

Red Rug to the Bull

JUST when Home Minister Mohammad Nasim appears to be on a roll to apply the law in a non-partisan way he finds himself up against stiff opposition, in certain pockets, from party loyalists.

Take the case of two MPs, Messrs Afzal Khan from Comilla and Mahbubur Rahman from Sunamganj. The first one, arrested on charge of embezzling Tk 8 crore worth of bank money and accused in the Shankar Kumar Das murder case, has been set on bail.

We condemn these incidents and urge the home minister to sit up and take note of the rowdiness fuelled among party supporters by quarters within the AL affected by the law enforcement initiative of the government.

Groom New Heroes

AS the nation, engulfed in the World Cup euphoria, showers praise and rewards on the cricketers for their superb showing against one of the game's superpowers, it should pause to acknowledge the objective reality of sports affairs in the country.

However, as it has happened before in the country, any new funding initiative for development more often than not falls prey to wheeling and dealing by a certain group of people.

Zoo or a Death Row?

ANOTHER piece of disturbing news comes from Mirpur National Zoo. The biggest Royal Bengal tiger in it died last Wednesday under mysterious circumstances.

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War Crimes Indictment and Hope for Peace

Peacekeeping forces, under the auspices of a neutral organisation such as the United Nations, are needed on the ground, to ensure that even if Milosevic again breaks his promise, there will be enough force to stop this man who is already under indictment for alleged war crimes in Bosnia and Kosovo.

THE refugees fleeing from their homes, the families who watched their villages burned to the ground, the women who were violated and the children who saw their parents murdered don't need an international tribunal court to tell them that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic is a war criminal.

But last week's indictment of Milosevic by the independent International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia still matters because it tells the victims of Bosnia and Kosovo that international law stands with them.

That may not be much immediate comfort to the thousands of Albanians who are feeling brunt of the brute force of Milosevic's plan for cleansing Kosovo of their presence.

This is the first time that a sitting head of state has been indicted as a war criminal, and the evidence seems overwhelming.

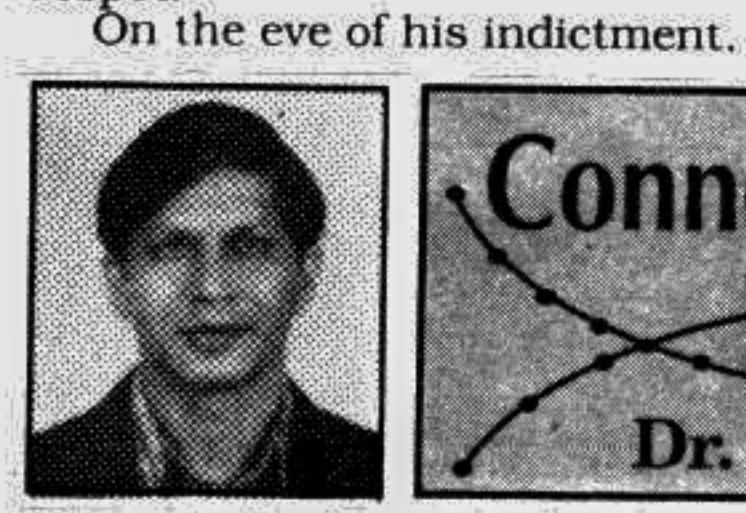
Kosovo. Time and again in his plans to dominate the Balkans, those pages say, Milosevic has acted against humanity and common decency.

Critics of the indictment said it was timed badly; that it would only hamper efforts to make peace in Kosovo and return of Albanian refugees to their homes.

However, placing Milosevic under threat of trial sends a signal to everyone in the Balkans that this kind of racism will no longer be tolerated by the international community.

It needs to be noted here that there are many Serbs who have stood up to Milosevic's gang.

On the eve of his indictment, Milosevic had sent a letter to the German government suggesting that he was ready to withdraw forces from Kosovo and accept a "United Nations presence" there.



Milosevic was beginning to yield under the pressure of bombing and that time was running out for a diplomatic settlement that would avert a possible ground invasion of Kosovo.

Milosevic since the bombing campaign began.

The planned visit, and the decision by Ahtissari to talk to a man indicted last week on war crimes charges, suggested that diplomacy had advanced enough to necessitate a direct exchange, however unpalatable such a meeting may be.

Although Milosevic has accepted a Kosovo peace deal, President Clinton seemed cautiously waiting for signs that Yugoslav troops begin pulling out allowing return of Albanian refugees.

Whether peace really comes in the Balkans or whether the allied forces will have to take further measures.

To not want peace would be madness. Certainly, stopping the killing, the bloodletting, the destruction should be everyone's goal.

But those tragic deaths and the desire for peace must not have pressured the international community into forgetting the reason the strikes were launched in the first place: to stop Milosevic from carrying out the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo.

The more than 850,000 ethnic Albanian Muslims who have been forced to flee the province by Milosevic's forces now must be allowed to return to their homes.

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ETHNIC CLEANSING IN YUGOSLAVIA

NATO's Air Attack and China's Stance

by A S M Nurunnabi

US President Bill Clinton publicly apologised for the NATO's inadvertent bombing of Chinese embassy but insisted that the allied campaign against Yugoslavia would continue, adding it was very important to draw a clear distinction between a tragic mistake and a deliberate act of ethnic cleansing.

