

# Is Afghan Syndrome Here?

It is rather amusing to note that Afghanistan before the advent of Taliban was not exactly a country, where women could move about freely. Indeed if anything Afghanistan from the social and economic points of view was a retrograde state.

To trace the origin of Taliban we have to travel back to the eighties. It was then that the Soviet Union found itself locked in battle against Afghanistan. In fact Afghanistan was the battle field and the battle against the Soviet Union was being fought by proxy by Afghan guerrillas operating out of bases inside Pakistan. Since the cold war was at its height weapons were flowing from the USA and training and logistical support from Pakistan. Money was flowing freely from the oil rich coffers of the Gulf Arabs.

The war lasted 10 years. It provided a golden opportunity to the West to severely maul the Soviet Union. The Soviets withdrew in disgrace much like the US had withdrawn from Vietnam in the seventies.

The debacle of the Soviet Union was the direct cause of the breaking up of that giant state. It was the most cataclysmic event at the end of the twentieth century which gave birth to independent Turkic states, thereby changing the pattern of relations worldwide. It has had an unexpected bonanza for Turkey. From a peripheral state of Europe, Turkey suddenly found herself in the centre of a region, which stretched right in the heart of Central Asia. And the population of the new states were their kith and kin and most spoke their language.

Landlocked Afghanistan has for long been the battlefield of expanding Empires. Thus during the heyday of the British Empire, Afghanistan drew the British Empire in occasional conflict with the Czar of Russia.

The withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan in the late eighties created a totally new situation within Afghanistan. Soviet Union provided with whatever authority there was in Afghanistan. With their departure Afghanistan remained for a period virtually without any authority. True there was a semblance of Government in Kabul but the warlords in far flung regions literally lorded it over.

The absence of any authority in Afghanistan has brought about what goes by the name of Taliban. They have their shad-

owly origin in the mountains within Pakistan, which was the spring board for destruction of the Soviet forces within Afghanistan. According to insistent reports the Taliban is the hand maiden of the Pakistan Intelligence Agency Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), which has its tentacles far and wide including operations in Kashmir.

With the departure of the Soviet forces since Afghanistan became virtually an open country, Taliban, with their superior training swiftly moved into the void and captured large part of the country. It not only established effective control over the area conquered by them, they also established a

half a century until the advent of Taliban in Afghanistan. There are distinct spheres of influence within Afghanistan, where Iran plays no insignificant part. Taliban, with its fanatical Sunni brand of Islam, has literally upset the apple cart causing severe strain between two friendly neighbours — Iran and Pakistan. Indeed we witness periodic sectarian violence within Pakistan, where Sunnis massacre the Shias. Yet Pakistan is only a Sunni majority country with a very sizeable Shia population.

It is astonishing that Taliban should make its appearance in Bangladesh — so far from its base. Furthermore Bangladesh is the ideal country

manbaria vividly illustrate to what extent the fanatics are prepared to go to impose their brand of life within Bangladesh. We have to seriously consider if through Madrassah education we are not depriving a large part of our population from joining the mainstream and become citizens equipped with modern knowledge.

An example from Turkey: The Government of the Welfare Party (RP) of Necmettin Erbakan was dragging the country towards obscurantism from which Mustafa Kemal Ataturk had saved the country in the early twenties. Fortunately for the Turks they have a powerful armed forces which enjoys genuine affection among the population because of its role in history. It takes its responsibility very seriously of being the guardian of Ataturk's reforms. The armed forces intervened and had the RP banned including its leader Erbakan. It took a very drastic step in the field of education. It changed the system of education by bringing an eight-year continuous education thereby eliminating the Madrassah-type education. In Bangladesh we have to seriously ponder about Madrassah Education.

Another point that has come to the fore is the attempt to destabilise the Government of Sheikh Hasina. It has to do with the trial of the assassins of Bangabandhu. The conclusion that we can draw is that Taliban is a mere smokescreen in order to destabilise the Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina because the Sheikh around the killers of Bangabandhu appears to get tighter.

