

JU: What Next?

The united action by a section of teachers and students at Jahangirnagar University was both unique and heroic. The university authorities first fumbled in their response but later recovered to ferret out the rapists through various measures.

The right course for the university would have been to deal those that they found to be guilty the maximum they could by way of punishment i.e. expulsion and cancellation of all of their academic certificates and more.

The Jahangirnagar University Teachers' Association on Saturday called for criminal proceedings to be drawn against the 13 and the setting up of a judicial probe into these and related crimes occurring on the JU campus over the last 10 years.

The nation's laws are not yet so equipped as to deal with a situation of serial rape incidents where the victims do not go to law for justice. Now how to make up for the inadequacy of law?

JUTA's call for a judicial probe to be conducted by a Supreme Court judge partly answers the question. The terms of reference must include the responsibility to suggest enactment and amendment of laws so as situations like JU's can be justly treated and healed.

And there, and not in the probe or even in the laws, present or future, lies the true answer to the rule of the rapists. The students and teachers, divided as they are into so many groups having as many or more ideas and outlooks, must stand as one against violent crimes on the campus.

It was a wonderful ambience at the JU with man and woman scholars ambling about lending colour and life to the campus. Unfailing vigilance and united action can only bring back that soul-filling atmosphere to JU.

Sign of Indo-Pak Maturity

The hitherto stalemated Indo-Pak dialogue has restarted in earnest. The first-ever substantive talks between Indian Foreign Secretary K Reghunan and his Pakistan counterpart Shamshad Ahmad since the two countries went nuclear in May have just ended on a realistic and forward-looking note in Islamabad.

The Islamabad talks occasioned a sea-change from the semantic differences over the order of agenda which had spoilt many an effort for a dialogue in the past. This time at the talks 'nuclear restraint' was discussed on October 16 and Kashmir on October 17. Both sides were understandably reticent in making the details available to the press at this stage; but we read a very positive sign into whatever little has trickled from the Islamabad talks.

A mortal danger faces India and Pakistan if they should persist in exercising their lethal non-conventional options to a point of launching on a full-fledged nuclear arms race. The world needn't tell the two countries about the consequences, they themselves realise the same only too well.

Tragedy in Karachi

Hakim Mohammad Saeed — the name is enough for cognoscenti in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh — is dead. He was killed in Karachi on Saturday morning by unidentified assailants. With him died his close associate Abdul Quadir Quarishi and bodyguard Wail Mohammad, by the same burst of automatic fire opened by the assassins when at six he arrived at the Hamdard Clinic to minister medication to patients.

A devout Muslim, Hakim Mohammad Saeed was known for his catholicity of mind and deep and wide learning. Mixing with all and sundry he, however, never compromised with his aristocratic tastes. Born in Delhi he developed from a small unani dispensing unit the giant Hamdard Trust now straddling the whole of the subcontinent.

We pray for Hakim Saeed's weal in the other world and for an early recovery of Pakistan in this.

Wye River Summit Is "Israeli-Palestinian Partnership" in the Offing?

The exchange of information on possible terrorist attacks and appropriate steps to stop those on both sides may gradually bring back some confidence among the ordinary people. After all, a great majority on both sides (Israelis 82 per cent and Palestinians even more) now believes in peace. But the major problems are to be solved.

Israelis and Palestinians closer to lasting peace, President Clinton added. The present US effort is, however, seen by many as a move by White House to deflect domestic attention on the impeachment process which may ultimately end up in no impeachment at all.

Apparently, the US administration has set up a mini Camp David in Wye River Plantation in Maryland, away from the glare of TV camera. It wanted to use the Camp David experience for another M-E peace agreement. In the quieter environment the leaders get the chance to reflect more on the important issues that divide them and look for solutions that would be good for their people.

President Clinton has been pressing for breaking the logjam as it is in the interest of both Israelis and Palestinians to reach peace which is long overdue. He asked both parties to remember that "peace is more than a process, it is, in the end, a destination."

This week saw the Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE) plummet by record levels because of the HUBCO crisis. The Government of Pakistan (GOP) having filed various criminal charges against the management.

Saif on a great many issues but HUBCO and KAPCO are great scams which needed to be exposed as they would have otherwise looted the Pakistan treasury bare. In existence from the '80s HUBCO scam was actually engineered by ex-World Bank official Ebrahim Elawan in collusion with senior power officials in Pakistan.

