

As they Sowed So They Reaped

A travesty of truth has been corrected by the Election Commission. We felicitate the EC's declaration of the JS seats of BNP lawmakers Md Aluddin and Hasibur Rahman vacant consequent upon their floor-crossing in terms of Article 70 (1) of the Constitution.

The Daily Star's elation is as great as that of any democracy lover in the country. We feel the true purpose behind Article 70 (1) of the Constitution, the spirit of parliamentary democracy and the dictate of honesty and propriety in politics stand vindicated.

But where does the cardinal sin lie? The ruling party not content with merely weaning them away from the BNP bribed them with offers of ministerial positions to commit a manipulative breach of the floor-crossing law in abominable taste.

To blacken the face of democracy even more, the Speaker acted hand in glove with the ruling party trivialising his own position and making a mockery of parliamentary and constitutional norms.

He waxed technical slurring over the grievous moral wrong he was committing. He could have himself decided that it constituted floor-crossing. Short of that, he could have sent it to the EC but he did neither.

Rising Power Price

THE government has increased the power tariff by five poisha per unit once again. The last hike was on 1 July '99. So, it has become a three-monthly onslaught on the consumer. This new price will apply with retrospective effect from September '99.

But we would like the government to consider other important factors that lead the Power Development Board and the DESA to lose revenue which is passed off as 'systems loss'. Besides, inefficiency and corruption have crippled the power sector as bills worth 50 billion taka remain unrealised.

What is There to Celebrate?

YESTERDAY, the world population reached the six-billion mark, marking a phenomenal growth of one billion in the last 12 years. In her message, UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Nafis Sadik said, "yet, we have something to celebrate on October 12."

The world population is still growing at an annual rate of 78 million and the growth is concentrated in countries that are engaged in a never-ending struggle to meet the fundamental needs for their populace. Sadly, one-third of the 356,000 babies born on Tuesday belonged to families that often spend day after day without a square meal.

In Bangladesh context, we have had some success in population control over the years and our efforts have been acclaimed world-wide. Still, at the current rate, the best scenario for the country is a population plateaued somewhere around 180 million in the next 25 years.

SOON after the guns fell quiet on Kargil mountains, the valley of Kashmir was immediately gripped with a new spate of insurgency having few parallels in the past.

In early August about 60 heavily armed militants struck at the Rastriya Rifles camp in Kupwara district in the dead of night. They fired a fusillade of rockets and machine guns before they stormed the camp.

There is also a qualitative upgradation in the militants' manpower and fire power. The valley is now awash with rockets and mortars in the hands of the insurgents — besides, shoulder-fired missiles to increase the range and lethality of attacks.

attacks the militants are now planning and executing their actions with military precision. They now pool their resources and attack in strength — often with deception plan. In more ways than one, the Kargil war seemed to have released the pressures on militants' group who, bolstered by fresh infiltration, set up bases and arms dump in the mountains of Kupwara, Baramulla, Rajouri and Poonch districts.

For this deteriorating situation Dr Farooq Abdullah, the chief Minister of the state points his accusing finger to the machinations of Pakistan's powerful intelligence agency, the ISI. But he is not alone to blame the ISI for myriad other incidents of subversions across the country.

Gujrat. The ISI is said to have been responsible for 11,000 explosions so far across India. The ISI sponsored terrorism in India rendered 2.7 lakh people homeless and destroyed public property worth Rs 2000 crores.

Confirming the revelations the Home Minister, L K Advani says that the 'Viciousness with which Pakistan is stepping up violence after Kargil is a desperate sign of a defeated army.'

According to a senior Harkatul Mujahideen leader from Muzaffarnagar, arrested recently in Assam, he was tasked to accomplish dual missions to distribute the portion of a 40 kg consignment of RDX to ULFA and send the rest to Himachal Pradesh to trigger blasts on the Manali-Leh highway.

sons for stepped up violence in the state. As per Indian authorities there has been a 79.42 per cent increase in the Muslim population between 1971 and 1991 while the comparative growth of Hindus is almost half at 41 per cent in Assam.

