

The CHT accord under study

Let the review be productive

It was in the BNP's election manifesto that when in power they would review the Chittagong Hill Tracts agreement. That process is about to begin.

The other point of determination will be the role which the accord has been playing in securing peace for the region. Towards materialising such objectives the government has plans to have a series of joint meetings with the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, the CHT Interim Regional Council and the PCJSS.

There is no denying the fact that the signing of the accord marked a change for the better in terms of relative peace from the insurrectionist days that bedevilled normality in the region for two decades.

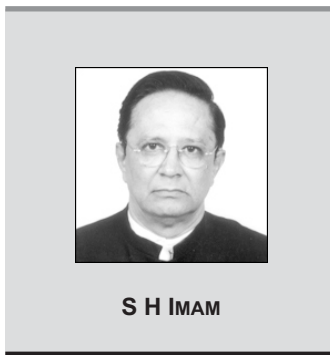
The tribal leadership has been maintaining contact with the present BNP leadership since before the elections. Moreover, what is important to note is that protracted negotiations were carried out by the earlier BNP governments with the tribal leaders in Tripura and CHT which basically laid the foundations for the subsequent talks that led to the consummation of a peace accord.

Enough is enough US better refrain from any war beyond Afghanistan

The United States' "single-minded determination" to wage war on a broader front than just in Afghanistan has apparently caused a tremor in the coalition against international terrorism.

The entire world will counsel the US to abandon even entertaining such plans. Enough is enough. The bitter memory of Afghanistan will rankle for long because of the number of innocent people dying and devastation caused to the country.

A mob rule in miniature, alarm clock ticking



S H IMAM

turning out to be a phenomenon. And we better not trifle with a phenomenon.

It is anti-people, thoroughly against the rule of law and patently tendentious which conjure up a rule of the jungle to come if we don't stem the tide.

number of reasons, such as a motive to settle personal scores, or even professional scores; or as in one particular instance, planted friends could yell 'catch him, catch him' pointing the finger at the chaser himself while the muggers jauntily made good their escape.

puny problem to the government. It doesn't represent a politically-loaded issue, rather it's a law and order problem calling for preemptive police vigil and persuading people to hand over the suspects or culprits to the police instead of butchering them by taking the law into their hands.

There is a conjecture about the rising trend of mugging to the effect that with the toll collection points or circuits changing hands some of

whether it is a let-it-happen resigned attitude of resignation or a fear psychosis on their part to avoid being entangled with the public outcry. Whatever it is, the police need to overcome this mental barrier; because it is absolutely essential that when public tempers get ugly with suspected or real criminals, the police don't hesitate to step right in and take charge of things.

Let's take the Kaptan Bazar

This goes to confirm the conventional theory that the public tend to take law into their own hands out of pent-up frustrations from seeing accused persons or criminals going scot-free even after being caught.

Something goes seriously wrong and we probe its causes, very naturally so. But in doing so, however, we cite reasons that are not remediable in the short term.

One can think of two options: first, a public education campaign needs to be launched via print media, radio and television to din the do's and don'ts into the ears of the public keeping in view the typical lynching episodes.

SH Imam is Associate Editor of The Daily Star

JUST ANOTHER VIEW
Something goes seriously wrong and we probe its causes, very naturally so. But in doing so, however, we cite reasons that are not remediable in the short term. They are all a long-term prescription, therefore, academic for the present purpose. But we need action on public lynching rightaway.

Evaluating SAARC: Economic reality versus political will

A. N. M. WAHEEDUZAMAN

AS the leaders of the region prepare to attend the SAARC summit in Nepal, it is time to ponder some of the critical issues that involve the association, its success and failures.

Like it or not, the economic arguments of SAARC despite its high rhetoric do not provide a strong rationale for an economic group. These limitations have been discussed widely and are well documented in SAARC literature.

First of all, the volume of trade among the member countries is very negligible. It is only 5 per cent of their total trade. This percentage is significantly high for the leading successful trading blocs.

weakens the basis for a serious regional trade regime.

Secondly, the member countries have similar export base and they compete in global market with similar products. Each country is vying for its position in the European

cracy/government and various other factors were mentioned. Additionally, informal trade (i.e., black market), currency valuation, and slow tariff reduction schemes aggravate the imbalances.

turn our attention to the 'political will' dimension of the process. Political will is a critical component in any regional cooperation or economic integration initiative.