Poet Shamsur Rahman's life has been saved miraculously. We can have a sigh of relief. The Taliban game seems to have been exposed. The effort to destabilise the Government of Sheikh Hasina appears to have been frustrated. We can have a sigh of collective relief. Let us be foolish to lower our guard. The killers of Bangabandhu have not only the mobile phones but very long arms and their roots run deep and they have powerful protectors. The price of democracy is eternal vigilance.

# Clinton's Plight May End in Delight

by Mir A Zaman

DOGGED Republican determination to reveal the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth appears to have won a few points for the man they want to see removed from office — William Jefferson Clinton, the first sitting president in 131 years since Andrew Jackson to be impeached in the annals of the United States of America. The trial of the president, which began in the Senate has more or less progressed along a predictable path, taxed tone of bipartisanship dissolving into partisan sniping with voting on two motions — to dismiss and to subpoena witnesses — on January 27. Both votes were strictly party line with a single exception, Wisconsin Democrat Russ Feingold who voted with Republicans. The margin was identical — 56-44 — against Senator Robert Byrd's motion which would have dismissed perjury and obstruction of justice charges against the president, and in favour of subpoenaing witnesses.

On completion of the first phase — presentation of cases from both the House prosecutors and the White House plus questions from the senators — the trial appeared headed for dismissal. When Senator Byrd made public his intention to move a motion to dismiss, the Republican spirit must have sagged; however, the House managers were not ready to throw in the towel. In a controversial move, they sought ruling from a US District Court to force co-operation from Monica Lewinsky, whose affair with Clinton led to the impeachment proceeding. Judge Norma Holloway Johnson ruled that the House prosecutors had no right under Lewinsky's immunity deal with Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr to force her to submit to their questioning. Nevertheless, Starr could, according to Johnson's ruling, answer questions from his staff and allow the House managers to attend. That was what the Republicans needed and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde obtained Starr's help January 23 in an attempt to force the former White House intern to talk to the prosecutors in the impeachment trial.

Lewinsky apart, two more witnesses, Vernon Jordan, an advisor and a long-time friend of the president, and White House aide Sidney Blumenthal — have already been subpoenaed for close-door deposition. Three House prosecutors have already interviewed Lewinsky.

The House managers, who seem to have given up on convicting the president of committing perjury, believe that Lewinsky's total recall of her conversation with Clinton and her interpretation of what he said would support the obstruction of justice charge. The prosecution team feels she "has a lot of information if you ask the right questions." And it appears that they have the "right questions." It would surely take plenty of skills on their part to use Lewinsky's interpretation to overcome her statement that "no one ever asked me to lie, and I was never promised a job for my silence."

The Democrats, however, say that the Republicans are actually buying time in the hope that something miraculous will spring up and help them convince the senators that the president's conduct amounts to "high crime and misdemeanour" and thus they should vote for his removal. Senator Edward Kennedy, after the back-to-back votes on motion to dismiss and subpoena witnesses, summed up the sentiment of his fellow Democrats when he said that the House managers were "whipping a dead horse or not, the Republicans are surely flexing their muscles in the Senate, passing a plan blueprint to end the trial that makes likely a public airing of Lewinsky's testimony and tentatively sets February 12 as the date for a verdict. The measure

passed 54-44 — with one senator from each party not voting — after a rival Democratic plan and a motion to vote immediately on the charges against Clinton failed on similarly lopsided margin.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, who did not rule out the need for live testimony of the three witnesses, might find it hard to convince his counterpart across the aisle Tom Daschle for assent on this issue. Daschle, who had said after the votes on motion to dismiss and to subpoena witnesses that the president would not be removed from office, reiterated his adamant opposition to calling live witnesses.

"... we don't want the spectacle of Monica Lewinsky or anyone else," the senate minority leader was quoted by AFP as saying. "What little dignity has Monica Lewinsky left we want to protect."

One of his fellow Democrat colleague in the Senate, Senator Jay Rockefeller, was more direct. "The proceedings are a Republican trial," he told the media. "They're intransigent... they're just desperate to get Monica Lewinsky on the floor of the Senate."

Many Senate Republicans are, however, opposed to the idea of live witnesses in the absence of "explosive testimony in the closed-door deposition. It seems they don't expect anything new to emerge. That the Republicans won't

be able to muster 67 votes to convict the president and remove him from office has become a certainty. Whatever the House managers come up with in between now and February 12, the tentative date for verdict, seems highly unlikely to change that. Votes on the motion to dismiss and to subpoena witnesses more than made it clear. That leaves the senators in a dilemma: should they completely exonerate Clinton?