Whatever could be the reasons for their easy intrusion into activities in India, a remarkable spread and range of ISI operation is evident from the areas covered by its agents from Muzaffarnagar, Karachi, Bangladesh to Gowhati, Manali-Leh and so on.

Statistics of its activities suggest a nationwide ISI network in India in recruiting, training and maintaining its ever-growing corps of agents. For example a Muslim cleric in Gujrat's Bhuj is suspected of being a conduit for delivering RDX, revolvers and remote control devices to a group of Muslims based in Hyderabad.

took them, allegedly to Dhaka for arms training. The series of arrests in recent past show that attempts are being made by the ISI to reactivate the militants group in Punjab. Indian authority also suspects an intelligence 'encirclement' of India by the ISI through Pakistan embassy staff in Bangladesh, Nepal and Dubai.

The mutual accusations by both India and Pakistan for many of their woes are nothing new. At one time the entire movement for 'Khalistan' was thought to be the handiwork of Pakistan while the latter held India's RAW squarely responsible for numerous bomb blasts in Karachi in the wake of MQM activism.

It is true that the ISI of Pakistan has been very powerful in the wake of Afghan resistance war during the eighties. It conducted the largest clandestine war after the second world war as a conduit for massive US assistance for war in Afghanistan.

Even if it is not always wise for India to blame the ISI for her problems, India has her own good reasons to do so. Last year when the US fired its cruise missile over Afghanistan, India, in a marked departure from her usual posture on such incidents, expressed sympathy for the US predicaments from the Islamist terrorism in Afghanistan in which Pakistan had a hidden hand.

The ISI: A Ubiquitous Monster!

In an ordinary reckoning ISI cannot be a match to India's intelligence resources — particularly in offensive intelligence activities. It is thus an enigma to the Indians how an ISI which is supposed to be much inferior in strength and resources to Indian intelligence agencies could pierce through the thick tangled web of the country's security system.

PERSPECTIVES by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

According to a senior Harkatul Mujahideen leader from Muzaffarnagar, arrested recently in Assam, he was tasked to accomplish dual missions to distribute the portion of a 40 kg consignment of RDX to ULFA and send the rest to Himachal Pradesh to trigger blasts on the Manali-Leh highway.

Taking Hope from the Pope

Although Washington continues to oppose any relaxation of the pressure on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Baghdad is looking for signs of breaches in its isolation. It hopes that a forthcoming visit by the Pope (in December) will draw attention to the human impact of sanctions.

IRAQ is hoping that the Pope's December visit will strengthen moves towards an erosion of Baghdad's isolation.

Pope John Paul II will meet President Saddam Hussein in the Iraqi capital on his way to Ur — the birthplace of Abraham, the first prophet of monotheism — as part of the Catholic leader's pilgrimages to Christian holy sites on the eve of the next millennium.

The visit by the Pope will be witnessed by the whole world and will constitute a victory and a support for Saddam Hussein that he could not have hoped for," a diplomat in Amman told Agence France Presse newsagency recently.

The meeting of the pontiff and the Iraqi leader will be a sort of absolution for the latter, dubbed the 'Butcher of Baghdad' by the West," the diplomat said.

An earlier sign of Iraq's rehabilitation, at least in its own region, came in early September when Foreign Minister Muhammad Saïd Sahhaf chaired a meeting of the foreign ministers of the 22 member Arab League in Cairo.

It was a striking contrast to the 1997 summit, when Arab League secretary-general Esmat Abdel Maguid broke with protocol by not inviting the Iraqi President.

This year, Maguid informed the foreign ministers that he had written twice to the Iraqi leader, and said that "moving

the Arab position in a positive direction requires brave initiatives [from both sides]" as well as "calculated concessions to break the [economic] siege [of Iraq]".

