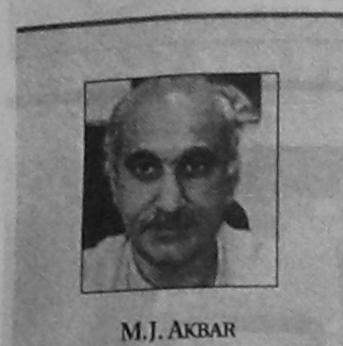
# The Mullah is laughing



FI were Mullah Omar I would be laughing all the way to the mosque right now. What began as an Armageddon, or at least a crusade, launched with a Bush-fire zealous enough to singe millions of television sets across the globe, has become a silent skirmish within three weeks. It could of course be the most expensive skirmish in the history of warfare, but that is the way of Washington.

On 12 September, after he had recovered from the shock of hiding in his own country, President George Bush sounded as if he had recognised the one error that haunted his father's strategy towards Iraq, the fact that George Bush the Elder did not confirm his military victory with a change of government in Baghdad. Bush the Younger was searching for the source of terrorism, the infrastructure that protected and trained those who spoke with guns, and demanded that any government that protected an Osama bin Laden was as guilty as the hijackers who flew airliners into the Pentagon and the twin towers of Manhattan. We forgot, in the tumult of that oratory, that the team that surrounds Bush the Younger is essentially the same as the one that advised Bush the Elder: Colin Powell, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld. The designations may have changed but the men are

It is possible that the next fortnight could prove me wrong, but it already seems that, ten years later, these men have no stomach for an American war. They want victory without collateral. They want a proxy war that can only end with the illusion of success. Having, in the anger of the first phase, committed themselves to an objective that demands sacrifice, they are now ready to settle for a political victory instead of any real solution. They want one man now, not the system that makes that man effective. The war has become a hunt, by special forces using sophisticated intelligence to scour the terrain inside

Afghanistan for Osama bin Laden.

We should have expected this dilution of American will. Because Afghanistan is really part of America's domestic agenda, rather than an international crisis. This holds equally true for Pakistan and India. The politics and policies of all three countries are being determined by how much this problem can serve their domestic interests and how the three governments can further their specific interests through this crisis.

The world has never quite known

since it came to power? Shown reverence to women? Instead it has brutalised women with a particular venom that has been recorded on film and in print, as and when possible in a closed and terrorised country. The Taliban social philosophy has destroyed education, eliminated (physically) civil society and devastated the country. The worst terror of this regime has been reserved for its own people. Who cared? No one. Washington itself, prodded by Islamabad, had begun

Alliance troops clearly show that the American dollar has made a dramatic comeback in their lives. They are riding motorbikes, wearing new boots and Nike socks. They look like

happy soldiers. The Pakistan administration's agenda is much clearer and more difficult. It has already won a signal victory by persuading Washington to soften its line against the Taliban. Pakistan would not want to lose an asset it created over the years in a country critical to its interests. It is

stopped thinking and retreated, hugging itself, into a political marsh called Uttar Pradesh. When you begin life as a single-agenda party, you always return to that agenda at the first glimpse of defeat. The BJP's visionaries are trying to reach Lucknow via Kabul. Anyone with a compass could have told them that this is an improbable route, but try arguing with the convinced. The Taliban has been converted into a UP election issue. The ban on SIMI, an organisation of Muslim students, may have some justification on its side, but the timing makes it nothing but a blatant effort to demonise Muslims before the UP elections. This government has been in power for three years; its evidence against SIMI could not have been collected only in the last three weeks. If the charge is fomenting violence then organisations like the Bajrang Dal deserve similar action. Militant groups of this kind have been publicly and proudly offering smallarms training to their cadres. Why are they doing this? To fight militants in the Kashmir Valley? The irony is that in February next year, or whenever the BJP government chooses to hold elections, the Prime

immune to such exploitation. The Afghan crisis offered chance to Delhi to formulate a genuine South Asia policy and then to obtain support for it from both within the subcontinent and the wider world. Every war provides an opportunity for potential peace. War itself is fought in the search for another order from which something unacceptable has been eliminated. There is no doubt that the central issue of the present crisis is terrorism and its elimination is the core purpose of every move. But there is growing doubt about the ability to achieve that purpose. Part of the doubt arises from the wavering resolve of the nation that was provoked, the United States. Then there is the problem of incomprehension: what precisely is in store for this region from Central Asia to the eastern borders of Bangladesh These two questions are only the beginning of a long and difficult list The answers demand some serious thinking, and minds have become

Minister and his home minister will

discover that the electorate is

too narrow for any thought at all. Unless I am proved wrong in the coming week, it is a world in which Mullah Omar can afford to laugh.

