

# Return and No-return

As the water recedes, some are returning home (if there's any), but the rest?..... without home, without hope?



— Star Photo by Amran Hossain

# PHOTO FEATURE ON FLOOD



— Star Photo by A K M Mohsin



— Star Photo by Sk Enamul Haq

# To Contain a Recurring Flood

by Syed AK Anwar Hossain

*If we have the will and determination, we will surely be successful in the long run. Genuine and faithful effort never goes in vain. Only our determination, earnest efforts, diligence and sustained labour for decades can bring us our much needed success in this field.*

FLOODING, however, is no new thing in Bangladesh. Every year flood is a regular visitor to this riverine country. During the British rule, occasionally East Bengal came under the grip of fearful floods. Now-a-days it occurs every year, because the rivers have been silted up, bridges and culverts have been built many a river causing obstructions to the free flow of water. It is necessary that at least the big rivers be completely dredged, and dredging must be carried on thoroughly and continually throughout the year. Expert help can be sought in this regard from the Russians who dredge their rivers continually throughout the year especially during the winter in the Siberian area to clear the rivers of ice and snow and also siltation.

ports. However it cannot be done in one or two years. It will need decades of patient, cautious and painstaking labour. We can also take sound advices from the engineers and experts of the Netherlands who have the experience of reclaiming lands from under the sea by dykes and polders. We can also take technical and engineering, and also monetary assistance from the USA. After all the adage goes — where there is a will, there is a way. If we have the will and determination, we will surely be successful in the long run. Genuine and faithful effort never goes in vain. Only our determination, earnest efforts, diligence and sustained labour for decades can bring us our much needed success in this field.

A thorough survey of all the river systems of Bangladesh must be undertaken by experts from home and abroad to ascertain the amount of work that will be needed and expenses that will be incurred, and feasibility reports be made. China after long 30 years' endeavour has been able to control partially the yearly devastating floods of the Hwang Ho river. We can also invite experts from that friendly country to show them our river systems and topography which are more of less similar to theirs, and seek their advices and feasibility re-

# The Dangers of Being 'American'

Jim Lobe writes from Washington

*The United States accepted more immigrants each year than any other country in the world — about one million. Altogether about 20 per cent of all children under age 18 in the United States today is an immigrant or has at least one immigrant parent.*

ATTENTION all immigrant children: assimilating into the 'American Way of Life' may be hazardous to your physical and emotional health. That is the tentative conclusion of a major new report on the children of immigrant families released recently in Washington by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine.

The 314-page report, 'From Generation to Generation,' found that, despite their higher rates of poverty, "children in immigrant families appear to experience better health and adjustment than do children in US-born families."

The authors of the report — which was based on a panel review of dozens of studies between 1900 and 1990 — discovered that as second and third-generation immigrants assimilated into US society, their health actually declines. The panel, which includes some of the nation's top experts in public health, medicine, sociology and demography, suggested that a number of cultural and related factors may work to protect first- and second-generation immigrant children, including diet, greater family cohesion, stronger discipline, and other cultural norms, such as taboos against smoking, drinking and pre-marital sex. "Immigrant kids eat less junk food; they eat more traditional diets — more whole grains and fewer French fries and hamburgers," said Donald Hernandez, who coordinated the study.

As a result, it recommended further research both to test the validity of the findings and to determine which protective factors may be more important. "A central challenge involves identifying the factors — genetic, familial, behavioral, environmental — tied to the countries of origin that play into these protective functions," the report said. The United States accepted more immigrants each year than any other country in the world — about one million. Altogether about 20 per cent of all children under age 18 in the United States today is an immigrant or has at least one immigrant parent.

with little formal education and were more likely to live in overcrowded conditions — both "risk factors" for poorer health and educational performance. Even these immigrants, however, were found to be generally healthier and greater educational achievement than for purposes of the study, first-generation immigrants were defined as those children who came to the United States after their birth; second-generation immigrants are those who were born in the United States of at least one foreign-born parent. The findings clearly implied that adapting to a US life-style, particularly by immigrant children living in poverty, often is damaging to their health and well-being in a number of ways. At the same time, the report stressed that research in this area had been "patchy", although "quite consistent" over time.

same ethnic group. Fernandez attributed this result to traditional norms against smoking and drinking by women which they brought to the United States from their homelands. Immigrant parents also reported that their children experience fewer acute and chronic health problems compared with their and-later generation families. And adolescents in immigrant families reported fewer neurological problems, obesity, asthma, early sexual activity, smiling, alcohol-consumption, drug use, delinquency and the use of violence compared with their counterparts among US-born parents, according to the report. However, these health advantages appeared to fade over time as immigrant children became more assimilated into youth culture — and often mi-

