

We Condemn the Mayhem in Kashmir

WE are deeply touched, grief-stricken and outraged — all at the same time — by the heinous massacre of 46 innocent Sikhs at a village in Srinagar on Monday evening.

What has definitely touched on a new sectarian dimension is the fact that the trouble was taken into Sikh homes in Kashmir for the first time.

The perpetrators may have succeeded in placing troubled and terrorised Kashmir in the full glare of the visiting US President.

Whatever may be the nuanced interpretations of the genesis and fall-out of the devilish episode of Monday in Srinagar it cannot obscure the sordid reality of the attritional and haemorrhagic persistence of the Kashmir imbroglio.

Speaking for the smaller countries of the region, we are deeply concerned over the escalation of tensions in Kashmir which cannot be underplayed except to court peril.

The process of solution to the Kashmir problem has to begin with an abiding respect for the line of control in the area.

Post-MFA Measures

EVER since the resolution for withdrawal of quota facilities for the least developed countries readymade garment exports was adopted at the Uruguay Round, we have all known that our garment industry's future would be at stake.

If New Delhi wanted Islamabad to be put in the quarantine, it would have been unproductive because the people in Pakistan, although not for a military role, would have felt left out because of India's pressure.

In this context, some of the BGMEA president's suggestions relating to the creation of "a separate authority to face the post-MFA regime and an apex body of export organisations to deal with the situation are worth examining.

Gagging Press at Feni

CLOSELY on the heels of allegations of high-handedness and unabated terrorisation at Feni by the followers of the ruling party MP Joyanal Hazari, has come to light the tactics being applied to keep the local and Dhaka-based journalists at bay.

A report in The Daily Star on Wednesday alleged intimidation and threat being posed to the lives of newsmen covering the combing operation in Feni.

Let us hope we can continue and take this process of understanding and respect for each other between the two countries to grow further.

Clinton's Visit to Bangladesh: A Brief Appraisal

THE President of the United States made a whirlwind tour of Bangladesh for 11 hours on March 20. This was, indeed, the first ever visit of a US President to this country.

The negative policy and role of the then government of Nixon of the US Republican Party towards Bangladesh liberation movement is well known.

The immediate benefit represented President Clinton's announcement of a sizeable US fund for utilisation in Bangladesh for food assistance and to harness clean energy.

But, by all accounts, the visit fell much short of the expectations of the present government. The government made vigorous and sustained efforts to include in the presidential programme certain items designed to promote political interests of the ruling party.

The opposition BNP achieved more than what they had expected. The allocated time of 15 minutes for Khaleda Zia was elongated to almost 45 minutes.

quipped, if one visit of the US President could achieve so much common identity and approach of the two major conflicting political parties, then he should visit Bangladesh more often to resolve many differences that exist between them and evolve a consensus!

Cancellation of this programme was a veritable disappointment for the President. But abrupt cancellation of the visit to the National Mausoleum at Savar for reasons of inadequate security is preposterous and unforgivable.

lambad a feeling that it was able to counter India's moves. Pakistan is, however, expecting too much from the five-hour stay.

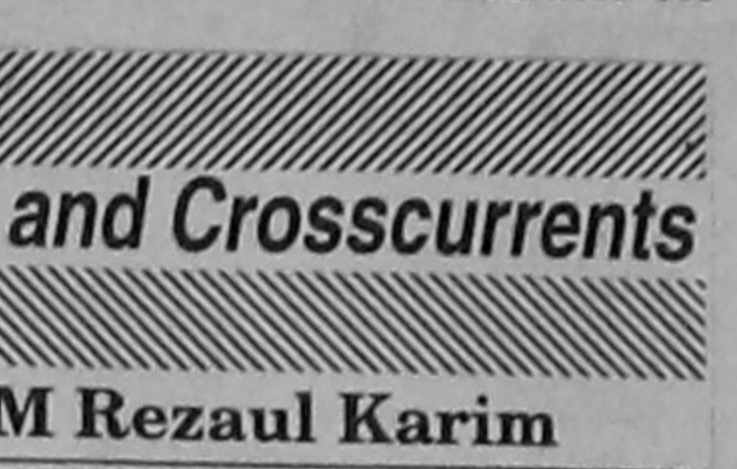
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by M M Rezaul Karim

