

How to be a Business Hub

Chittagong's status as the country's "commercial capital" and how to go about turning that thought into action has indeed been the subject of some debate.

Over the past three decades, Chittagong has gradually lost its position to Dhaka, with the former's basic economic infrastructures such as roads and highways, telecommunications, power supply etc. remaining neglected.

It is clear that the government needs to improve economic infrastructure in the city and invest heavily in the region's social sectors. Expansion of the port, particularly with the addition of a private-built terminal is vital.

Sind Imbroglia

In Pakistan's highly mercurial politics one critical threshold is crossed after another with the country never appearing to come unstuck from a state of flux.

Sharif's this most auspicious political vindication today seems overtaken by the fact that on his recommendations Sind Assembly has been suspended and the province is placed under direct federal rule.

Politics and the Underworld

Three suspected terrorists, two of them wanted in multiple murder cases, were arrested on Thursday night from the Jatiya Sangsad hostel room of an MP representing a Noakhali constituency.

There is nothing in law or the Constitution that MPs elected to the Jatiya Sangsad will be angels. But national politics has come to a pass when one is no more scandalised by the news of leaders nurturing all kinds of bullies.

It is possible, or rather very probable, that the crime situation now largely involves politics and politicians. The political parties and the Jatiya Sangsad must soon find a way out.

Too Much Insistence, Too Little Attention

The essential problem is to develop a practical and realistic approach. The very word 'administration' is too narrowly conceived. There is an obsession about rules and regulations and an acute shortage of men of action.

SIX ministers wrote to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to transfer a particular secretary at the centre. Vajpayee kept quiet. He did not move even another secretary, who annoyed the minister so much that he stripped her of all powers.

There can be two reasons. One, he did not want to needle the bureaucracy, which is already performing less and less. Two, he was not sure if his ministers were all that justified in asking for the transfer of certain officers.

No doubt, bureaucrats are only pushing files. They give the impression as if they do not take the BJP-led coalition seriously. But this can be because of political instability.

The ministers I have talked to feel let down. One of them said if they had a majority, no officer would have dared to drag his feet.

for "not acting".

Welfare Minister Maneka Gandhi says that during the V P Singh regime (she was also a minister then), bureaucrats took the initiative to put forward suggestions and carried out orders willingly.

Commerce Minister R K Hegde feels that the bureaucracy has got politicised. It is coming in the way of delivering the goods. His impression is that they have become "lords unto themselves" and they have to be disciplined if any government is to move further.

Bureaucrats serve the interests of parties which pamper them and consider them their own. This has destroyed collective functioning. In fact, the bureaucrats allied to one party see to it that even the routine work of the opposition party is blocked.

their views frankly in cabinet meetings because the officers are present.

This is a serious matter, which all political parties must ponder over. Theirs may be a small gain. But the nation's loss is enormous because no officer feels accountable.

I do not think that a country, which eats, drinks and sleeps politics, can now turn back and

— and good intentions — the government offices continue to work in the rut and carry on old traditions which have little significance today.

Take, for example, the system of noting by various grades of people. This has been done away with in almost all other countries.

Still prevalent is the old practice of the man at the bottom of the hierarchy, generally a clerk, writing the first "note" marginal in their impact.

Other notes are just wasted. Nehru emphasised this point. But the system has not changed much.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Navar writes from New Delhi

agree upon keeping certain fields like administration out of politics. When ministers use bureaucrats for political purposes, it is not surprising that the latter become dilatory and defiant.

Jawaharlal Nehru would openly say that one of the problems he faced was "a reorganisation of our administrative structure."

How Serious are Asian Trouble Spots

Among the main trouble spots in Asia certainly the South Asia, where two main countries — India and Pakistan — have been against each other for a long time, is the global attention.

THE political scene in Asia often causes concern for global peace and stability. It is only logical corollary to certain developments which stem from some conflicts that are in many ways intractable in nature.

Asia has a large number of sovereign countries ranging from vast population like China and India to too smaller nations like the Maldives — he island-state in the Indian Ocean. It has flourishing democracies as well as communist nations and also kingdoms.

Among the main trouble spots in the Asia, certainly the South Asia, where two main countries India and Pakistan have been in loggerheads for long, is the global attention.

conflicts like in the Afghanistan, Korean Peninsula and part of the continent that covers countries like Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and others that also fall in a way in the Middle East category in the context of the very nature of the crisis.

The East and the South-east Asia is relatively less tense on political plane although some countries there are facing economic crises of big proportions including such economic giants like Japan and South Korea.