### Safe environment: Agenda for politicians

HE environment pollution that has by now become a matter of serious concern all over the world has not begun just recently. It began in the inception of human civilization and since then it has been increasing unabated throughout the world. But it took quite a long time for the world leaders to understand the truth that the world is heading towards an environmental disaster. Understanding the gravity of the situation, the world leaders met in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and came to a consensus to protect the world environment.

However, the leaders were not committed to their own people, as a result of which no significant development in any sector of environment is found even after a decade since they took oath in Rio de Janeiro. According to experts' review, the present condition of environment in almost all sectors such as, land, freshwater, forests, biodiversity, air and noise is rather worse than in 1992. The major cause of such depletion in environment is that the most developed countries are still consuming resources much faster than they can regenerate, while most developing countries with rapid population growth are facing the urgent need to improve the living standards without caring the environmental condition of

their own. Although we could not find any complete comparative study on the environmental situation of our own country between now and a decade ago, the situation seems to be much more aggravating than the previous years. The major cause for such environmental degradation particularly in cities and more particularly in Dhaka city is the over population. The unplanned expansion of urbanization including centralization of most of the administrative infrastructures and commercial benefits helped tremendous increase of the population of major cities, especially of Dhaka city, the population of which shall not be less than double now than ten years ago.

As most of the administrative and commercial establishments are centralized in the capital Dhaka, the

impends here. It will break out in

earnest when and if the US cruises

aircraft and commandos begin their

commercial viability of this mega city is continuously attracting people to be migrated from their respective rural areas. Although not like Dhaka, other cities are also being crowded mostly because of their business potentials. For the same reason, the social status competition is increasing and such competition is making some highly ambitious people furious to make money by adopting any unscrupulous measures such as, grabbing government land to make shanties and business centres, encroaching rivers and canals for the same purpose, cutting hills, destroying trees and

Let us appeal to both the leaders of the two major political parties to take an agenda to protect the environment of our country. Let us tell them that while a total of 15,000 (may be up to 25,000) people die every year of air pollution alone and countless more of water-borne and other diseases, safe environment has become a matter of our basic human rights and only the political commitment can quickly improve the unabated deterioration of environment which we are living with.

other natural beauties for their personal gains. Such naked competitions are everywhere for social, political and financial gains without caring the consequences. For instance, if the street in front of a landlord is spacious enough, in most cases he is abusing that space materials or any other unused things, or someone is providing the space to others for keeping rickshaws, schoolvans, cars, microbuses or even for erecting makeshift

The above competitors who are providing cheap facilities to the immigrants are getting at least twoway benefits first they are making a lot of money renting their makeshift huts in slums and shops by the roadside and collecting subscriptions from the vagabond youths by providing shelters and, in the process, often allowing them to mugging and robbing, and then they are using the muggers and inhabitants of their make-shift shanties for their own survival in any clashes with their rivals and law-enforcers as

The above cheap employments attract people towards cities for which the population in cities particularly in Dhaka city is being increased in the process of Malthsusian Theory of Population Increase' in geometric ratio, and to meet the demands of such huge population, the overall environment has been jeopardized. When population with lack of civic sense is increasing geometrically, the envi-

ronment is also being polluted proportionately mainly because of the inadequate number of members of the law-enforcing agencies in comparison with the ratio of population increase, and lack of sincerity of the government machineries. As a result, the environment of the country particularly of Dhaka city is being aggravated and getting worse day by

The air pollution itself is killing 15,000 people a year in our country, as it was revealed by Mr Jitendra Saha of the world Bank South Asian Unit in his report recently published in some national dailies. But the total number of deaths by air pollution is learnt to be 25,000 now as was revealed by some other expert very recently, although I could not find the reference.

The noise pollution is another matter of great concern, as the level of noise in many parts of Dhaka city is above 100 decibel, which is more than double the highest permissible level of 45 decibel as prescribed by

the World Health Organization. Same is the case of water pollution. A number of study reports say that about 35-51 million people are at risk of arsenic problem alone. While the ground water of almost fifty percent area of the country is arsenic-polluted, the experts are suggesting incremental use of surface water instead, after making necessary treatment. But as the surface water is also heavily contaminated by different kinds of hazardous contaminants like faeces, toxic wastes, etc. in all over the country, millions of people are getting various types of water-borne diseases, and an enormous number

of them are dying every year. Dengue, malaria, filaria, and other kinds of diseases like the most recent mysterious one found in Meherpur, caused by mosquito bites, are all due to dirty environment that is killing thousands of people every year.

