This goes to confirm the conven-

tional 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.

Indeed there is truth in it and it must

make the police sit up and do some-

thing to salvage their image; but at

the same time we need to be wary of the possibility as well that people

might feel self-righteous with what

they are doing if we overstress something that is evident public

knowledge, meaning repeated

wrong and we probe its causes,

verv naturally so. But in doing so.

however, we cite reasons that are

not remediable in the short term.

They are all a long-term prescrip-

tion, therefore, academic for the

present purpose. But we need

action on public lynching rightaway.

One can think of two options:

Something goes seriously

police debacles.



DHAKA THURSDAY DECEMBER 13, 2001

The CHT accord under study

Let the review be productive

T 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. Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed in a meeting with leaders of the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), who called on him in Dhaka on Tuesday, clarified the government's position on the matter. He told them that what the government aimed at was a review of the accord designed to examine how far it has guaranteed the rights of the tribal people keeping within the Constitutional framework of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bangladesh.

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. Admittedly though, its implementation ran into snags so that its full potential for peace, development and co-existence between the tribals and the plainland settlers remains practically unrealised. What made the implementation of some of the important provisions of the accord problematic is the persistent reopening of a few settled issues by the tribal leadership across the board. There have been complications with regard to the land issue, regional council's rules of business and the voters' list.

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. This should augur well now.

Enough is enough

US better refrain from any war beyond Afghanistan

HE Untied States' "singleminded determination" to wage war on a broader front than just in Afghanistan has apparently caused a tremor in the coalition against international terrorism. Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, the chief of Britain's defence staff has spoken of "some slight difference in emphasis" between London and Washington on the issue. That is in militarydiplomatic parlance but some of the other expressions Boyce has used are picturesque: "We have to decide soon whether we make a commitment to a broader campaign or make a longer term commitment to Afghanistan". In other words, since Britain is to lead or contribute to the multinational security force to be shortly deployed in Afghanistan, it couldn't at the same time join in any US-led attack on other countries. A couple of other countries in Europe, China and Iran have already voiced something of an aversion to the US toying with any idea of extending its anti-terrorist campaign to another country beyond Afghanistan. The countries previously mentioned as being the likely US targets have been Iraq and Somalia. 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. We will urge the US to wholeheartedly engage themselves in the reconstruction of Afghanistan rather than try the costly mission of a 'broad-spectrum domination' of the world. Let it set better examples of a good world order.

A mob rule in miniature, alarm clock ticking

S H IMAN

UBLIC lynching is no respecter of the month of Siam and the approaching Eid nor of the month studded with

Bandladesh a full three decades ago. It has taken a toll of a dozen lives in as many days of the current month, the figure since September 1, being 19 altogether. Although it is too much to expect that exalted feelings and high ideals would have weighed with a mob psychology gone haywire to bring it back to sense, the fact however is that our mood has darkened at a time of keenly awaited rejoicing, celebrations and solemn resolve

There is absolutely nothing populist about the incidence of mass beating and mayhem. Even though some recent remarks from highly placed persons apparently attributed such a dignity to it, there is no telling how pernicious public lynching is. More so when this is



nomenon

invite more trouble

turning out to be a phenomenon. And we better not trifle with a phe-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. To say that these could strike a fear in the muggers beaten blue and could be barely waiting in the wings to pounce on unsuspecting citizens to be stopped in their tracks is to virtually

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. Meanwhile, the chaser has been into their hands.

saved from breathing his last by a God-sent identification of somebody in the crowd who knew him.

puny problem to the government. It doesn't represent a politicallyloaded 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

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

JUST ANOTHER VIEW

Victory Day marking the birth of 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.

> Basically, the contention is fallacious on two counts. First of all. this is not borne out by facts. There may have been lulls in between low and high points of the lynching episodes but these proved extremely short-lived as the scourge returned every year with vengeance during festival times.

Secondly, the real danger lies in unbottling the monstrous genie of public reaction based entirely on suspicion rather than proof. As a result, a finger-pointing at somebody in public could wreak a havoc. And this could be actuated by any

regional trade regime.