A great majority of professionals, particularly in the financial field are decrying the heavy-handed tactics of GOP, led in this case by Senator Saifur Rahman of the Ehtesab Bureau (EB). Their contention is that the tough tactics mechanism of using FIA and police will deter foreigners from any financial commitment to Pakistan.

Like in the case of Ms Benazir Bhutto whom he has by the short hairs, Senator Saifur Rahman needs to be commended for a job well done in the case of HUBCO and KAPCO. One may not agree with

table are many but the most pressing ones are: more land for Palestinians out of occupied land and security guarantee for the Israelis. Undoubtedly, the issues are linked and can be dealt with effectively if both sides show enough flexibility. The basic demand of the Palestinians that Israelis must go back to pre-1967 border remains valid but unfortunately situation on the ground has changed dramatically.



Spotlight on Middle East Muslehuddin Ahmad

those areas in favour of Palestinians unless he is offered appropriate compensations. The idea of an agreed tract of land belonging to both parties to be kept as nature's reserve appears realistic in order to keep the two feuding communities apart. Details are to be worked out for policing those areas, if necessary initially by the US or international forces.

The issues on the negotiating table are many but the most pressing ones are: more land for Palestinians out of occupied land and security guarantee for the Israelis.

Power Play

Everything said and done, the fact remains we live in an unfair world where merit has no place, in fact merit is a disqualifier. There should have been some finesse in the handling, the perception of gunpoint negotiation could have been avoided for the sake of our economy. Whatever the merits of our case, the long-term implications are adverse. In the power sector, we are seeing power play in real time.

emerged after GOP announced a very welcome 30 per cent reduction in electricity tariffs which gave consumers relief across the board. On the other hand it was rumored that in absolute contrast GOP had agreed to 15 per cent tariff hike as well devaluation of the Pakistani Rupee.

AS I SEE IT Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi

Analysts across the broad spectrum braced themselves to assume the worst, KSE index fell dizzily as a composite result. One tends to give credence to Ishaq Dar when he says that IMF seems to have softened its original conditionalities at the insistence of Pakistan.

confidence building measures are taken. The spirit of Wye handshake must travel down to the people through the efforts of the leaders themselves. They must visit one another regularly and sort out the problems at the ground level.

Several negotiating committees are now engaged in Wye River. The Israeli withdrawal from 13% per cent of more land of West Bank with 3 per cent nature's reserve appears settled.

As the reports show, the place looks like a battle field, residents ever prepared to attack one another. No one understands the special resonance of Hebron better than those who live the experiment: a Jewish settler, Orit Struck, mother of nine, who declares "I am a soldier on the front line of a battle."

The case of Hebron may look extreme to many but the animosity and the hatred are so deep and have been there for such a long time that Wye River handshake may not ease the situation unless very practical

ready retired. It should be interesting to see how the new COAS swallows this. In this critical stage, someone like Lt Gen Aizal Janjua, presently Comd 5 Corps at Karachi, with long experience in ISI could perhaps have fared far better.

The rest of the Army belongs to the COAS and it is his (and only his) prerogative to shuffle his commanders in the best interest of the Service rather than at any bidding from outside.

As everyone knows, it is the traditional right in the Army of every Commanding Officer at every level to choose his own crop of close aides and slot in subordinates according to his own perception of what suits his command. With a good crop of Lt Gens to play around with, the selections have been routine, though the media has played it up as would befit a "Kabbadi" match.

Mian Nawaz Sharif has moved his real preference for COAS i.e. Lt Gen Ziauddin, formerly Engineer Corps, using his prerogative as PM to the sensitive post of DG ISI, very much in the manner late Lt Gen SR Kallu was brought in by Ms Benazir even though he was al-

ready retired. It should be interesting to see how the new COAS swallows this.

We have many a priority to look for other than to see if our national rear is covered or not. Nurul Bashir Khilgaon, Dhaka

Post-flood rehabilitation programmes

Sir, Now that the flood water is fast receding at almost all places, the question how to cope with the post-flood rehabilitation assumes major importance. In spite of the grandiose plans, hopeful announcements etc. of the government agencies and others, the affected people do not see how the massive problems will be tackled. In my opinion, serious attention has to be given to the following:

It is also interesting to note that the media failed to criticise the strike call. The media, however, did not fail to criticise in bitter words when the Chittagong Port workers resorted to strike. Is this because the university teachers belong to the upper strata of the society or influential? I think judgement of the media should be neutral and impartial.