Many senators support punishing the president by some type of censure motion if he is not convicted. "Whether you vote for conviction or not, he should not be able to claim that he was exonerated," said Senator Republican Orrin Hatch, who has proposed that the Senate adopt a statement that Clinton lied under oath and obstructed justice and couple it with a motion to adjourn.

The Hatch proposal is similar in essence to a likely Republican "finding of fact" plan, which could be passed, if moved, on the strength of Republican majority vote. However, ever, there are quite a few Senate Republicans who don't support the idea. Republican Senator Richard Shelby is one of them. When asked whether the initiative was alive and whether he supported it, he told reporters, "I think it's alive, but I hope it's not breathing very well."

The other option, the all-too-familiar Democratic one, is a motion to censure the president for his misconduct.

Once the senators reach their verdict on February 12 — which is highly unlikely to go against the president — the Republicans will find themselves at the receiving end. They will have to come up with a stronger reason for demanding a trial and not opting for a senatorial motion to dismiss than their dogged determination to know the truth.

According to a Newsweek poll, released on January 30, fifty-four per cent of Americans believe that the Republicans have been hurt by the impeachment proceedings. If the House managers fail to come up with something explosive during the closed-door deposition, the wrath of the public would surely be on the Republicans and it could well reflect on the 2000 presidential election. Then, the Republicans will have little option but to rue their decision to get on with the trial in the first place.



## The Horizon This Week

Arshad-uz Zaman

highly fanatical regime in the name of Islam. In their scheme of things women have no place except behind tight black veils and no schools nor any work place. It is rather amusing to note that Afghanistan before the advent of Taliban was not exactly a country, where women could move about freely. Indeed if anything Afghanistan from the social and economic points of view was a retrograde state.

Talibans have created within Afghanistan a civil war like situation, which has existed within its chequered history. Thus there are parallel centres of authority and leaders like Rabbani and Dostum are vying for power. Another country which is deeply interested in the affairs of Afghanistan is its neighbour Iran. The militant brand of Sunni Islam of the Taliban is anathema for Iran. That Taliban should try to take the lead by its fanatical brand of Islam is most unwelcome to Iran. In 1979 while topping the regime of the Shah of Iran, the new rulers brought about what they describe as Islamic Revolution.

Iran and Pakistan have had the best of relations for nearly

for religious amity, far removed from ethnic or sectarian violence. Indeed Bangladesh is for that matter the most homogenous country imaginable. How is it possible that Taliban should suddenly become a subject of media attention?

Taliban has in all likelihood a master player behind. The focus is continuously on the ISI of Pakistan. There is no doubt that Taliban is a creature of Pakistan. Lately too many incidents are taking place in and around Bangladesh, which cannot be wished away as simple coincidence. The latest in the series is the cowardly attack on the very respected poet Shamsur Rahman. He escaped miraculously from the hands of his assassins in his own home. Very rightly it has unleashed a storm of protest throughout the country and particularly among the intellectuals. Shamsur Rahman is a very eminent poet and he is specially associated with the Liberation of Bangladesh. Very frequently Madrassah bred politics is coming to the fore. That the Madrassahs are the recruiting ground for Taliban is undoubted. The events in Brah-

with the South China Sea on the east. Modern Singapore's growth and trading prosperity are largely due to this fortunate geographical position.

Singapore's total population of approximately three million consists mainly of Chinese (app.78%), who speak Fukien and Kwangtung dialects of Chinese, Malays (14%) and people from the sub-continent of India (7%) and Eurasians (1%). The Malays speak Malay and the Indians speak Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu etc. English is the common language. The Chinese are either Buddhists or Taoists or Christians. The Malays are predominantly Muslims while the Indians are either Hindus or Muslims. So this is truly a multi-racial and multicultural society. Has it always been so? No. Then how did an island at the tip of Malay peninsula become a predominantly Chinese city-state? How did it achieve such political stability and economic prosperity?