IN course of NATO's air strikes against Yugoslavia, it was reported that NATO forces mistakenly hit the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.

The latest incident of bombing of Chinese embassy in Belgrade has led many non-NATO countries to condemn it. They called for a quick end to hostilities.

goslav President, that if the UN had proposed military action, it would have been vetoed by Russia or by China itself.

NATO's justification is that the actions of Milosevic in allowing his Serb forces to go on fiercely with his ruthless campaign of ethnic cleansing by processes of murder, rape, looting, and destruction of property of ethnic Albanians and driving them across the borders are so heinous that he must be stopped.

The question is whether this stance of China is morally defensible in the light of the horrendous process of so-called ethnic cleansing which has so far decimated the majority ethnic Muslim population of the Kosovo province.

According to observers, China fears that the US, now the only superpower, may be able to fashion coalitions to take punitive military action against other countries.

The NATO action in a sense, it is felt in some quarters, underlines the failure of the UN system. Those quarters point out that after all, the rights of ethnic minorities are supposed to be guaranteed by UN conventions, such as the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

Some international observers feel that something needs to be done. It is clear that, in the aftermath of the Cold War, tensions between ethnic groups have grown worse.

Other relevant international conventions are those on genocide, torture and racial discrimination. Yet, decades after these conventions came into effect, still abuse of ethnic minorities still continues.

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China also suspended contacts on weapons proliferation and international security.

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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.

Honorary citizen dishonoured

Sir, Thanks for the timely article, "Honorary citizen dishonoured". The very moment I got the news about the firing of Mr. Greenidge, I was feeling in the same way. In fact I was waiting to see such an article in the DS.

Also, it's difficult for me to comprehend why the reception couldn't wait until the players finish their official engagements. This is a kind of immature line of thought.

Last but not the least, this success in cricket proved if we try hard we can achieve "impossible". So why don't we apply the same spirit in all other sectors?

An achievement, indeed

Sir, The victory of our cricket team over Pakistan team at the World Cup tournament has been rightfully termed as making of a history. We are all proud of our players and all those who have contributed to put us in the international cricket map.

Mr Greenidge, thank you for your contribution to our cricket.

Where was the voice of the nation?

Sir, I write to express my disappointment in the manner in which the reception for the

Bangladesh cricket team was conducted and presented on BT. Perhaps the most noteworthy part of our recent victory was the feeling of euphoria that swept over the nation, bringing people from every section of society together in an overwhelming wave of nationalism.

Yet, during the reception, supposedly the culminating point of these feelings, we fell let-down. From the moment we switched the on the TV, we waited to hear the sound of the crowds cheering and to join in but alas, their voice was never heard.

Anyone, knowing ABC of cricket, can easily see the catch in the game. Pakistan lost not in super six by losing, but they salvaged Bangladesh's image in a naked way.

"Beyond the Boundary"

Sir, I am writing to express my appreciation for the column "Beyond the Boundary" by Mr. Shakil Kasem. My enjoyment of the World Cup has been considerably enhanced because of the intelligent and entertaining commentary with which

Nothing to be emotional

Sir, If a headline like "doubtful win?" in a Bangla daily when Zimbabwe, a well rated team in World Cup '99 defeats South Africa in the last group match, could be digested, the headline in the same news paper after Pakistan-Bangladesh match reading: "Bishwa Obaak Takiye Roy, Bangladesh Oitihashik Joi" is simply intolerable.

Wasim's game plan

Sir, I am shocked by the crazy jubilation over Bangladesh's win over Pakistan. If I have ever seen a fixed match, this was the one. It was really amusing to see how hard the Pakistani bowlers and fielders toiled to ensure that Bangladesh get a respectable total.

Shabash Bangladesh!

Sir, What a day! Pakistan, a cricket giant tasted its first defeat in World Cup '99 in the hands of the cricket 'minions'.

Why holiday?

Sir, Bangladesh team defeating Pakistani team in the World Cup Cricket on 31-5-1999 is now the talk of the country and the whole country is suffering from a victory fever. The

government has also declared a half day holiday on 01-06-1999. What a waste of time for a poor country!

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hint of sympathy or encouragement.

We are happy that Pakistan lost to Bangladesh. We are happy that Bangladesh, in spite of being treated as an underdog, gave an answer appropriate of a proud nation.

All's well that ends well

Sir, What an absolutely fantastic cricket match! Congratulations to our cricketers who made the night of the 31st of May possible. The match was exciting, challenging and the end was sensational.

MoM's Champagne

Sir, Bangladesh cricketers brought pride, glory and joy by defeating the mighty Pakistanis in their World Cup encounter.

Congratulations, boys

Sir, As a novice, Bangladesh's performance in the

World Cup was great. Compared to other countries, Bangladesh fared better than some, in their first appearance. I am proud to be a Bangladeshi.

NAM expenditure

Sir, The importance of the upcoming NAM summit is undoubtedly questionable to begin with. The money to be spent is enormous and how our country will be benefited from the Summit is unknown as well.

Massacre of trees

Sir, I have been keenly following the appreciative concern and resentment being expressed by the readers on the Usmani Uddayan trees. What surprises me more than the fact that the government could announce such a preposterous decision is the adamance with which the authorities seem to remain unmoved by the massive public concern being voiced by the people across the country.

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