Now let us see what should we do

to protect our own environment. Since education is one of the key methods to get people learned, this could continue as a measure of creating awareness which is already putting vehicles, construction being done by a good number of voluntary organizations, NGOs and environmentally conscious people of the society. But it is definitely a lengthy process and none can say when the people will be learned enough to protect their own environment until the government's commitment and its sincere efforts are ensured. It is true to say that strong political commitment can play a vital role in improving the already degraded environment as well as protecting it from further ruination. And now is the time to get our political leaders committed to protect our environment, as the national parliamentary election is being held. Let us appeal to both the leaders of the two major political parties to take it as an agenda to protect the environment of our country. Let us tell them that while a total of 15,000 (may be up to 25,000) people die every year of air pollution alone and countless more of waterborne and other diseases, safe environment has become a matter of our basic human rights and only the political commitment can quickly improve the unabated deterioration of environment which we are living with.

M Sirajul Islam Molla is General Secretary, Sunder

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There is no doubt that the central issue of the present crisis is terrorism and its elimination is the core purpose of every move. But there is growing doubt about the ability to achieve that purpose. Part of the doubt arises from the wavering resolve of the nation that was provoked, the United States. Then there is the problem of incomprehension: what precisely is in store for this region from Central Asia to the eastern borders of Bangladesh?

what to do about the Taliban. Pakistan helped create it, so established a lonely vested interest. The United Arab Emirates placed an ambassador out of self-protective instincts; and Saudi Arabia to show solidarity with a government that was avowedly Islamic in its claims. The rest of the world ignored something it could do nothing about. I was as aghast as anyone else at the images that strained the imagination on 11 September. But far more horrifying than what the Taliban has done to America is what the Taliban has done to its own people, to Afghanistan. For more than half a decade now the women of Afghanistan have lived through degradation and terror that must shame all nations in principle and Muslim nations in particular, for the word that the Holy Quran uses for women is reverence. Surely believing Muslims do not need to be told about the fourth Surah of the Quran, Al Nisa, whose principles govern their personal law. The opening verse establishes the first principle: "O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women. Fear Allah, through Whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for Allah ever watches over you" (from the translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

Taliban in a quiet, incremental manner, a fact that the State Department will not easily accept just now. Washington understood the Taliban only when the Taliban reached New York and Washington.

The United States has, with less subtlety than it thinks, changed its policy. Its war aim has narrowed down to a single point: the hunt for Osama bin Laden. (Incidentally much-encouraged myths about him do not add to the cause of credibility. He does not have three hundred million dollars. For him to inherit that much his father would have had to leave six billion dollars in his will and that sort of money he did not have. It did not really exist before oil. And the Afghan resistance to the Soviet Union did not really need the Laden millions; the CIA had enough In any case this money-hype misses the point. Those who go out to die do not need bank accounts.) President Bush presumably feels that a dramatic capture of bin Laden by special units of American and British armies will satisfy the domestic audience, after which the boys can fly back home and warships go back to their bases. The Taliban could stay in Kabul. The only difference would be that the Northern Alliance would be offered a supply line to reenergise a confrontation of many years. This was precisely the policy created by the Cheneys and Powells in Iraq and it ended in the mass sacrifice of Kurds, among other tragedies. Recent photographs of Northern

other than the Taliban would be more hostile to Islamabad. The second, or maybe the first, imperative in Islamabad is survival of the old-fashioned kind. Stay alive, and stay in power. President Pervez Musharraf was poorly advised when he decided to televise his tension, but the comparative calm since then could prove deceptive. The real problems for the Pakistan government will come if the Americans are unable to storm the Laden hideout and pick him, or if Mullah Omar rejects the compromise being suggested by soft-liners in the Taliban who do not want their movement to become hostage to a single individual. This would mean real problems for the Bush team as well, forcing them into a battle they do not want Reluctant armies rarely win. So far the pro-Taliban sentiment in Pakistan has been less farspread than the pictures of American flags burning would suggest, but real shooting could trigger real passions.

axiomatic that any government

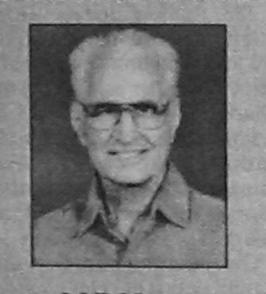
The government in Delhi had one obvious motive; that whatever scenario emerged after the dust settled, the world should do enough to eliminate the use of terror from the region. But this would have to be a reasonable and regional package, rather than a unilateral one, and therefore a policy that the world