According to a report by the London-based IISS think-tank, the political tensions in Asia have increased in recent years mainly because of the nuclear consequences of India and Pakistan. The annual report of the IISS says that these two countries fought three wars in their more than fifty years of existence but dangers involving them have increased manifold following their atomic explosions in May this year.

had exploded nuclear devices way back in 1974 and it improved its capability in the field by several detonations while Pakistan, so far remained restrained on the issue, followed the Indian suit when it also carried out several explosions in late May this year.

The two Koreas have the history of belligerence for long and North Korea has built up a vast army over the years as it feels that only defence can protect it from rival South Korea which is supported by the western powers led by the United States.

Some reports suggest that "bulk" of the artillery including 80 per cent of the artillery and the missiles are positioned within 60 km distance of the South Korea borders. Their hostilities are no new but some developments indicate that the

environment in the Korean Peninsula may worsen if the North Korean regime finds it difficult to cope with the internal problems. Food shortage and some kind of uncertainty — albeit small in nature within the ruling authority may at one stage encourage it to experiment military clashes with the other Korea because this may help the North to tide over domestic problems.

Certainly, this is only an apprehension that depends on the future course of events in the Peninsula as well as within the North itself. But the dangers cannot be ruled out.

Afghanistan scenario remains full of unpredictable events despite the success of the Taliban in controlling most parts of the embattled country. The situation there had also brought Iran within the proximity of getting involved in the imbroglio. However, of late, there has been a thaw in the tensions caused by Iran's likelihood of involving itself in the conflict. The Afghan tangle is very complex in nature and it seems that it would remain a trouble spot even if the Taliban

on a file. Whatever else is recorded subsequently, the original note forms the basis on which depends the fate of the case. There is nothing derogatory about a clerk giving his opinion. But it only shows that a case is not straightaway dealt with at a high level to lessen the red tape on one hand and to enable an officer of experience and calibre to dispose of it quickly on the other.

At present, there is too much insistence on communication through formal channels, too much cross-reference, too many reviews by legal officers, too much pre-occupation with 'saving' rupees and too little attention to effectiveness. Administration is primarily the conduct of programmes and policies for the nation. Hence the importance of objects, targets, results, responsibilities and the delegation of authority. Mobilisation of men, infusing them with purpose and making them responsible for producing results is the challenge before the country.

The essential problem is to develop a practical and realistic approach. The very word 'administration' is too narrowly conceived. There is an obsession about rules and regulations and an acute shortage of

men of action. The present rules do not permit quick vertical mobility. They should be amended to provide more opportunities for promotion at the lower level. Those who excel should be adequately rewarded.

One other way to get results is to restructure the civil services. The present system of classification of the posts into four classes, or gazetted and non-gazetted, should be abolished. The services can be divided into technical and non-technical. And those jobs, which necessitate the posting of employees to rural or hazardous areas, should carry not only a substantial allowance but also pension at a higher scale.

Effective leadership by the Vajpayee government's ministers is important. It does not consist merely in issuing directives and securing their compliance. Ministers have to set an example of dedication and total involvement in work. Their conduct, hours of work and willingness to fully shoulder the burdens of office will have an exemplary effect. But if they have political gains in view, they cannot be objective. The bureaucracy can exploit this. Probably this is what is happening. Ministers' complaints are probably justified. But when the entire administration is run by important organisations outside the government, for example, the RSS, and the communist politburo, public servants are bound to use the opportunities to play politics.

of any other group or faction there eventually finds a firm grip to control the whole country.

There are other trouble spots in the Asian region but three or four major conflicts capped by the Indo-Pakistan tensions over "Kashmir" pose real threat to the political stability.

Many Asian countries are mired in poverty. Yet these countries are now in the hot race for strengthening military prowess. Continuing conflicts have come down heavily on the economies of these nations affecting their people. Iraq-Iran war had continued for a long time, and Afghanistan scene shows no signs of abating, and India and Pakistan continue to build up arms capability and strengthen atomic powers. Two Koreas are facing each other.

It is in this context, Asia has all the potentials to witness an aggravation in the political climate even though nothing is alarming at the current stage. Asian nations which are not much involved in the tensions should strive hard to see to it that the tensions are lessened before they are exploded in wider scale. The peace-loving nations in other continents can also contribute to this effort to improve the political environment in this biggest continent.



power definitely tilted towards India which is otherwise also bigger in size and population. The IISS feels that now that both countries have bombs, the chances of wider conflicts between them involving nuclear power have only increased. In that case, the dangers have undoubtedly enhanced in the South Asia and this scenario poses serious challenge to world peace and stability. These two

Gerald Ford on President Clinton's Impeachment

by Khandakar Q Elahi

The picture of American society currently depicted in many minds all over the world, is the graphic details of President Clinton's affairs with Monica Lewinsky in the Kenneth Starr's report.

