogue states, their

present leaders have been

screened through multiple elec-

tions and arguably acceptable

democratic process, and ac-

countability for misdemeanors

the judicial courts of the two

countries-all political indica-

tors of mature nation-states. A

natural corollary from this is

that if India and Pakistan do

develop a cogent nuclear

weapons delivery system, re-

ports say that at present they

are sporadic at best, their polit-

ical leaders will be enlightened

enough to realize that power by

its nature entails a burden as

well a promise and the more

power is realized in visible.

concrete form, the more the

burden grows in relation to the

in political office has seeped to

Both India and Pakistan

It follows from this that in

cal uses of power.

Even today after the initial necessary confrontational public posturings, the political leaders of the two countries are making saner, conciliatory statements and talking of the need to talk to iron out the Kashmir and other problems between them. The Indian Foreign Minister has supported the thesis that the nuclear tests and their potential for destruction would be the impelling force for the two countries to sit across the table for discussing their outstanding problems. The Pakistan Prime Minister has invited the Indian Prime Minister for talks to end the arms race between the two countries. The Indian Prime Minister has laid repeated emphasis on the need of dialogue with Pakistan on the basis of modalities agreed between Guiral and Nawaz Sharif, and has made offers of no first use of nuclear weapons, of willingness to discuss Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Non-proliferation freaty, and of talks for a treaty

potential, placing restraints on

freedom of action. It should be

While all pointers are that the rational sagacity of the leaders of the two countries will dictate the pace and number of nuclear weapons delivery systems, the joker in the cards is that one country might be tempted to frenzied stock-piling beyond the economic tensile strength of its civil society, and the other will follow in a copycat synd, ome, leading to societal upheavals and instability. and thereby a potentially dangerous geopolitical nightmare. The twentieth century has instances of egomaniacal leaders enticing their people to long journeys through sloughs of despondency, like the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union and the Nazis in Germany, but fortunately such happenings have not occurred in a democratic ethos as obtains in India and Pakistan.

for fissionable material cut-off.

The author is the former Bangladesh Ambassador to Italy and Switzerland

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Why Obsession with Kashmir, When the Whole World Becons...

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed writes from Princeton

By making Kashmir the cornerstone of its foreign policy towards India, Pakistan is suffering from tunnel

vision. There are 130 million Muslims in India. What would happen to the remaining Indian Muslims

if Pakistan were to rescue a few million Kashmiris?

MERICA believes that a A nuclear war between India possibility. After all, unlike the US and the Soviet Union, these two countries had fought each other thrice before and harbour genuine hatred for each other Here is the doomsday scenario: in "city-busting" nuclear exchanges, 17 million Pakistanis and 29 million Indians are immediately dead! Medical services are overwhelmed. Final death count: 100 million. The fall out coats a region from the subcontinent to China. Mutually assured destruction

(MAD) is followed by mutually

assured sickness, disease and

Bangladesh will be right in the middle of it. Regardless of which cities get nuked — Islamabad. Lahore, Karachi, New Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta the prevailing winds will carry the fall out over Bangladesh. It is in the interest of Bangladesh, therefore, to quickly occupy the moral high ground vacated by Pakistan and India Bangladesh government and individual citizens should seize the opportunity to inject some sanity into our neighbours gone insane. At the very least, to forestall accidental war we must make India and istan install safety valves that should include cold war-type telephone hot lines and arrangement about prior notification of military exercises. We have a stake in all

It is much too simplistic to attribute the Indo-Pak hostility to religion alone. As the Bangladeshis know all too painfully, Muslims of East and West Pakistan did not get along that great. Currently Bangladeshi Muslims get along fine with both Pakistani Muslims and Indian Hindus. The problem that separates India and Pakistan can be reduced to the dispute over Kashmir. This disputed territory is at the centre of India-Pakistan hatred and mistrust that has defied diplomatic resolution for half a

century. It is well known that the Hindu Maharaja of Kashmir ignored the wishes of his overwhelmingly Muslim subjects. A cease fire followed with a UN promise of a plebiscite. With Soviet veto, India has success fully fought off the plebiscite for the last fifty years.

Pakistan has a legitimate point. The province of Hyderabad had a Hindu majority and a Muslim Nizam. Yet, through "police action" India took over the province. Logic dictates that Kashmir should have gone to Pakistan.