# India's Remarkable Response to a Family Tragedy

by Rep. Merrill Cook

*In the last few years, my daughter, Barbara, also developed a strong interest in India. She was engaged to marry a wonderful man who shared that passion. Peter Zachariadis was an exceptional young man who felt very much at home in India.*

INDIA'S story, mystery and, above all, her people have captured my family's collective imagination in recent years. This country has blessed our lives and comforted us in recent tragedy. My oldest son, Brian, is happily married to a woman from India, Nipa Gupta, who comes from a small city near Calcutta. They met and married at Yale University and are raising their daughters, in my only grandchildren, in the ways of India. I have learned a great deal about the Indian culture through Nipa's gracious presence in our family. I remember the traditional Indian celebrations they held when granddaughters Tori and Anisha ate their first solid food.

passion. Peter Zachariadis was an exceptional young man who felt very much at home in India. Two years ago, he spent a year in Benares learning Hindi and studying the Vedic texts. When he graduated from college in May, he decided to pursue graduate studies centered around India's religion and history. Upon his graduation, he returned to India to spend time with a teacher there, Mr. Dixit. The trip was partially a graduation present from his parents. Tragically, he died there last month. Peter was bathing in the Ganges river about eight miles from Uttar Kashi, high in the Himalayan foothills, on the evening of June 22 when he was swept away by the current. His disappearance brought me in direct contact with the Indian government for the first time. I was moved and honoured by their prompt and generous re-

sponse to my request for help in finding Peter. He and his friend, Robert Svoboda, went into the river beneath the prayer terrace at the ashram to bathe in preparation for a planned fire ceremony. The river is fast there, but Peter had been directed by the Swamy to what everyone thought was a safe place to bathe. Two hours after he was swept away, Robert called Peter's father, who called me. By then, it was dark in India. The local police and ashram residents were searching the banks, but nothing more was being done. When I got the call, it was the morning of the 22nd here in the United States. I immediately called the State Department who put me in touch with Brig. Gen. Arun Roye, the military attache at the Indian Embassy. He was both compassionate and efficient. He immediately arranged search by a Gorkha battalion. By 4.00 a.m. in India, the Army had launched a ground search and the Air Force a helicopter search. The battalion searched upstream. The Bengal Engineering Group searched downstream. Civilian trackers were employed and medical personnel stood by. Part of the river was dammed off and frogmen searched the dammed area.

I was repeatedly updated over the next few days on all the very extensive search for Peter. When Peter's father flew to India, he, too, was amazed and humbled by the remarkable efforts the government and the wonderful local residents made to find Peter. The embassy sent a car to meet Peter's father at the airport and arranged a hotel for him. The Indian government and civilians made this remarkable effort knowing that there was little chance that Peter was still alive. In that part of the country, the Ganges is a roaring, raging torrent that plunges down out of the mountains for miles and miles. But those of us waiting here in the States envisioned our tamer American rivers and clung to the hope that he had pulled himself out of the river at some point and was only lost. Until now, my interest in India has been primarily intellectual. When I was elected to Congress, I promptly joined the Congressional Caucus on India because of my children's interest in India. I was proud to join 341 members of Congress last year in defeating the measure

# Suddenly, Tinted Cars Become Transparent

As rebel leader Foday Sankoh goes on trial in Sierra Leone, the peacekeeping force in charge of security has ordered car owners to de-tint their windows. In Freetown, reports Gemini News Service, it has long been difficult to know who is inside a car or who is driving it. Tinting had become as much a fashion as a security precaution. Rod Mac-Johnson writes from Freetown

IN Freetown, capital of troubled Sierra Leone, all vehicles are suddenly transparent and everybody can identify drivers and passengers. Only days ago more than half the cars in the city had tinted windows and drivers could be identified only by the number plates. The order to strip the tint came from the West African Peacekeeping Force (ECOMOG). It was, they said, to improve security. Not everyone likes the idea, but some like 35-year-old student, Sorie Kamara are delighted. He was run down by a fugitive motorist and six months later he is still nursing his injuries. He says: "If this order had come earlier I would have been able to identify driver. We can now breathe with relief, knowing who is driving and not thinking that a rebel or a junta collaborator is on board." Tough security moves, including the order to cut out the tint, came as Corporal Foday Sankoh, the leader of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), went on trial in the city on eight counts of treason. Sankoh had been arrested in Lagos in March 1997 and put in jail in Nigeria for more than a year. His RUF committed many atrocities in the rural areas over several years. He was ex-

