

## Flood Garbage

This year's prolonged pervasive flood has given a new dimension to Dhaka's growing disreputation as a stinky, filthy city. With two-thirds of the city inundated and water recession at its slowest, life has become miserable for the city-dwellers. If the air reeks of putrid filth, ground offers no relief, the stagnant flood water spiced with the rotten refuse making a terrible concoction there. This devilish combination has already told on public health. Dysentery and skin disorder have broken out in epidemic proportions. This swift turn for the worse has been compounded by the rupture in City Corporation's daily activity of garbage collection and disposal at the designated place.

Although calamities like the one the country is grovelling under now upsets its normal rhythm, life nevertheless goes on. So does the daily ritual of life. The fact that the authorities are hamstrung in their bid to dispose of the accumulating filth of the city is no answer to the problem. Domestic garbage will be produced at homesteads and people cannot store them for disposal at some convenient time in future. The daily dumping of the garbage in the stagnant body of water is turning the city into a cesspool. We are afraid the city authorities cannot remain in a state of stupor they are in now for long. They have to think up an alternative way to deal with this situation. Since outfall is offlimits to motorised vehicles the City Corporation authorities may consider using boats for garbage disposal. If disposal of garbage is one area where there is no easy and foolproof suggestion to concentrate on, there is a lot the City Corporation can be urged to do to minimise the health hazards posed by the rotten stagnant water.

Since the water is not moving, drains and gutters in areas where flood water did not enter, have turned into hotbeds of mosquito propagation. The DCC must look into the ways it can adopt to keep the growth of mosquitoes under check by using mosquito repellent and often disinfectants. Using the media to sensitise the citizens about their tasks when flood waters recede is highly advisable.

## A Martyr of Rarest Kind

Saiful Islam Mukul, editor of Kushtia's *Daily Runner* was killed by unknown assailants on Sunday night while returning home by a rickshaw. Condemnation of this dastardly crime is being received from all walks of life. Journalists are among the most vociferous to denounce the murder. On Tuesday the editors of the national dailies met and said this was an attack indeed on journalism itself. They decided to publish books on editor Mukul and attend his chehnum at Kushtia in a body.

As days pass, the idea that he was made to pay with life for his journalistic uprightiness grows more and more irresistible. The *Daily Runner* is a small paper compared to the Dhaka morningers and yet it was second perhaps to none in courage and integrity. And Mukul, the man was wholly synonymous with his paper. And he was no freak in a jungle of lesser people taking inconceivable liberties with journalism. He only but very capably bore the standard his father, the former editor, had left in his charge. Mukul died for his writing against some wrong doing band. He is now one of our rarest achievers — a martyr in the cause of journalism. We salute him.

What is the cause of journalism? Man, unlike the myriad other species of the animal kingdom, lives by information. Information gives him the power to judge things and, more important, it empowers him to make choice which constitutes the essence of his freedom as against predetermination. Now the most important and stupendously big channel through which man gets his information is journalism. Information for a journalist is sacrosanct, it is his life. And unpublished information is no information. The cause of journalism is unhindered — and unmanaged — information. Mukul believed, as did his father, in this and he paid with his life to uphold it.

The various press organisations of the nation — the editor's associations and journalist unions, the Press Club, the Press Institute etc would do well to institute a prize after Saiful Islam Mukul — for journalistic courage and integrity.

We send our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

## Predators in Human Form

The city air is heavy with the extortionist lo-custs' droning. They are spreading out a crimson cloth-piece of a bowl, their trade-mark, before the passers-by. Also, reportedly, they are out on hunts — shops and business houses being the most favoured targets — asking for contributions in relief money as though the floods have untapped all their milk of human kindness. With some put up seriousness that only ruffians can wear they are uttering assorted names of clubs and philanthropic groups, to pester for money, and then when that does not work, to literally snatch it under coercion or not-too-veiled threats.

And what are they doing with the money? Well, even without the newspaper reports that have been revelatory of their buying phensidy we would have felt the spurious do-gooders were doing all that anyway without any compunction. They should be booked for this most culpable embezzlement of public money conceivable. Declare them as mug-gers and dacots and proceed against them accordingly.

Complaints have started pouring into the police control room, so we learn from a report that appeared in a prominent Bangla daily yesterday. Police responsibility cannot end by warning us against the self-appointed money raisers, or reminding them of a breach of law or 'indeed asking us not to pay them. In fact, we want the police to do whatever it takes to catch and punish them. Public assistance would not be in short supply.

# US vs Osama Bin Laden

USA is trying hard to refashion the world according to its own interest. War against terrorism figures high on the agenda. Terrorism strikes surreptitiously in places least expected and succeeds in attracting maximum attention. Terrorist attacks on the US Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salam were such incidents.