There is no point in shrugging off the current spate in the incidence of crowd-bashing by saying, "Well, we have seen lynching in the past, so there is nothing new about it and it could happen again!" The attitude is wrong, because (a) it overlooks the sudden spurt witnessed in the scale of happening, for whatever reasons; and (b) it might send a mixed

signal to law enforcers who essentially need to be clearly directed to toughen their approach to the problem. As a matter of fact, with a massive mandate under its belt, public lynching could at best pose a

the old thugs and their operatives may have slithered off the wheels of business to sprout in various awkward directions. The police are the best people to know whether this surmise is correct or not. And should it prove correct then they will have to train their guns accordingly.

One particular missing link in the jig-saw is why should the police fail to prevent lynching when they must have been around the place of occurrence or drawn to the same by the kind of hue and cry that is raised with each chase given after the suspected culprits? One wonders

incident of last Sunday as a testcase in which four youngmen lost their lives to an ugly dosage of

Sunday's incident proved.

first, a public education camfrayed public tempers. At least one paign needs to be launched via of them, it is learnt, was a comprint media, radio and television to pletely innocent passerby while the din the do's and don'ts into the rest, as the people of the business ears of the public keeping in locality and the policemen have view the typical lynching epivouched for, had criminal records, sodes. Secondly, it might be a good mainly as extortionists. Now the idea to create a documentary film point is, for quite a while in the past. on the subject and show it for the businessmen of the locality on some durable effect on the public being constantly harassed by the mind. muggers had reported them to the police but obviously to little avail as

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

Let's take the Kaptan Bazar

things

SH Imam is Associate Editor of The Daily Star

Evaluating SAARC: Economic reality versus political will

A. N. M. WAHEEDUZZAMAN

S 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. Specifically, two issues come to my mind'economic reality' and 'political will'. I shall address them in view of a recent study I conducted on regional economic cooperation.

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. Here are a few for consideration.

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. For EU and NAFTA this share is 55 per cent and 52 per cent respectively. The share is also relatively high for the not-so-successful trading blocs. For ASEAN it is 20 per cent and for MERCOSUR it is 25 per cent. Such a small share of intra-SAARC trade

weakens the basis for a serious other factors were mentioned. Additionally, informal trade (i.e., Secondly, the member countries have similar export base and they black market), currency valuation, compete in global market with and slow tariff reduction schemes similar products. Each country is aggravate the imbalances. Unless vying for its position in the European India makes 'unilateral concessions'

cracy/government and various 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. It refers to the will of the people or its representatives towards any move that has a

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. The sufferings endured during the two wars forced the Europeans rethink about their

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. 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.

The economic arguments for SAARC are weak and the political will is fragmented. Nevertheless. the governments should continue the process for a different reasonit is peace and stability in the region. We all would like to see that the two nuclear states as well as other nations in the region are engaged in a dialogue. I believe SAARC can provide that opportunity. That is the minimum we can expect from SAARC.

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

Żŗ 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.

PLAIN WORDS

The US-Pakistan relationship is obviously ambivalent, with hostile attitudes almost seething below the surface.

potential for much mischief both for Pakistan-America relations and for domestic politics in the country.

or North American market. The competition abroad deters the cooperation at home. There is also a lack of complementary sectors that can encourage trade within the region. This phenomenon is not likely to change in the near futureweakening the argument for a regional cooperation.

Thirdly, the member countries' trade imbalances with India are a constant problem for the growth of a trade regime. The issue has been discussed several times in different SAARC meetings. Discriminatory practices, lack of reciprocity, attitude of the Indian bureau-

to improve the condition a viable trade regime would not be possible. Fourthly, the countries of the region are in varying stages of economic development. economic infrastructure is a problem and requires huge investments (establishing telecommunication infrastructure, roads and highways, internet etc.) for growth. Also concerns about the efficacy of the legal and regulatory framework supporting the economic infrastructure are

reasonable level it will be difficult to accelerate process of integration. Having discussed about the economic realities of SAARC let's

there. Unless all these improve to a

NAFTA initiative, Canadians barely (52%-48%) approved the treaty.