THE House of Representatives has now authorized its Judiciary Committee to begin an inquiry on President Clinton's possible impeachment; the Committee will determine whether Mr. Clinton has committed "High Crimes and Misdemeanors", the Constitutional requirement for impeachment. The outcome of the enquiry is not at all clear. Mr. Clinton is in trouble for having an extramarital affair with a White House intern. But the charges do not concern this matter: They are perjury — lying under oath, and obstruction of justice.

Under the circumstances, former President Gerald Ford's suggestion merits evaluation, particularly because it was widely publicized by the print media and debated in the TV discussion programmes. He made this suggestion in an article published in The New York Times on the 4th October titled "The Path Back to Dignity". It may be recalled that Mr. Ford himself became President in 1974 after Richard Nixon had resigned under the threat of impeachment. President Ford writes, "I resolved to say nothing unless my words added constructively to the national discussion... This much now seems clear: whether or not President Clinton has broken

any laws, he has broken faith with those who elected him...

"The question confronting us, then, is not whether the President has done wrong, but rather, what is an appropriate form of punishment for his wrongdoing. A simple apology is inadequate, and a fine would trivialize his misconduct... I think the time has come to pause and consider the long-term consequences of removing this President from office based on the evidence at hand.

"The House Judiciary Committee should be able to conclude a preliminary inquiry into possible grounds for impeachment before the end of the year... Imagine a President receiving not an ovation from the people's representatives, but a harshly worded rebuke as rendered by members of both parties. I emphasize: this would be a rebuke, not a rebuttal by the President.

"Let all this be done without partisan exploitation or mean-spiritedness. Let it be dignified, honest and, above all, cleansing. The result, I believe, would be the first mo-

ment of majesty in an otherwise squalid year. At 85, I have no personal or political agenda, nor do I have any interest in "rescuing" Bill Clinton. But I do care, passionately, about rescuing the country I love from further turmoil or uncertainty.

Few people would doubt Mr. Ford's sincerity, but his suggestion, if accepted, serve the purpose — save President, the institution; not President, the person? I would examine this question shortly, but before that Mr. Ford's principle of making the suggestion needs to be clarified. More specifically, he raises the question: Has Mr. Clinton broken any law? The institution of marriage, that forms the foundation of all human societies, is regulated by two sets of laws — one religious and the other state. Extramarital affairs are crimes under both laws: it is a sin under religious laws and a crime under civil laws.

The state prevents this crime by threatening material punishment, while the religion prevents it by arousing human conscience and warning punishment after death. Mr. Clinton has committed a crime: The public and the members of the Congress know it and the President has admitted it. The question thus is: What is the proper dose of punishment? A person's conduct is treated as a crime if it violates laws of the society in which they live. The severity of a crime is determined by the potential injury it may produce in the society. By saying, "a simple apology or a fine" is not the proper dose of punishment for President Clinton, Mr. Ford recognizes that this is not an ordinary case. For, these are the normal punishments prescribed by laws of the society: The husband apologizes to the wife. If the wife forgives the husband, the matter ends there; if not, the matter is settled in the court, which usually involves some kind of material compensation. In my estimation, taking Mr. Clinton's crime lightly,

poses a potential threat of endangering the foundation of three vital institutions, not only in the US, but all over the world: the institution of marriage, the institution of government and the institution of democracy. First, marriage is a moral institution based on trust and commitment. They are absolutely necessary for achieving the purpose of marriage: procreation of children and development of a humane society. A couple cannot perform their parental duty of creating good citizens if there are no love and respects between them; trust and commitment are the foundation of these supreme values.

Forgiving President Clinton for his illicit sex, amounts to giving this crime a national approval. Second, What impact Mr. Clinton's illicit sex portends on the institution of Presidency? If Americans do not object to Mr. Clinton's extramarital affairs, they will have nothing to say if they get a president who is single and establishes sexual relations with many women. By doing this the President will break no

civil law. As Thomas Paine, America's godfather, says, "Power corrupts everybody... Were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver". Finally, whether people like it or not, America is the leader of the world, a role it has been effectively playing since the end of WWII. And by virtue of the spirit and promise with which America was born, she could claim some authority of "moral leadership of the free world" yet to be created. Democracy, not the naked capitalism, is the hope of humanity's existence on the earth.

The Cold War has ended. This has created a unique political atmosphere for all-out efforts to institutionalize democracy all over the world. America risks damaging its moral leadership authority because of President Clinton's sex scandal. For, the picture of American society currently depicted in many minds all over the world, is the graphic details of President Clinton's affairs with Monica Lewinsky in the Kenneth Starr's report.

The writer, a former Associate Professor of the Bangladesh Agricultural University, now lives in Canada.