The island of Singapore, whose main settlement used to be known as Tumasik in the fourteenth century was an outpost of the Siamese empire (Ayutthaya). Its local ruler Parmasevara declared Tumasik's independence, was defeated by Ayutthaya and as a result fled to Malacca where he founded the Malaccan Kingdom with the protection of the Chinese emperor. Tumasik (Singapore), which was at that time nothing more than a fishing village, was sacked by the Siamese army. One may wonder why I am going so far back in time while writing about modern Singapore. Well, whatever Singapore is today, Malacca was that and much more five centuries ago. It was at that time that the Chinese immigrants started moving into various countries of Southeast Asia.

A unique geographical position, good government, Chinese imperial military protection, a liberal policy of virtual free trade converted a small fishing village into the most important trading centre in that area for merchants from far-flung places like Arabia, China, India etc. Soon Tumasik (Singapore) as indeed the whole of Malay peninsula became part of the Malaccan empire. In early fifteenth century, the descendants of Parmasevara embraced Islam. From this time onwards, Islam became an important factor to be reckoned with in this area because the rulers and the ruled in many countries of Southeast Asia took up the new faith with great zeal. Malacca played an important role in

spreading Islam all along the Malaccan trade routes. So far we have seen how Malacca became an important trading centre, when the Chinese settlers started moving into the Southeast Asian peninsula (even today Malacca's population is predominantly Chinese) and islands and when most Malays became Muslims. But what about the European influence? When did it start? After all, Singapore looks more like a modern European city than a typical old Asian Metropolis? Its streets, its squares carry undeniably British names. Does this mean to say that the British were the first and only European colonisers of this area? No.

Looking for the spice trade the Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in this area. They captured Malacca in 1511. Although, it continued as a Portuguese trading post until 1641, when it was lost to the Dutch, it never recovered its earlier glory. The once powerful Malaccan empire quickly disintegrated. The British conquered Malacca in 1795 but were unable to restore its important position as a trade centre primarily because of an unusual siting of the Malacca estuary. In December 1810, Sir Stamford Raffles arrived in Malacca on orders from the East India Company Governor General in India to ensure British control of the trade routes. The British and the Dutch fought for the next 14 years for military supremacy in that area. Britain's superiority was finally acknowledged in a treaty with the Dutch in 1824.

Raffles was a man of vision. He wanted to find a substitute for Malacca. After several reconnaissance voyages along the straits, in January 1819, he and his assistant Major General William Farquhar (whose excellent collection of Natural History Drawings was on display at the Singapore History Museum) arrived at a fishing village called Singapore and entered into an agreement with Sultan Hussein Shah, (who was the claimant to the Johor-Riau sultanate to which Singapore belonged) for the establishment of a trading post for the East India Company. The rest of the story is well-known to the students of history.

Sir Stamford Raffles is definitely the founder of modern Singapore, a strategically placed sea-port which soon replaced Malacca as the most important trading centre in this area. There was so much activity that by 1823 over five thousand Chinese, Malays and Eurasians (Mixed Asian-Portuguese and mixed Asian-Dutch) had moved from

Malacca to Singapore. The Chinese, who in search of tin, were still migrating in significant numbers to Malaya provided another source of labour and entrepreneurs for Singapore. Establishment of rubber plantations all over Malaya in the late nineteenth century opened up opportunities for immigration from south India. Thousands of them started flocking into Malaya, some of whom later found their way to Singapore. Foundations were thus laid for future racial tensions and conflicts both in Malaya and Singapore. Actually racial tension was at the root of the political separation between Singapore (which had obtained self-government in 1959 and had merged with Malaysia in 1963) and Malaysia in 1965 because Chinese-dominated Singapore and Malay-dominated Malaysia could not get over their mutual distrust.