But the Vajpayee government

MJ Akbaris Chief Editor of the Asian Age

## An incalculable category

Is this what the Taliban has done



M B NAQVI writes from Karachi

AKISTAN politics is relentlessly moving towards a grand polarisation. This is not to say there is much confusion. But the two poles stand out amidst all the increasing din and dust: there are Taliban snugly in the saddle in Afghanistan and have apparently plenty of noisy i.e. in the media and platform and influential support in Pakistan. Much of the populous rightwing is clearly on the side of Taliban and the hard kernel of this section comprises Jehadi militias and religious parties. A small, or as the liberal types assert, the biggest, segment of what may be called secular or semi secular Rightwing is certainly not with them. Mainstream parties like PML and PPP are a part of this latter

The religious Right religious parties and private Jehadi armies,

TOM & JERRY

I REALLY THOUGHT

Garfield ®

JIM PAVS B.Z3

### PLAIN WORDS

Heavy political turbulence impends here. It will break out in earnest when and if the US cruises, aircraft and commandos begin their strikes. They say it will be on the whole less spectacular than the war against Iraq in 1990, though a few flashes of that sort will have to be shown to the American public opinion that is baying for revenge. That will be the moment of truth for Taliban's supporters, especially those ensconced in strategic positions.

some of whom with dubious political connections is clear-headed and knows what it wants. It is for Taliban's survival in power and they feel that if the Americans succeed in throwing Taliban out of power in Afghanistan, their own chances of gaining power in Pakistan too will vanish. Therefore, they are intent on making maximum trouble for the Musharraf regime. Like all military governments it had begun with banning all political activity that involved common people's participation; it had permitted only indoor activity by the leaders and for the leaders, though there was a big difference: this time the press freedom was not curtailed thanks to the world opinion and the isolation of Pakistan; the generals felt too timid to annoy major powers further by suppressing a vigorously free press. But the religious parties are ignoring technical limitations on political activity. There are rallies and public meetings, not to mention the press support the religious lobbies are

KLAK

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KLAK

getting, every day in all cities and towns as if there was no military dictatorship in power. The government has sheepishly "relaxed" the restrictions on political activity. The whole country appears to be in

The military government, for its part, has adopted the common practice: if you can't break a racket, join it. So it has taken to organising its own supporters' rallies, albeit organised and dominated by district officers and newly elected mayors, called Nazims. The government has, on the subject of joining the Americans' war against terrorism very unpopular with the religious lobbies that have so far been the darlings of the regime the support of three major parties, all basically conservative: PML and PPP as noted. The third party is MQM representing only the cities in the Sindh province. The government observed Thursday (Sept 28) as the Solidarity Day. Rallies were taken out and meetings

AHEM

were held, though a rally was not permitted in Karachi because perhaps the regime was not interested in witnessing a show of MOM's strength. There was also some danger of clashes between the PPP and MQM because they have a long history of rushing at each other's throats, often literally. Nevertheless, both PPP and MQM did show their popular support: former on a countrywide basis and the latter remains king of Karachi streets.

But this support is not for Gen Pervez Musharraf and his regime. It was basically negative. It is, in large measure, to the US itself as also against Taliban. A large segment of aware citizenry in Pakistan abhors the kind of politics Taliban champion. On this issue, the liberal opinion is consciously siding with the US. No one has forgotten its record and its double standards. Few can forget or forgive America for underwriting military dictators in the name of stability and development

by Jim Davis

By Hanna-Barbera

WE WOULDN'T

HAVE TO WATCH

SO MUCH VIOLENCE!

for much of the time since 1953. Its claims of promoting democracy and human freedoms are less than credible to Pakistanis. They have just given a pledge to stabilise Musharraf's Presidency. That sounds like Pakistanis being sentenced to another decade of 'stability'. Apparently people are expendable, dictators are not. Even so, compared to the risks that inhere in Taliban-style Islam for Muslims in a Muslim state liberals have freely chosen to side with the dyed in the wool conservative Bush against Osama and Taliban.