I wonder why the teachers went for a strike when an enquiry committee was working and the committee was instructed to submit the report within three days.

It is also interesting to note that the media failed to criticise the strike call. The media, however, did not fail to criticise in bitter words when the Chittagong Port workers resorted to strike.

Asad Rahman Segunbagicha, Dhaka

To the Editor...

Another usual day at T&T Sir, My sufferings for getting my telephone line shifted is not over. This has happened today (October 15) when I went to Sher-E-Bangla Nagar Telephone office. The office has three alternative days for general people to submit/collect (and to pass fines from one table to another table...as if it is not T&T's part of job) papers for shifting/new connection etc.

Thursday was one of the public day. I went to the table from where my demand note would be issued. But the person was not there. We were told that the person was sent by higher officer to GPO for a job (official or personal?). There was no one to attend his table and as a result we 8 people were waiting and chewing the gossip of other people. I waited for one and a half hours and saw few desperately deciding to wait more...but I remain to ask myself, "why do they go outside office when they fix schedule for public? It is not us who decided the day...what kind of courtesy it is?"

People may argue that they might have some urgent business outside office. Yes, they may have...but where is the alternative support system? Why it was necessary for a person to go out where he is already scheduled for attending many like us? Some were saying that he is the only one who can handle cases come to his table. I think there is a serious problem with the working style and system not with the person sits in that chair.

Only God knows...how many HURDLES shall I cross before I hear a dialing tone in my own telephone set. Or will there be a day when the telephone will ring and say... "Good morning. This is T&T at your service. Thanks for giving us opportunity to serve you..."

John Martin Dhaka

... then, there must be a flaw ... Sir, Thank you for the elaborate story on failure of the automated trading system published on 11 October.

While someone said in his column that network collision is very common, I would politely beg to differ. The term called "security" in a networked environment comes exactly because of such scenarios, and one would expect that this type of systems which handle financial transactions, must be secure, fault-tolerant, and robust.

be a basic flaw somewhere. That is all that we can gather from the report published. May God help the traders! Sajjad Hossain Dhaka

Lynching comes to Bangladesh Sir, There is a disturbing trend in the society, needing immediate deterrent action. The newspapers are full of stories daily of lynching of terrorists or by the terrorists. Nowadays extortionists and muggers are being chased and caught by the crowd, and then mercilessly beaten up by the members of the public, resulting in frequent deaths.

The people seem to have lost faith in police action, and feel frustrated at the indifference shown by the Administration in according the issue a very low priority. Today the weak and meek are the victims, but a time may come soon when groups and powerful public figures would be the victims. The internal party feuds are already taking violent turns. Violence is being used as a solution. What is the reaction of the authority? The government had to look at every facet of the illnesses of the society to instill public confidence. We hear more platitudes than action plans. Plans are announced from time to time, but there is a huge gap in implementation, and the quality of the service leaves much to be desired.

The image of governance has to be improved. Cumulative public grievances are dangerous, and later it becomes difficult to handle too many issues simultaneously. Nip it in the bud. Why the administration cannot become tough from time to time? A Zabr Dhaka

"Clandestine radio..." Sir, My attention was drawn to the news item which came on the front page of The Daily Star on 15th of Oct 1998. T&T and Betar has come to dispute who is to perform the detection of this unauthorised transmission.

Technically speaking it is the job of the Ministry of BT&T to possess and operate adequate detection finding equipment to detect any and all unauthorised frequencies. Until BT&T was stripped of its regulatory role it was the job of MOPTT. However, practical situation is neither BT&T nor MOPTT has necessary DF equipment or organisation to monitor, detect and put to stoppage any unauthorised transmission.

It may be mentioned that a mobile unit was procured during the last days of Pakistan to detect unauthorised VHF transmissions. After liberation this vehicle was stripped of its equipment and transformed into a pleasure vehicle by the then management group. After that BT&T never procured or operated equipment for frequency monitoring and detection. It is quite evident that even after 27 years of independence, we are still unaware what are minimum essentials for an independent country.