The current situation seems almost unbelievable; racial tensions have become a major problem. The unemployment rate has been brought under control; the economy no longer depends entirely on entrepot trade; ninety percent of the population has been provided with public housing; corruption in public administration is minimal and in thirty three years the GNP has gone up by twenty five times to transform a resource-poor developing country into a High-

performing Asian Economy. It is indeed a remarkable achievement by any standard. It also provoked two questions in my mind. How did this miracle happen? Can we, in Bangladesh learn anything from this example? I discussed the first question with my acquaintances among the resident foreigners and the local people. Almost everybody agreed that political legitimacy and political stability (which flowed from this legitimacy) created the appropriate environment for sustained economic development. Given the lack of natural resources, Lee Kuan Yew adopted a plan to create a hospitable investment climate to attract multinational corporations from the West and Japan, to modernise the infrastructure of the country, to restrict import with a view to protecting infant industries and to initiate an export drive. The motto for the Singaporeans was simply to excel in everything they did. Today the industrial sector (app. 25% of the GDP) manufactures transport equipment, petroleum and electronic products and processes food. Ship-repairing, ship-building and a whole host of other small industrial activities are on the rise. Financial and business services (30% of the GDP) provided by Singapore can perfectly compete with similar services available in Tokyo, London or New York. Port facilities in Singapore are considered as the best in the world. Transportation and communication provide more than 10% of the GDP. Wholesale and retail trade account for 16 per cent of the GDP.

Because of the scarcity of land and the very high cost of building, the government decided to provide public housing to the population and started a crash programme to build high-rise apartment blocks. The plan has been so successful that approximately ninety per cent of the population now lives in public housing. I must confess I did not find any shanty towns anywhere in Singapore. Minimising corruption in public administration was the next item on the PAP (People's Action Party) agenda. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew decided to bring up the salaries of the civil servants in different categories to the level of similar categories in the private sector. He said, "Pay top salaries.....and get clear government or underpay them and risk the Third World disease of corruption." At the same time he also gave additional powers to the anti-corruption department to enforce the law. Graft has today been largely flushed out of the system. I am convinced that Singapore's success, to a great extent is due to honest and efficient civil servants. This has also created a healthy general climate where cheating as a normal method of doing business has been eliminated.

Upon my return from Singapore, I was asked, by a friend, "Since the people of Singapore come from different ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds, do they at least have a common religion?" I hesitated for a moment and then replied, "Yes, they indeed have a common religion and that is education." I found that at almost everyone wanted to study. About 91 per cent of the people aged 15 and over can read and write. Parents, employers, unions and the government help children, employees, members and the citizens in every way possible to acquire academic education and professional training. No wonder, according to some highly respectable international agencies, Singapore's workforce is rated as the best in the world. I was certainly very impressed by their work ethic and discipline.

Singapore has scrapped the colonial system of promoting civil servants on the basis of seniority alone. Instead, meritocracy has been established as the major criterion for promotion and opportunities for retention. This emphasis on efficiency is not restricted to the government servants alone. Actually it is applicable also to the politicians and the business executives.

Willingness to learn from others has been and still is one of the major strategies of the government. The idea is, first of all, identify a problem clearly. Then, identify who had similar problems before and form a team of experts to find out how that problem was solved. Invite the foreign experts to give their ideas, if need be. Finally, change or modify their ideas to suit Singapore's circumstances. By European standards, law and order situation seemed to be excellent during my stay in Singapore. Yet, I did not see many uniformed police. I was told later that the police were a lot of plain clothes policemen mingling with the public. Corruption in the police force has been greatly reduced by offering better pay and training. Crime rate is quite low because of tough law enforcement measures. Indeed there is a joke which says, "Singapore is a fine city because you can get fined for everything, from littering on the pavement to dropping litter or any such minor offence."