To the Editor...

WWC and power failure

Sir, After the catastrophic flood in the country have come the flood lights at the Bangabandhu Stadium, Dhaka.

While we whole heartedly welcome the holding of first ever knockout world cup international cricket tournament in Bangladesh, we wonder why when it was no more perceptible and justified to hold the out-door game in day time when frequent power failure, recurrent load-shedding and fluctuation of voltage are regular feature in the country.

Would the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Youth and Sports and President of BCB kindly clarify the matter?

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Contraception

Sir, Slowly the awareness that mass children in the family is good, not only for the well-being of the family as a whole, but also for the children, is coming into our ordinary people's mind. But once they decide

to have a small family the harder part comes — how to keep their family small? No means of contraception is perfect, 'accidents' of unwanted pregnancies occur while using most of them. Then most of them have side effects which vary sometimes from person to person. So that some contraceptives don't suit some people at all and they just cannot tolerate them.

So the choice for them gets narrower and narrower, as they find more and more contraceptives unsuitable for themselves. Because use of contraceptives is not for a month or so or an year or so. But for years and years together, once one has decided that she doesn't want any more children, and that their family is complete now. Ideally both husband and wife should share this responsibility of avoiding unwanted pregnancies. In our country strangely enough men don't want to take this trouble at all and leave it entirely to the helpless women. But the women of our country are mostly uneducated or have the minimum education. They can't understand or take seriously this responsibility and often get pregnant. Even while taking pills! This

happens because they miss a few pills, by forgetting or just out of carelessness.

Intrauterine contraceptive device or IUCD doesn't suit many and leads to pelvic infection in many. Hormone injections or Norplant are also not free from various side effects eg. irregular bleeding. In the end many women just stop using anything out of frustration. But since they still want to keep their families small and since their husbands don't cooperate at all, they have no alternative left but to go for abortion, which is called menstrual regulation or M/R, to sort of, cover-up what you actually are doing! M/R certainly is not and should not be used as a "contraception" to keep the family size small. But this is what many women are doing out of desperation, in our country. One woman gave the history of going through as many as ten M/Rs in 11 years! What an "easy" way of family planning! Most women go through at least two or three M/Rs to keep their family size small. This is not good either medically or ethically or religiously even. Not only it is going on unabated but it is also on the rise with the passage of time and women get-

ting more and more aware and busy with their profession and other activities. With it, is also rising the side effects and complications of induced abortion or M/R — both in cities and in villages. One woman had her first three pregnancies aborted! Then the fourth one, that she wanted to have turned out to be Ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy not located in the normal place) — most likely a complication of the repeated M/Rs. For her the only treatment now was surgery on emergency basis. Commonest complication of M/R is pelvic inflammatory disease, which in turn leads to many other problems e.g. sterility or inability to conceive, chronic pain etc.

In villages the problem gets even more serious and life threatening because the abortion is carried out by lay women or absolutely untrained midwives. Who haven't the slightest idea how to carry out the whole procedure taking all the aseptic precautions. So the results are as devastating as expected. Few days back a woman presented to the doctor with a painful and tender mass in lower abdomen. She gave the history of inserting a stick into her private parts, which the ig-

norant mid-wife had given her to abort her pregnancy. But it didn't and instead led to many serious complications. Finally she had to go to the doctor for D&C i.e. dilatation, evacuation and curettage. Still her suffering didn't end. The stick that she had inserted, perforated her genital organs and entered her abdominal cavity. There it produced an inflammatory lump or mass. She was in agonizing pain till the abdomen was opened up and the stick removed, surgically.

These lay women who cause sufferings of this magnitude to the poor women of our country, should be caught and sent to jail! How dare they practice something of which they have no knowledge or training at all! Our mass media should be used to make people aware of all these and many such hazards to their health, instead of harping on the same tune day in and day out.

Another thing, since men in our country want more and more children, they should be allowed in the labour room to watch the agony that his beloved wife goes through, to present him with a child. Maybe that will make them think twice before wanting too

many children! When you ask them why do they want so many children. The answer comes, who is going to 'eat' so much of wealth that he has accumulated? Well, why not donate!

Dr. Sabrina Q. Rashid, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

Pain in the neck

Sir, The success of a writer depends on how many people were moved by his/her works. Depending on that, Taslima Nasreen should be hailed as a very successful writer. The mere presence of her has made fundamentalists press and dry-clean their panjabis and hit the streets. Not only that, they are now planning for a fasting session too. How noble!

It is strange how Ms Taslima can pump the blood in all these people's veins. Now we hear the terms like 'Jihad' and 'Islamic Courts' too. Is this what fundamentalists do for a living, 'create confusions and trouble'? Shagor Dhaka