Logic is not what we are good at in the subcontinent. Many Indians dream of "Akhand Bharat" (undivided India). Yet there is nothing "Akhand"

about Bharat. India was never an undivided unified nation. It consisted of fractious princely states, which the British in their own interest lorged into one unit. For the Indians to claim that they are owed the whole of the geographical area of the Indian subcontinent, because it is their historical right, is ludicrous. If it had not been greedy about unjustly capturing Kashmir, a territory that should not belong to it. India would have spared itself a lot of

Pakistan became a reality in large measure because of the Congress and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's refusal to accept the three-unit solution. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah made a mile out of an inch, and coupled with the Muslim League-inspired riots and Muslim League support for the British war efforts, won him his Pakistan. Instead of being grateful and satisfied, the Pakistanis grabbed Abdul Gaffar Khan's Northwest Frontier Province through coercion, and since the nation's inception have staked everything on snatching all of

The fact is, Pakistan cannot gain Kashmir through force. The United Nations will not help, because Russia will always veto any resolution

Kashmir from India.

detrimental to India. (One of the reasons why the UN is less than noble is that Russia always protects the interest of its friends even if they are wrong, and America vetoes any resolution that attempts to Israel for its crimes.) The only remaining way is to negotiate head to head.

The well respected "The

Statesman" of Calcutta recently suggested that since India is the senior party to the conflict, it should show generosity over Kashmir. That is unlikely to happen in a BJP government, wielding a fiery BAT (Bajpayee, Advant and Thackery) and claiming the Pakistani side of Kashmir as well. In a perfect world. India would have taken the lead in mollifying Pakistan with a Northern Ireland type peace, that takes into account the wishes of the people. While it is any body's guess how Kashmiris would vote to join Pakistan (they would probably opt for pendence), not too many will want to remain under the Indian guns. India is finding out as the Israelis did that one cannot keep a restive population suppressed for ever.

One wonders whether there was an Indian intelligence failure regarding Pakistan's nuclear capabilities. The bellicose

statements from Mr. Advani in the aftermath of Indian explosions almost dared Pakistan to explode - if it indeed had the that the front line in Kashmir has now been transformed into ground zero.

By making Kashmir the cornerstone of its foreign policy towards India, Pakistan is suffering from tunnel vision. There are 130 million Muslims in India. What would happen to the remaining Indian Muslims if Pakistan were to rescue a few million Kashmiris? A little patience is in order here. West Germany got back the eastern half of the country after 45 years of Soviet dominance. The world will never be a perfect place. A nation has to strive for justice, but should not exercise foreign policy based on a single

By exploding the bomb, Pakistan has assured its security. Regardless of the initial negative consequences, by going nuclear Pakistan has already wrested the leadership of the Muslim world from Egypt Saudi Arabia and Turkey. No longer will they be treated as "miskeens" by the rich Middle Eastern nations. Those nations will now come calling

Pakistan to pay their respects.

The Arab nations such as

Egypt who had signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, in spite of Israel's known nuclear capability, are now kicking themselves. They now realise the impact the possession of the bomb can have on a nation's standing in the world. Arabs, whose appreciation of Pakistan is tinged with a little jealousy, had long suspected that Israel was helping India in bomb making. And influential Jews in America have been berating China, ostensibly for its human rights abuse. but in reality for helping Pakistan's nuclear efforts.

After Pakistan detonated the bomb, the Israel-loving China-bashers in the US have suddenly gone silent. No doubt they are busy formulating new policy, now that Israel's unilateral nuclear threat has been matched by at least one Muslim nation. Expect the arrogant Netanyahu to suddenly mellow, and the peace process to restart in the Middle East. There will also be an effort by the enemies of Islam to control the proliferation of the "Islamic bomb." Notice that no one talks about Christian, Jewish, Hindu or Confucian/Buddhist bomb, only the fearsome "Islamic Bomb." As though nuclear devices made by nations are devoutly slamic Muslim!

By playing its cards right and reducing its obsession with Kashmir, nuclear Pakistan can now widen its sphere of influence to include the

Foreign and local medical specialists

this: the lives of Bangladeshis

are as much at stake as that of

Indians and Pakistanis.