## The Horizon This Week

Arshad-uz Zaman



Talebans (meaning students). These are students of Madrasah (or religious schools), which has entered the fray in order to save "Islam". In a country where Islam was not in any danger of any kind. The western borders of Pakistan, which has been the favourite recruiting ground of fighters who resisted the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan for ten years, has been the recruiting ground for Taleban.

Indeed it is common knowl-

edge that Pakistan trained and launched the Taleban on the fertile soil of Afghanistan, where central authority was missing since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union. Taleban has been trying to establish authority and is facing resistance from various quarters including Iran and the states of Central Asia.

It is natural that Osama Bin Laden should make his home in Afghanistan. The country is in the grip of civil war and the edge that Pakistan trained and launched the Taleban on the fertile soil of Afghanistan, where central authority was missing since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union. Taleban has been trying to establish authority and is facing resistance from various quarters including Iran and the states of Central Asia.

On the other hand, there appears to exist sufficient evidence to implicate two Libyan citizens in the Lockerbie bombing. Now that the US has cleared the path to his trial in a neutral — in this case the Netherlands — court, the trial is likely to start soon. Chances are that this trial will attract worldwide attention.

What chances there are that the US succeeds in their world-

wide crusade against terrorism? It appears very slim indeed. Terrorist and the liberation warrior are the two sides of the same coin. This war has gone on since time immemorial. A just order does not exist and is not likely to be fashioned any time soon. The war against Osama Bin Laden is a relatively simple matter since he is virtually a state-less person and has been repeatedly branded a terrorist.

Indeed there have appeared comments that the US public is tired of the target Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The advantage with the Bin Laden target is that it does not pit the US against any state. Pakistan appears to be collaborating with the US since it is reported to have handed over a suspected bomber of the US Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salam.

US attempts to establish order throughout the world are not likely to meet with much success. The world is complex and there are numerous clashes of interest. Ethnic, religious and numerous other differences make this a dangerous world and terrorism breed in the sea of discontent.

The US has expended nearly half a century is establishing peace in a volatile region like the Middle East. The US is incapable of bringing reason to a little Netanyahu. How is the US expected to root out terrorism from the world? The US may be compelled to live with cosmetic changes but substantial gains on the terrorist front is bound to elude her grasp.

Pax Americana is not round the corner.

# British Cheers for US Imperil Relief for Millions

The American attack on the Sudan has put in jeopardy the peace process in which Britain was playing a key role. Unequivocal British support for the attack has led to a break in diplomatic relations between the two countries. This in turn, reports Gemini News Service, imperils the huge food airlift to millions of famine-hit Sudanese.



THE TOMAHAWK TERROR

tion will plan out amid all this political and diplomatic wrangling. Nobody has yet mentioned the impact it will have on the provision of aid to the starving population. It might as well have been a different country for all the attention that has been paid.

The UN World Food Programme is undertaking the largest humanitarian airlift in history, dropping 9.500 tonnes a month to 1.5 million famine affected people in the south. Across the country 2.6 million are estimated to require relief. Disruption of supplies at this critical time before the October harvest is bound to have a devastating impact on a population almost totally dependent on food aid drops.

Suleiman Rahhal, Chairman of the indigenous non-governmental organisation, the Nuba Relief Rehabilitation and Development Society, told Gemini: "Bombing Khartoum will

## Peter Moszynski writes from London

clearly have little impact on global terrorism and does nothing to bring a conclusion to Sudan's horrific civil war. An international conference to address Sudan's domestic conflict is needed, not one that merely addresses US concerns. Washington's failure to provide conclusive evidence linking the destroyed pharmaceutical factory to Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, described by the State Department as "one of the most significant sponsors of Islamic extremist activities in the world today," has led to widespread support for Khartoum throughout the Arab and Islamic world and unease among most of its western allies. Bin Laden, indicted from murder by a US Grand Jury on 24 August for the bombing attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania, is emerging as a popular hero throughout the Middle East. Even moderate Arab leaders are terrified to speak in defence

of American actions. Khartoum is now being rapidly rehabilitated internationally, widely viewed as a victim of unjustified US aggression. Before the attack Sudan was regarded as a virtual pariah by many countries in the region. Now it is being seen in a much more positive light. Many people consider British Prime Minister Tony Blair's support has severely restricted Britain's potential to help provide a settlement to the conflict, just as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was beginning to face up to some of its post-colonial responsibilities. After years in which a Conservative government always appeared loathe to tackle the legacy of Britain's imperial past, the new Labour administration seemed eager to play a more proactive role in ending a conflict that stems from before Sudan's independence. British MP Anne Cloyd, who actively follows Sudanese affairs in the Parliamentary Se-

## To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

### Political pilgrimages

Sir, Lately we have been seeing a new style of political pilgrimages. When in trouble, or for quiet and confidential meetings abroad, go to the land of the Hajj, for Umrah (any time), to camouflage the real purpose of the visit or contact.