In reply, claimed Maguid, Saddam Hussein had said, "Iraq

Dilip Hiro writes from London Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has proposed suspension of all UN sanctions against Baghdad without waiting for progress on the re-introduction of military inspections.

Keeping up the pressure. A timeline diagram showing events from 1990 to 1999 related to the Iraq crisis, including UN resolutions, oil sales, and international pressure.

is ready for quiet and rational dialogue to address past mistakes.

In a similar vein at the same conference, Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, urged "the Arab brothers to turn the bitter page of the past, and open another one of cooperation and cohesion, drawing lessons from the experience of division."

Nevertheless, the UN Security Council remains firmly divided, with the US-UK axis on one side, Russia and China on the other, and France in between.

To the Editor...

Oops. Sir, Being a regular reader of the DS since its inception, it is becoming more and more difficult to digest the grammatical errors which seem to appear in galloping frequencies these days.

I am now referring to the box on the first page appearing in the issue of Friday, October 8, 1999 under the heading 'Paediatric surgery suffers' wherein the first line reads as 'There is only 48 paediatric surgeons.....'

Furthermore, I would like to highlight another hackneyed phrase used quite generously by your news reporters, i.e. "from in front" of. This could perhaps be rephrased to read as "from the precincts of" or "in front of" or "from the vicinity of" or whatever to make it more palatable to the reading public both at home and abroad covering senior citizens to students and all.

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Pollution — the other name of Dhaka

Sir, Recently, I was walking along the pavement near the Farmgate police box, I noticed many people urinating beside the pavement in front of a police. In my amazement, the police didn't say anything to those who were polluting the environment in such a way.

If one visits any bazaar, he would be encountered by filthy rubbish with very unpleasant smell which would make shop-

ping difficult. It seems like the local people living in those areas are reluctant to step forward to clean the roads and thus make the environment in our country more messy.

Once, the City Corporation had placed portable dustbins all around the city but that wasn't enough to keep the city clean. Now there are only handfuls of these bins left. Where are the rest of these bins? Among all kinds of pollutions, smoke pollution is the most dangerous one and it's gradually increasing in our city, due to the increasing number of vehicles.

Black smokes emitted from vehicles especially from buses and 'baby taxis' can cause disease and lung cancer, heart disease and asthma problem. These smokes irritate eyes and also make breathing difficult. People, whose main transports are rickshaws, suffer the most. Despite of all these, traffic jam and sound pollution (i.e. too much honking) are other causes which make the environment polluted.

Knowing all these why the government and particularly the citizen don't step forward? Being a third world country, we should do our best to prove that this country can be one of the top Asian countries and environmental concern is just a small step to begin with.

Rizwan Hussain Jabbar, Dhanmondi Tutorial

The list

Sir, Something must be done in this choking capital of ours. I say this because, there is traffic jam in all the roads; there is garbage on all the roadsides; there is lead in the air; and there are muggers in every corner of the city.

There is no security for the members of the public; no safe drinking and household water; no sufficient electricity; no range in the gap between the rich and the poor; and there is no peace in the civic life.

Again, the list is painfully long. Ashraful Alam, Dhaka

Lest We Forget A Tribute to Justice Ibrahim

by Sayed Kamaluddin

JUSTICE Mohammad Ibrahim was a dignified and a courageous person, who believed in democracy, the democracy in which the rule of law is practiced and, transparency as well as accountability are ensured.

Son of Alhaj Ghyasuddin Ahmed, Justice Ibrahim was born in 1898 in a village called Bishnupur under Sadar thana of Faridpur district. His forefathers served the judicial service of Nawab Alibard Khan of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. He matriculated in 1914 from Barisal Zilla School with scholarship and three gold medals in English, history and mathematics.

Two years later, he passed his Intermediate Science from Dhaka College in the First Division and with scholarship. He also obtained his BA with honours in English literature with distinction. He then began to study MA in mathematics. At this stage his study was interrupted because of political turmoil in the country.