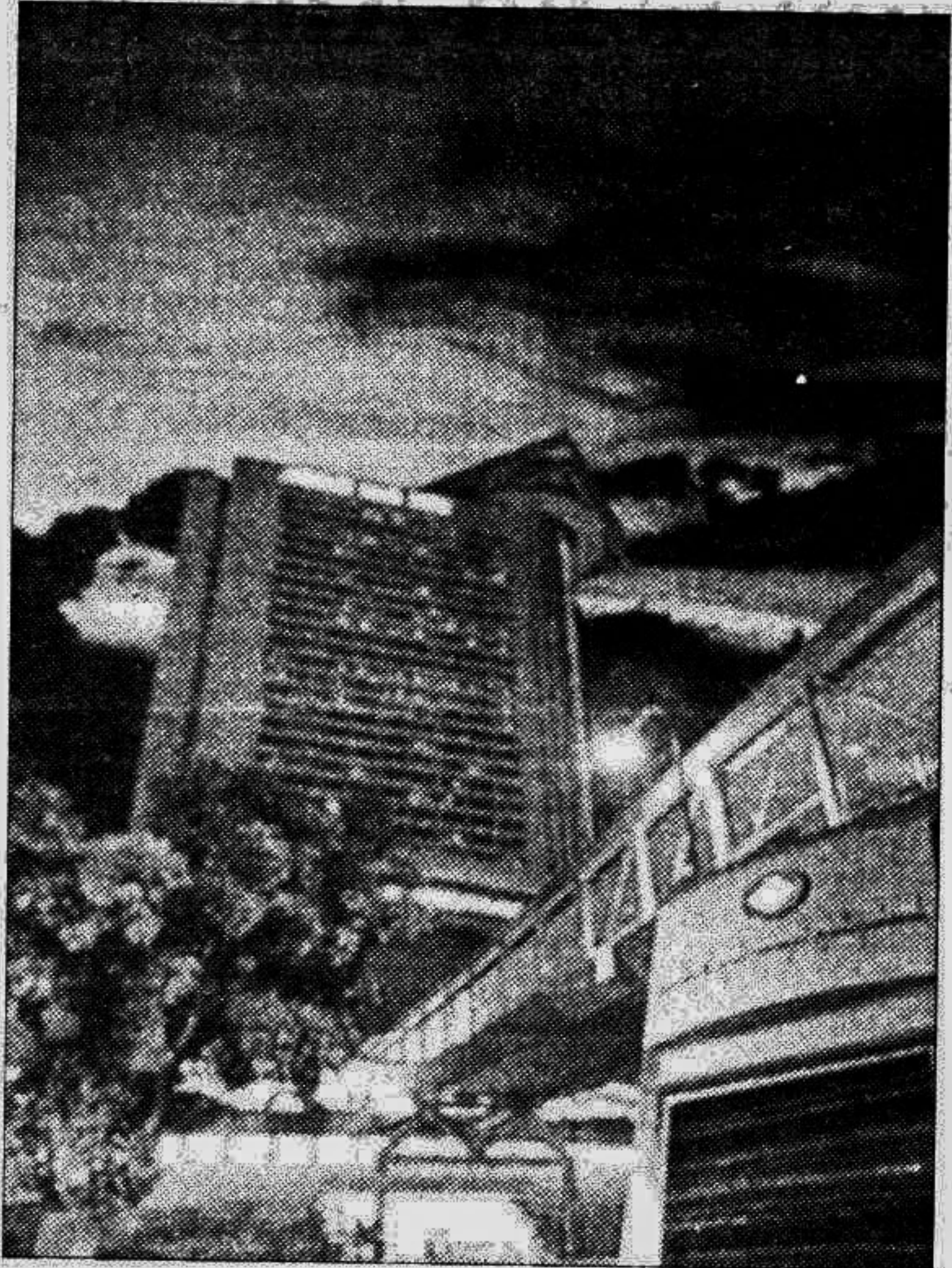
Can we, in Bangladesh learn anything from Singapore? My short and simple answer is, "Yes". Having said that I should add that if in 1978 the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping thought that China could learn from Singapore and as a consequence sent no less than four hundred delegations to Singapore to study missions, then surely Bangladesh can at least study (it is more than probable that it has already been done) some relevant aspects of Singapore's economic transformation from a resource-poor developing country into a High-performing Asian Economy.

## LETTER FROM EUROPE

# Singapore — an Asian Miracle

by Chaklader Mahboob-ul Alam

Can we, in Bangladesh learn anything from Singapore? My short and simple answer is, "Yes". Having said that I should add that if in 1978 the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping thought that China could learn from Singapore and as a consequence sent no less than four hundred delegations to Singapore to study missions, then surely Bangladesh can at least study some relevant aspects of Singapore's economic transformation from a resource-poor developing country into a High-performing Asian Economy.