### We condemn US attack

Sir, We condemn US cruise missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan and UN economic sanctions against Iraq. We strongly demand forfeiture and destruction of all US weapons of mass destruction, imposition of UN economic sanctions on US like Iraq and immediate withdrawal of UN economic sanctions from Iraq which has by now got ample punishment and lesson.

### The honest president

Sir, It is really appreciable that the President of America Mr Bill Clinton has publicly admitted his wrongdoing with Ms Monica Lewinsky.

### Income-tax returns

Sir, As per rule, 15th September is the last date for submission of income-tax returns. It has however been observed that, even in normal situation, National Board of Revenue (NBR), extends the date by four to six weeks, but the announcement to this effect is not made till a day after the last scheduled date, for obvious reasons.

### A day without traffic jam!

Sir, Nowadays we cannot imagine a single day without traffic jam. It has become a part and parcel of our life. Generally we blame the rickshaws, defective transportation system and excess number of vehicles for these traffic jams. Such traffic jam is a common phenomenon at Gabtoli-Aminbazar route. We the students of Jahangirnagar University and other passengers who regularly use Dhaka-Chittha highway are the victims of this jam. We lose

our valuable time and cannot do anything on schedule. The cause of traffic jam at Aminbazar is very simple — the whim of the truck drivers and owners. Near the Aminbazar bridge, both sides of the road are always full of trucks. Often we find that the trucks are being repaired and washed on the road. As a result other vehicles cannot cross the road easily, and jam is created. Sometimes it takes several hours to ease this jam. Besides, after the opening of Bangabandhu Jamma Multipurpose Bridge (BJMB) the importance of this road has increased significantly.

The authority concerned (if any) should take necessary steps to solve this problem immediately and reduce the miseries of the passengers.

### Child smuggling

Sir, Effective measures must be taken by the respective governments to stop child smuggling for exploitative purposes, i.e. sports, prostitution and drugs.

### How to become free

Sir, Oppressive French Regime saw its demise at the advent of the French Revolution that triumphantly swept away the Bastille after eleven years of Voltair's death, whose satirical writings dramatically sparked the French society leading to the French Revolution. Voltair did not, however, espouse the idea of revolution, nevertheless his satires sown the seed of revolution in the minds of his wide ranging French readers. Voltair's stringing arm against the oppressor kept the latter in utter discomfort, unabatingly it pro-

vided sustenance to the idea of revolution among the French. Francis Leiry writes, 'He (Voltair) would doubtless have disapproved of the Revolution's later excesses but would have been proud of the inscription on his tomb. He taught us how to become free'.

Sheikh Mujib has led this nation to freedom but no one taught how to create a free society. Who among our leading Bujidijibites we should go to for teaching us 'how to become free?' Is it Kabir Chowdhury? Shamsur Rahman? Sufia Kamal? or Shawkat Osman? (Posthumously). One of them must be our kind of Voltair.

The nation is awaiting with a befitting inscription for each of them.

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### The streets!

Sir, Recently we saw an advertisement in newspapers to recruit lobbyist to be engaged in improving the image of Bangladesh abroad, particularly in the EEC countries and in USA. This is likely to cost a considerable amount of foreign exchange. The result is not very certain. Almost every important country has an Embassy in Bangladesh. The officials of those Embassies/High Commissions regularly files report about our homeland to their respective countries. These Embassies are supposed to project the correct image of our country. If required, some of those embassies could be strengthened (without increasing the number of employees) to suit the need of our time. However, common people have little to say regarding the state affairs.

A foreign national (in that matter a Bangladeshi national also) has to encounter a large number of professional beggars at every traffic light junction and at every railway crossing while travelling to and from the international airport to the city. These beggars are not really poorest of the poor. They are apparently highly trained professionals. Every passenger travelling on this road has to wait for a long time due to traffic jam and they are subjected to the unavoidable pestering by these beggars. Is it possible to

remove them at least off the travel path from the international airport to Shongraon and Sheraton Hotels.

### Over the moon?

Sir, 'Dead men tell no tale,' goes the saying. But BTV has other ideas.

### Are the police alone to be blamed?

Sir, The recent brutal killing of Rubel in police custody has horrified every conscious heart across the country. If the law enforcing personnel can kill an innocent man then we have every reason to be terrified. But whenever such a murder takes place, severest condemnation and bitterest criticism against the police pour out from every section of people.

What is the outcome? It has never stopped and it never will. Because we never succeeded to address the problem properly and could not trace out the root of the evil.

We shall have to expose the black hand (or hands) of those who have been using the police force for their own interest, ranging from the corrupt businessmen to the highest office of the country. The illegal interference and influence exercised by a section of evil politicians have played a considerably significant role to turn the peace-keeping force into a peace-breaking one. Being used unlawfully and illegally encourage them (the police) to exercise unfair means which is seen in the shape of corruption, bribery, releasing criminals in exchange of money, leaving the criminals undisturbed in exchange of particular percentage and so on. It is our immoral, selfish politicians who have created this situation.

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