In the absence of a strong 'politiduring the last four decades in Latin

embraced over divisiongenerating a people.

economic priorities. Unity was long-term consequence for the nation. That is why European Union requires a favourable political will (through referendum or similar popular method) before any acces-Their sion. Mere governmental wish is not acceptable to EU. Here, I will bring

the example of Norway. In 1995, Norway wanted to join the Union but her people rejected the move. Norway is still outside the Union. In

> cal will' the integration initiative is bound to fail. The history of various regional cooperation movements

strong political support for the union. The 'attitudinal distance' prevailing among the people in the region complicates the notion of political Suspicions are high, trust is lacking, and the progress is slow. The 'stalled summit' also demonstrates this. Serious efforts need to be taken to affect the belief structure. 'Exemplars' should be provided to change the attitude of the Well-orchestrated integrated marketing communication (IMC) campaigns using mass media, public discussion, exchange

and visits by opinion leaders



M B NAQVI writes from Karach

• HE games the intelligence agencies play can be dangerous and tiresome. Danerous because they manipulate nedia by feeding distorted and artial information for extraneous purposes of their own. It is tiresome or careful readers and viewers to valuate factual news by separating he contaminated chaff from the rain of fact.

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

bulk that threw a lurid light on ISI tried to show how it was Pakistan activities as a state within a state President himself who briefed the CIA chief George Tenet on Decemand as a den of pro-Taliban operaber 2 in Islamabad about the Big tives, the utter vulnerability of Paki-Story of Al Qaeda's nuclear ambistan's nuclear weapons and the close links of Pakistani nuclear tions and activities with all the scientists with Osama bin Laden, Alparticulars and sources in Kabul, Qaeda and Taliban in general. It advising him to go in person to Kabul and see for himself. Tenet is naturally extolled the American secret services' efficiency and reported to have done just this. seemed calculated to pave the way Apparently, the story is correct. But for the Americans to get the custody that says nothing for the contacts of an unspecified number of Pakibetween the original two scientists stani scientists or engineers who and Taliban inside Afghanistan were connected with their country's apparently for humanitarian purnuclear programme. The other poses of their NGOs supposedly story was clearly inspired by Pakilong after their retirement from stan's own secret services and it government service.

Pakistan government had apparently been interrogating these two retired scientists for about two months. They are Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmoud 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. That is, if the official explanations are correct.

But the CIA and other foreign agencies are apparently pushing for the custody of not only these two impugned scientists but of at least six others, two of whom or an additional two, are required to be interro-

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 too 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. Pakistani agencies appear to have their own suspicions of the Anglo-American secret services of strong

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

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 The question of Pakistani scientists' contacts with Al-Qaeda, whether true or false or in between, holds the 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 While America and Pakistan are in fact cooperating closely with each other in the war in Afghanistan, their old suspicions and wariness appear to be still at work. The US-Pakistan relationship is obviously ambivalent, with hostile attitudes almost seething below the surface. This 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.

> MB Nagvi is a leading columist in Pakistan anti-Pakistan bias, as stories that

> > instance no ID card checking sys-

tem exists in these buses and no

Terrorists in their

When Israel attacks Palestine killing

mostly the civilians, these attacks

are termed as 'action against terror-

ism" but when Palestinians attack

We request the authorities

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

"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

Excesses take its toll

Dhaka

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 civilisa-

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 responsively as a main opposition party for the greater interest of the public and democ-

racy

M.H. Bari

Khulna

starts by saying, "There are a numyoung 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 bus runs on time. matter of shame to see the quality of people who are working for different concerned to take immediate steps foreign missions and thus are in this regard. representing our country abroad. Dept. of I.R, DU With the change of the govern-

ment 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

Anjali Akbar Azimpur Road, Dhaka

any Israel position to protest Israeli occupation, they are termed as **Bus crisis in DU** "terrorists". Shouldn't it be the other Bus crisis in Dhaka University has

way round. Tareq

Rezaul Karim

own land

reached a frustrating and painful stage. Each and every University Rajshahi

bus is always overcrowded which Putting right people in causes terrible hardship to the right places commuters. The number of bus One of the articles in a national daily needs to be increased immediately. Members of the bus committee ber of good, honest, educated do not pay any attention to this nor do they carry out their duties. For