America, Asia and Africa reveal this. On the other hand, the 'anti-war' attitude after the World War II literally propelled the integration movement in Europe.

removal of travel restrictions may be helpful. Favourable attitude will foster favourable political force for integration.

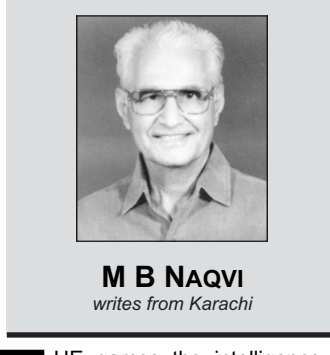
To date, the political commitment in SAARC is an initiative of the governments of the seven member countries. The initiative, though timely and laudable, has limited participation.

The economic arguments for SAARC are weak and the political will is fragmented. Nevertheless, the governments should continue the process for a different reason: it is peace and stability in the region.

Dr. Waheeduzaman is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi, USA.

To date, the political commitment in SAARC is an initiative of the governments of the seven member countries. The initiative, though timely and laudable, has limited participation. It confined among the government officials or a few businessmen. It lacks a broad-based people's support. Initiatives must be taken for a broad-based political will necessary to carry the process forward.

Dangerous games



M B NAQVI

writes from Karachi

THE games the intelligence agencies play can be dangerous and tiresome. Dangerous because they manipulate media by feeding distorted and partial information for extraneous purposes of their own.

This thought arose from two stories on one and the same day in the Pakistan press on Tuesday. One was lifted from New York Times in

bulk that threw a lurid light on ISI activities as a state within a state and as a den of pro-Taliban operatives, the utter vulnerability of Pakistan's nuclear weapons and the close links of Pakistani nuclear scientists with Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and Taliban in general.

tried to show how it was Pakistan President himself who briefed the CIA chief George Tenet on December 2 in Islamabad about the Big Story of Al Qaeda's nuclear ambitions and activities with all the particulars and sources in Kabul, advising him to go in person to Kabul and see for himself.

Pakistan government had apparently been interrogating these two retired scientists for about two months. They are Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmud and Ch. Abdul Majid. They have had contacts with Taliban and they are being questioned ostensibly for breaching the service rules about not taking official prior permission for visits outside the country.

gated. Many here think that some of it is professional rivalry, if not turf war, among a variety of intelligence agencies of different countries including Israel, a close associate of American agencies.

There are also two many political prepossessions of each agency and unavowed hidden agendas. Pakistani intelligence services, especially ISI, are suspected of infiltration by pro-Taliban officers by all western agencies as so many stories in the US media suggest.

reek of inspiration from them suggest. The gravamen of Pakistani spooks' suspicions is the American intent to somehow get at, or into, Pakistan's hitherto secret nuclear programme; and their efforts to get the custody of Pakistanis who have worked for the nuclear programme on the suspicion that they may have helped Al-Qaeda acquire nuclear know-how or materials may be only a smokescreen for that purpose.

MB Naqvi is a leading columnist in Pakistan

PLAIN WORDS

The US-Pakistan relationship is obviously ambivalent, with hostile attitudes almost seething below the surface. The question of Pakistani scientists' contacts with Al-Qaeda, whether true or false or in between, holds the potential for much mischief both for Pakistan-America relations and for domestic politics in the country.

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

"Is Islam an Arab religion"

Regarding the debate about "Is Islam an Arab religion", I would like to quote from Sura Fateha which starts with "All praise to Allah who is the Lord of the whole Universe".

Allah didn't say that He is the Lord of the Arabs. Jamil Ahmed Houston, Texas, USA

In his letter ("Is Islam an Arab religion?") Mr. Khan tells us that it is Muslims, and not only Arabs who cannot be made slaves. If I get this harsh and inhuman statement right, it implies that non-Muslims can be made into slaves!

Kazi Zubaidur Rahman University of Nottingham

Democracy in action!

It was sort of encouraging to see the picture of former Home Minister sitting on the road near Zero Point,

looking helplessly at the surrounding policemen, during the recent party hartal in Dhaka.

This is democracy in real action (or inaction), in an under-developed country, where politics is more under-developed. We seem to be good in tit-for-tat exchanges. It is hoped the feuding politicians would keep the nation entertained during the next five years, when a change of scene is likely.