tradited to Sierra Leone after the restoration of President Tejan Kabbah last March. Sankoh's RUF allied itself with Major Johnny Karoma in overthrowing the democratically-elected Kabbah. Karoma made Sankoh deputy head of state while he was still being held in Nigeria and he never took over the post. Karoma ruled for nine months before being ejected by the Nigerian-led ECOMOG. He fled and Nigeria handed over Sankoh to Sierra Leone. The anti-tint order came from the Sierra Leonean Chief of Staff, Nigerian-born Brigadier-General Maxwell Khobe. Some people were furious at the order. A civil service permanent secretary had tinted his

Mercedes Benz jeep only three days earlier at a cost of \$200 — and then he had to pay another \$20 to get it removed. Transport official John Sesay said the order affected a quarter of the country's 55,000 registered cars. He added: "We have constantly warned owners not to tint their vehicles. People were too obsessed with making their cars fanciful. We fully back ECOMOG." ECOMOG's chief information officer said: "We want to see who is driving at the checkpoints. The country is at war, so we are taking no chances." Sierra Leone is far from peaceful yet. Recently rebels lured a surrender at the northern town of Kabila and then opened fire on soldiers of ECOMOG at point-blank range.

Many were killed. Tinted glass on expensive cars became the fashion in 1992 when the 29-year-old Captain Valentine Strasser toppled President Joseph Momoh by coup and formed a government whose members were all under 30 years old. An army colonel pensioned off at the time because he objected to the army's flamboyant style said: "It was fashionable as young military officers wearing Ray Ban sunglasses raced Grand Prix style along Freetown's narrow streets. "You never knew who was on board, but with emergency lights flicking, you had to jump for dear life." Many civilians followed these trendy traits and commuters nicknamed tinted vehicles "mind your own business", which meant the vehicles were off-limit to passers-by. Curious commuters guessed that the main aim of the owners of such vehicles was to spirit away someone's girlfriend or wife on romantic missions. The irony of all this is that Strasser's government used to cite "security reasons" for tinting their cars. And many ECOMOG cars are still to be tinted. — Gemini News The writer is a journalist who works for the Sierra Leone News Agency and writes on social and environmental issues.

that would have limited U.S. aid to India. I believe continued aid is critical at a time when India's democracy is still young and her economy changing. I have watched with deep concern the growing tensions between India and Pakistan. But my emotions were not deeply stirred and my experience with India was not deeply personal until Peter disappeared there. I am more grateful than I can adequately say to the people and government of India for their compassion and their remarkable sustained effort. To every parent, the life of a child is priceless and worth any effort to preserve. But the Indian government's efforts on behalf of a tourist, not even one of India's own, both moved us and comforted us. We will be forever grateful. I don't know very much about the religious beliefs that drew Peter to India. But I know he was thrilled to be back there and he and my daughter were both looking forward to a later trip to India that they would take together. I know that bathing in the Ganges was an important element of Peter's trip. Before he left for India, he told his father that he felt somewhat self-conscious being a white man bathing in the river, but said he had accepted that this was a holy river and respected the ritual. In a notebook read by his parents following his death, Peter had written, "those who are advanced in spiritual understanding will bathe in the Ganges without considering the condition of the water." We are struggling to accept Peter's death. Barbara believes he is happy. When Peter's father travelled to India to help in the search, he was told how fast Peter learned, how incredibly advanced he was in his understanding given his short years of study. I hope Barbara is right. I like to think he died in a place he had come to love doing exactly what he wanted to do. We all loved his keen mind, gentle heart and growing passion for spiritual understanding. I think his time in India and his exposure to its teachers and religious beliefs enhanced those wonderful qualities Peter already had and prepared him for whatever wonders life after this life holds. For that, too, we will always hold India dear. US Rep. Merrill Cook sits on the House Banking and Financial Services Committee — India Abroad News Service

Garfield® by Jim Davis. TAPPITY TAPPITY TAPPITY. REHEARSAL. JAMES BOND. THE FOUNDRY IS DARK, SAVE FOR THE GLOW OF THE FURNACE AND CRUCIBLE OF MOLTEN METAL — AS MR. JUBBY FOLLOWS BOND OUT OF THE WAREHOUSE. YOU CAN'T HIDE FOREVER, BOND! MY GUN AND YOUR GUARANTEE YOUR ULTIMATE FATE! BUT IF YOU'RE WISE ENOUGH TO COOPERATE — WE'VE STILL TIME TO BARSAN!