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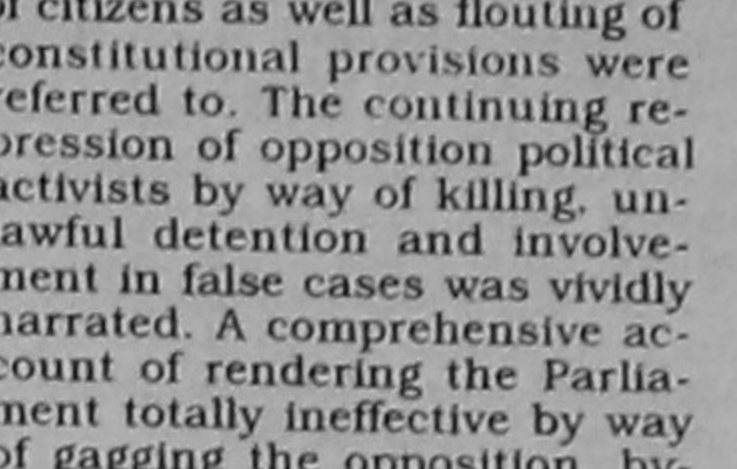
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"the less I say about it, the better, except it certainly seems to be vigorous."

There was one unfortunate episode worth referring to that causes concern and disappointment to many.

Further, the role of the BTV, which telecast a fleeting glimpse of this meeting and made deliberate omission of Begum Zia sitting at the Head Table at the presidential banquet crudely demonstrated a step-motherly attitude.

Finally, if one is asked to summarise the significance of the visit of President Bill Clinton to Bangladesh in one sentence, one may say that by this visit, the ruling party showed little, the opposition cared much and the general people of Bangladesh benefited the most.

The author, a former Ambassador, is a member of BNP's advisory council

Clinton's Stopover

How does America cool down the atmosphere without having any meaningful contact with Pakistan? Even otherwise, New Delhi should realise, if it has not, that Islamabad fits into various configurations of Washington.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

to change a government. If Clinton succeeds in getting Pakistan back on the road to democracy, India should be happy because elected representatives, however exasperating, do not see things either as black or white.

Even at present, when there are no visible official ties between America and Pakistan, Musharraf continues to take a posture which he assumes that

Washington will not disapprove. He has already made the terrorist organisations lower their profile. But I found both in Islamabad and Lahore hoardings and recruitment camps for people to join the jihad in Kashmir.

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OPINION

What's in a Name

Helal Kabir Chowdhury

What began as a protest against the naming of the residential halls of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology has turned into an issue to be reckoned with.

These resulted in the closure of the University for an indefinite period and the decision of the syndicate has been kept in abeyance.

It is a pity that the 'fundamentalist' elements have managed to gain ground by capitalising on the sentiments of the non-partisan citizens.

understood as a Jamaati interest has taken the shape of APAC's cause and destabilised the University. This is a public University and its activities are monitored by the government.

The intellectual class of the country has also been jolted by the episode. One noted litterateur has decided to observe hunger strike along with his family members at the entrance of the University on March 26th in support of the proposed naming.

Religion-based politics is not unheard of in this subcontinent. When BJP can become the major political party in India and form government, the Jamaatis here could also dream of forming government some day in collusion with like-minded parties.

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To the Editor ...

Clinton, Bangladesh and 1971

Sir, The visit by President Clinton, the first ever visit by a US President was very significant to us in many ways.

Therefore, the remarks Clinton made both on his arrival and at the Bangabhaban banquet about our liberation war and the people are very significant.

I would definitely have appreciated if the US President visited the Savar Mausoleum but we must try to understand the shortcomings of the most powerful person in the world when it comes to security matters.

Let us hope we can continue and take this process of understanding and respect for each other between the two countries to grow further.

Akku Chowdhury Banani, Dhaka

To repair or not to repair...

Sir, The link road connecting the College-gate on Mirpur

Road and the campus of Bangladesh Agricultural Institute (BAI) was not finally repaired. However, the road has been repaired upto the gate of the Suhrawardy Hospital complex.

What a pity! Bangladesh is an agricultural country and its economy is based on agriculture. But unfortunately, as we experienced there is no initiative to upgrade the infrastructure, academic status of the institutions (eg. BAI, estb. 1938) which are working hard to produce scientific manpower for bringing development to the agri-sector!

M Zahidul Haque Associate Professor BAI, Dhaka-1207.

Ban student politics

Sir, Students contribute in shaping the history of Bangladesh. They were the active forces that turned our liberation war into a success.

of power. This culture is very much prevalent nowadays.

Political leaders give sermons to students about maintaining proper lifestyles. But I think they actually don't want them to lead a fully academic lifestyle.

Addressing the prize distribution ceremony on the occasion of National Education Week 2000, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the students to carry only books and pens instead of arms.

But we see completely a different picture in our student politics. After AI's assumption to power, its student wing started taking control of the residential halls in all the universities even with the help of the police.

Arif 207, Rashid Hall, BUET