A few months ago, I travelled to Dhaka to see one of my younger brothers, who was seriously ill. It was a short trip full of emotional encounters with friends and relatives, whom I had not seen for many years. These meetings were filled with the memories of dear ones, who had long disappeared and reminiscences of the past. We travelled to Savar and prayed at the family graveyard behind the mosque, where our parents are buried. I came back to Madrid, feeling very sad and certain that further bad news from Dhaka would soon follow. Sure enough, only a few days after my return, I was informed that my brother's health had worsened and that he had been taken to Singapore for further medical treatment and that he had only minimal chances of survival. So with a heavy heart, I packed my bag, bought a ticket from the nearest travel agent and left for Singapore. This letter comes as a result of that trip.

I knew that Singapore, ("Lion City" in Sanskrit), like Hong Kong and Macao, was one of the last trading outposts of European colonial powers in Southeast Asia. So I had imagined it to look and function more or less like Goa, Calcutta, Karachi or at best like Bombay. What I found was completely different. The airport usually conveys the first impressions of the city to the newly-arrived. The Singapore Changi Airport which was modelled on the Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam is a completely modern transportation hub and can be compared with any modern airport in Western Europe or North America. It was impeccably clean and the ground staff

seemed to be extraordinarily efficient. Unlike most of the taxi-drivers at the Madrid airport, their counterparts at the Changi Airport were highly disciplined and completely honest. This was the second surprise in about ten minutes after my arrival. So I braced myself up for further surprises, albeit pleasant ones. And I was not disappointed.

As we sped (always respecting the speed limits) across the city towards my brother's flat by the Raffles Hotel (named after the founder of the city and the British empire in the Far East), I discovered a prosperous, vibrant, modern city with towering skyscrapers, wide avenues, well-kept public parks and clean side-walks. Later I discovered a multiracial Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian and harmonious city with neat well-planned housing estates and no slums. I talked to the doctors and nurses at the hospital, travelled by the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) underground system (all the trains were air-conditioned), hopped on the buses (the bus stops were fitted with overhead fans), visited the banks, used the telephones and everything seemed to work as efficiently as a Swiss watch. What a miracle! How did it happen?

The Republic of Singapore, which comprises of the Singapore island and fifty or so small islets is situated at the southern end of the Malay peninsula. The main island is separated from Malay peninsula to the north by the narrow Johor Strait and from Riau-Lingga archipelago (Indonesia) to the south by Singapore Strait, which links the Indian Ocean to the west

## Asleep at the Wheel?

Naem Mohaiemen

Robert Merton was both prominent partners in Long-Term Capital. They were hired by former students who had made it big on Wall Street. The explicit reason for the recruitment was to add star power and credibility to the hedge fund. This strategy succeeded, attracting big investors, lenders and trading partners.

All and Rahman also stated: To most academics and Wall Street practitioners this seemed like blaming the builders of Titanic rather than its crew for hitting the iceberg. But in this case, the builders of the ship were also on duty as the crew. Myron Scholes and

clusing some in the financial press, who always viewed Wall Street's new innovations with scepticism." If the preceding were true, how odd that one of the first negative reports on the bailout came from the WALL STREET JOURNAL, hardly an institution that views Wall Street with "scepticism." It was a JOURNAL reporter who first wrote about the argument that broke out during the bailout meeting — between the heavy-hitters led by Merrill Lynch, and other banks that refused to join in the bailout.

After joining the fund, Myron Scholes did not take a backseat to refine his academic theories. Rather he became an aggressive salesman for LTCM, traveling frequently to help raise money. Over a few months, Scholes raised \$1 billion for the fund.

Bets, it was the traders of LTCM who made refinements to their models in order to place their bets.

On this front, one might accuse the two theorists of dereliction of duty. It was their name in marquee lights that attracted big money investors, but both kept themselves somewhat distant from daily details. In fact, Robert Merton stayed at his Harvard office for most of the year — venturing to LTCM's offices about twice a month.

But in spite of this hands-off approach, both the professors were members of LTCM's risk management committee. As such, they were empowered to question trades and review the size of various positions. At some point last year, however, some point last year, some of the more conservative positions with massive downside passed their review. At that time, both the theorists failed to apply common sense to call a halt to the carnival and say, "Stop for a moment. I know this is based on my Nobel-winning theories, but something smells rotten in Connecticut."