He joined the non-cooperation movement led by Mohanand Karachand Gandhi as well as the Khilafat Movement under the leadership of Moulana Mohammad Ali and Moulana Shaikat Ali. This was the time when he acquired his deep-rooted conviction in secular politics, communal harmony and human values and dignity.

He practiced law in Faridpur and Dhaka, became district and sessions judge and later elevated to the benches of the High Court. He retired from the judicial service in 1956 and politely turned down an offer to become the Speaker of the National Assembly. However, little while later he agreed to become the Chairman of Election Tribunal. Subsequently, he also became the Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University.

He was one of the three organisers of the 'Ikhwanul Adab' (literacy brotherhood), founder

with arms inspections." Washington is keeping an eye on pressure outside the main arena of international diplomacy, notably from Hans von Sponek, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq. On the eve of September's Security Council negotiations, he urged, "Don't play the battle on the backs of the civilian Iraqi population by letting them wait until the more complex issues [of the UN inspections] are resolved."

Warning against "the danger of using the human shield in the hopes of coaxing Iraqi concessions on arms issues," he appealed: "Please remove the humanitarian discussions from the rest in order to really end a silent human tragedy."

His plea echoes the recent report on the situation in Iraq by the UN Children's Fund (Unicef), which says that the mortality rate among Iraqi under-fives has risen from 56 to 131 per 1,000 in the past five

— GEMINI NEWS specialising in Middle East affairs.

The cause is an increase in malnutrition and disease and a dearth of medicines, resulting from economic collapse under the weight of UN sanctions.

The Iraqi people would not be undergoing such deprivations in the absence of the prolonged measures imposed by the Security Council and the effects of the Gulf war," concludes Unicef executive director Carol Bellamy.

The Unicef findings have strengthened the hands of those like von Sponek who have attempted to turn international attention toward the travails of ordinary Iraqis at the expense of the US administration, which, aided by Britain, has focused on the inflexibility of the Saddam Hussein regime, and blamed it for the suffering of its nationals.

These findings and their implications are likely to figure in the speeches that the Pope will deliver during his journey through Iraq in December, much to the discomfiture of the US.

The author is a journalist specialising in Middle East affairs.

recognised as a separate economic entity.

This is sound, was Manzur Qadir's chairman, Cabinet sub-committee comment on this suggestion, but Ibrahim's next suggestion that 'the central government should have only Defence, Foreign Affairs, Inter-Wing Communications and Currency; all the remaining subjects should be the concern and responsibility of the provinces' was dismissed by Manzur Qadir as unsound.

Ibrahim then made a recommendation which appeared outrageous, if not treasonable: "As regards the provincial subjects the provincial Constitution may be made by the President in consultation with representatives of the respective provinces."

Was the Law Minister contemplating one Constitution for the centre and another for the provinces? The author himself put a question mark in his book. Then he goes on: "Neither Ayub nor Manzur Qadir made any comment on this. Ibrahim proceeded to demand that 'there must be some law or convention that the post of President and Vice-President shall rotate between the two wings alternately.' He also asked for equal representation for the two provinces in the central cabinet, and wanted the permanent seat of the central legislature to be located in Dhaka."

Gauhar, however, truthfully mentioned that he (Justice Ibrahim) "having stated his point of view, studiously avoided taking any part in the deliberations of the government" and it was during this period of time that he mostly stayed quietly at his Purana Paltan residence. This was also the period when he was actively involved in the formation of the Combined Opposition Party (COP), a loosely form of conglomeration with a number of political parties which refused to join the Ayub bandwagon.

What Gauhar had quoted him as saying more than half a decade before the Six-point programme was actually launched, was, indeed, an extremely courageous stand taken at a time when any difference of opinion with the government of the day was being construed as 'anti-state'. The fact that being anti-establishment does not necessarily mean anti-state did not occur to the then ruling elite. He left for his heavenly abode on 13 October 1966, a few months after the six-point programme was announced, which had incorporated many of the points he mentioned in his observations to Ayub Khan.