But heavy political turbulence

strikes. They say it will be on the whole less spectacular than the war against Iraq in 1990, though a few flashes of that sort will have to be shown to the American public opinion that is baying for revenge That will be the moment of truth for Taliban's supporters, especially those ensconced in strategic positions, especially in the Army. That is the nameless fear here. Are there Taliban supporters in the holy of holies: Army? Commonest assessment is that intelligence services are infested with Taliban-minded operatives while some are supposed to be in the Army's higher echelons. Doubtless most go by the assurances commonly held out that no one in the Pakistan Army can afford to break its discipline; it will hurt all its senior officers. Perhaps there is no danger. But the mind that thinks like Taliban is an incalculable category. All that can be said is: what wil be will be.

Nagvi is a noted columnist in Pakistan.



#### **Bangladesh Power Development Board Tender Notice**

দেশপ্রেমে উদ্বন্ধ হউন বিদ্যুতের অবৈধ সংযোগ বন্ধ করুন

1) Name of office: Span Type PC Pole Plant, PDB, Aricha, Manikganj 2) Name of work: (I) Supply of spare parts for spinning machine, (II) Supply of bar cutting machine, scrapper machine, mixture machine and main switch, core coil, Thermer relay coil etc., (III) Supply of some machine parts of capacitor panel, (IV) Supply of materials for installation of copper bar. 3 Estimated cost: (I) Open tender, (II) Open tender, (IV) Open tender. 4) Earnest money: At the rate 5% of quoted amount to be deposited with the tender through Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh in favour of Deputy Director (Accounts), ZAO, (P&CO), PDB, Dhaka. No tender will be received without earnest money. 5) Eligibility of contractor: For serial nos. 1&2, PDB's 1999-2000 enlisted A B & C class contractors & bonafide supplier firms with past experience. 6) Requisite papers for purchase of tender: (a) Firm ownership affidavit, (b) Authorisation with specimen signature in case of purchasing tender through representative instead of owner, (c) Income Tax TIN certificate & (d) enlistment documents. 7) Price of tender (i) Tk 500/=, (II) Tk 300/=, (III) & (IV) Tk 200/= respectively in the form of Pay-Order/Bank Draft in favour of Deputy Director (Accounts), ZAO, (P&CO), PDB, Dhaka, 8) Tender schedule to be had at: (a) Chief Engineer, Civil Works, PDB, A Gani Road, Dhaka (B) Director, Civil Works, PDB, A Gani Road, Dhaka (c) Manager, Agrani Bank, Aricha Ghat Branch, Manikganj, 9) Last date of selling tender: 7-10-2001/22 Aswin, 1408 BS up to 12-00 Noon. 11) Date & time of opening tender: Tenders will be opened on 8-10-2001/23 Aswin, 1408BS at 12-30 PM in presence of tenderers/their representatives (if any), 12) Work order time limit: (I) 30 (thirty) days, (II), (III) & (IV) 15 (fifteen) days respectively. 13) If, under unavoidable circumstance, any tender cannot be received or opened on the prescribed date, then the next working day will be considered as the date of receiving & opening tender. Other terms & conditions and all rules & regulations of tender mentioned in the schedule should be complied with properly.

Biddut/Jana-402(5)/2001-2002 DFP-22902-9/9

G-1827

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#### Tender Notice for Purchase of Ambulance

Tenders are invited from bonafide importers/distributors for purchase of one

brand new Ambulance for this company. Tender No. GTCL/PIC (Procu)/Ambulance/2001-2002/03.

Tk 1,000/= (one thousand) only (non-refundable). Price of tender document : Tk 50,000/= (fifty thousand) only. Earnest money Tender document to be sold from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on all working days

from 20-9-2001 to 24-10-2001. Tender document to be sold from and received at:

Accounts Department, GTCL, House No. 1, Road No. 12, Sector No.3,

Uttara Model Town, Dhaka.

Accounts Department Petrobangla, Petrocentre, 3 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka. Accounts Department, Bakhrabad Gas Systems Limited, Head Office

Complex, Chanpapur, Comilla. Accounts Department, BAPEX, Ibrahim Mansion (4th Floor), Purana

Paltan, Dhaka.

Accounts Department Titas Gas T&D Company Limited, 105, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.

Accounts Department, Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Limited, Steel House, 102, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.

Accounts Department, Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Limited, Court

· Accounts Department, Jalalabad Gas T&D System Ltd, Gas Bhavan, Mendibag, Sylhet-3100.

· Accounts Department, Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd, Chiknagul, Sylhet. 25-10-2001 up to 12:00 Noon. Last date of receiving tender

Date & time of opening tender 25-10-2001 at 12:15 PM. No tender under any circumstance will be received after the prescribed date &

The authority reserves the right to accept/reject any tender without assigning any reason.

GTPR-08/2001-2002 DFP-23210-11/9

G-1829