A Voter Dhaka

Excesses take its toll

The price of excess is a toll, which has to be paid later for a considerable period of life. The politicians are very much aware of the mockery played by fate (karma) later in life.

A regime excels in excessive use of power, and later pays the price, through a general election, where the verdict of the people tells the story. The game of life is to contain and balance the possible excesses, prompted by ego, lust for power, or

unauthorised acquisitions. The meek also have a caretaker-- as asserted from the biblical period.

Newly emerging nations in the twentieth century had to pay through heavy sacrifices. If ambition takes over, the penalty is continued, on the hire-purchase system, through instalments, month after month, year after year; till the system is cleansed for revival, and then survival.

First the masses suffer, and then the errant leaders are punished morally. The calculation is on the basis of compound interest. Many LDCs cannot repay the loans taken as aid (Pakistan is a recent example). Moral bankruptcy is a vicious circle, and it needs super-human effort to get out of it.

Bangladesh has learned many lessons during the three decades of its emergence, but many more hurdles lie ahead, for system cleaning. The corrupt system of governance now calls for a thorough overhauling. It is a huge national task,

led by selfless leaders.

These thoughts loom before the Victory Day due on December 16, 2001. The deadline is the victory of the self.

AZ Dhaka

Muslim terrorists

The Western media, the CNN, the BBC and the entire developed world is crying hoarse about the Muslim terrorists. But let there be a head count of all the death of innocent people that have been caused by the Christian terrorists, the Jewish terrorists, the Roman Catholic terrorists, Buddhist terrorists, Hindu terrorist and others.

A terrorist is a terrorist, and has to be fought in all countries and in all fronts to save humanity and civilisation. Shahabuddin Mahtab Dhaka

New English text-

books

In a country, where there are only a few teachers who can or are able to read, write and talk in English correctly despite the fact that they may have done their MA in English from various universities of Bangladesh, the new English textbooks are only a farce.

The fact remains that neither the Ministry of Education nor the Education Boards keep any track of what kind of education or teaching is being imparted to students who do MA in English at the university level. May I ask the concerned authorities how the college teachers are supposed to teach English Language when many of them have little or no aptitude? And how many students would be able to grasp the writings, which appear in the new text of HSC 2001? The text itself may be very well written and be able to serve the purpose-- a marketing purpose, of course, but what about the future of the students?

Many have done their MA in

English but how many of them are capable of becoming teachers?

Mujibul Haque Sobhanbag, Dhaka

AL's stance

The country's eighth parliamentary election was conducted in a free, fair and peaceful manner. All domestic and foreign poll observers in their reports clearly mentioned it as did our national media.

In democracy, disregarding people's verdict would be a great mistake. AL's decision in not to join the parliament is not consistent with their previous pledges made to the public. Not joining the parliament after being elected as MPs is a clear violation of people's right.

We urge the AL to join the parliament and to act responsibly as a main opposition party for the greater interest of the public and democracy. M.H. Bari Khulna

Putting right people in right places

One of the articles in a national daily starts by saying, "There are a number of good, honest, educated young men I know who could do this country a whole lot of good by speaking for it abroad..."

Yet sometimes, it appears to be a matter of shame to see the quality of people who are working for different foreign missions and thus are representing our country abroad.

With the change of the government and our Prime Minister's firm pledge, we are hopeful of some changes. It is time that we recognised our talent and felt the need to represent our country in a better way. Anjali Akbar Azimpur Road, Dhaka

Bus crisis in DU

Bus crisis in Dhaka University has reached a frustrating and painful stage. Each and every University

bus is always overcrowded which causes terrible hardship to the commuters. The number of bus needs to be increased immediately.

Members of the bus committee do not pay any attention to this nor do they carry out their duties. For instance no ID card checking system exists in these buses and no bus runs on time.

We request the authorities concerned to take immediate steps in this regard. Rezaul Karim Dept. of I.R, DU

Terrorists in their own land

When Israel attacks Palestine killing mostly the civilians, these attacks are termed as 'action against terrorism' but when Palestinians attack any Israel position to protest Israeli occupation, they are termed as 'terrorists'. Shouldn't it be the other way round.

Tareq Rajshahi