Sir. These are some reflections on a news item in the DS on import of foreign doctors in our country. I'm a medical doctor and I am very much in favour of foreign medical specialists participating in the health care delivery system of our country. I would like to narrate a personal experience before putting forward the ratio-

My son is a victim of maltreatment by one of our socalled high-graded specialists. I could afford to go to a foreign country for the treatment of our son, but I decided to show patriotism and allowed one of our very high-graded specialists to almost maim our son. Our son had to undergo an operation of nose and adenoids. Any instrumentation in the nose region, which is very close to the brain, needs special care and adequate antibiotic coverage. But our son was not provided with that. I could not contradict the specialist. Our son was discharged after a week from the clinic but a focus of infection

remained. After a few days he developed high fever, photophobia and prostration. The worst conceivable thing happened — he developed Meningitis — caused by a

careless, negligent surgeon. Our son was saved because I lost no time, virtually lifted him from the bed and rushed to Dhaka Shishu Hospital. I took the command. I asked the registrar to give him the full treatment of Meningitis. Our son was in stupor for more than 48 hrs to cut an agony short, by the grace of almighty Allah, he is fully recovered now. But, nobody can compensate the amount of mental, emotional and physical stress our family had to undergo. All these happened because the professor took it easy, falsely reassured me.

In our country, we have no dearth of callous people. There is something wrong in our gene. In any foreign country (I have worked in three) bigger the doctor, more modest is the person. He is more courteous, more careful, more responsible. Unfortunately, the reverse is order of the day in our country.

Most of our very busy/busy specialists have the following qualities — lack of sincerity and professionalism, immodesty, lack of humanity and sometimes lack of proper knowledge too. They suffer from giant megalomania. In them vanity reigns supreme. I can cite many more examples of malpractice, maltreatment and callousness by our esteemed

specialists.

So, the government should allow foreign specialists to work in our country with the motive to raise the level of efficiency and accountability turning the field more competitive, and last but not the least make our doctors humane, well-behaved and polite.

Dr Sued Nasrullah Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka-1217

Choking to death

Sir, Dhaka city is the cynosure of all. Not because of any happiness or joy, but of clamour

Rickshaws, scooters and bicycles obstacle the way. The passengers are muddled up in their brain. Accidents occur daily, causing pain, mind you, people are not worried about them. They are always tense and distraught, pondering about hartals and strikes.

What should we do? Should we try to learn from our mistakes? Sit with hands, over our head, thus it is a huge headache. The cars move with the celerity of an ant. The trucks

and buses race. Dark smoke surrounds the atmosphere, and chokes us to death. Yasmeen Fairooz

House No. 572, Block B

Lalmatia, Dhaka

Sir. The government is going ahead with none too ambitious plans and projects for quantitative enhancement and modernisation of our pathetic police service, in which the public confidence is dwindling. These development projects have four other invisible areas for immediate correction, otherwise physical increase will not be effective :

Policing the police

a) correcting the weaknesses in the current outdated policing system (organogram); b) professional attitude of the police personnel at all levels towards the performance of duty lafter proper training and orientation); c) stop outside interference from influential sources. including bribing; and, d) quick disposal of cases in the courts. There is another hidden

agenda: the areas of investigation and prosecution by the police. There are many loopholes, which have been addressed in the media.

Today, the criminals use sophisticated arms and techniques. The police must be several steps ahead. There are two key bastions : fast transport and communication network. Human systems loss is a bane in the Third World countries. because the society abets it. Hence the efficiency will rise slowly with the completion of

the projects, as it depends on the local culture in any profession. The rate of change of culture, good or bad, depends on many factors, which need not be elaborated here.

Go for the reforms, but it should be an integrated one. otherwise it would be uneconomic.

A Husnain Dnaka

The Centre and the rest

Sir, It seems to be a daily practice now a days for people who read the newspaper in the morning, to throw up their hands and exclaim The Horror! The Horror! in a terror filled voice. Two infants, one aged 1 1/2 months and the other 2 months were wrenched from the security of their mothers loving arms and brutally murdered for reasons which I am sure bears no resemblance to what is sane and what is orderly.

These two infants did not leave behind a whisper let alone a cry to the world they had come to; my query is: how long will this go on? How long can this chaotic condition last? When will the sleeping majority (like us) rise from their sleep of satisfaction and try to bring about a change in the quality of life? When? When question after question reverberates round and round one's brain, but there

The only thing that stares back at you point blank is that the centre cannot hold and the rest is silence. Fahima Khan Gulshan, Dhaka

is no answer.

"BBC bridge is going

down?" Sir. Mr A Husnain, in his letter "BBC bridge is going down" published in the DS on May 22, '98, so approved of BTV's discontinuation of BBC relay that it seems he is content enough with BTV's political slavery (the practice of flattering whoever rules the country).

In a country of informatic dearth like ours. BTV's relay of BBC as well as CNN used to keep us abreast of the world happenings. Now that the relay is discontinued, we are left with no option but depend on our very sycophantic television, BTV.

Jamil Ahmed Dishari 11. Howapara Sylhet.