

Setting the NGO house in order

Government must hold widespread consultation before framing new laws

Simply put, the NGOs have asked for what they are about to get -- new stringent laws governing their activities.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's meeting with some NGO leaders held last Thursday sets the tone for the emergence of a new relationship between the government and the development partners.

We would like to strongly urge that wayward activities of some of the NGOs should not be used to discredit their overall performance over the last nearly three decades.

The PM's declaration that she will consult with NGO leaders in formulating the new policy is highly reassuring.

For whom the partisan bell tolls?

Administrative clean-up must be transparent

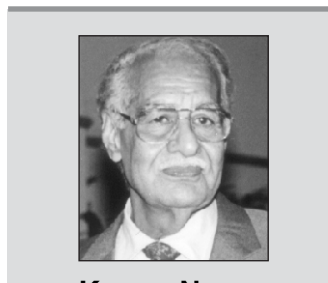
The one man Committee headed by Enam A. Chowdhury, a retired Secretary and member of the BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council has detected 107 'illegal' orders relating to appointment, promotion and transfers.

Removing and installing politicized bureaucrats is a traditional practice in Bangladesh. But it began in earnest with AL's 1996 victory.

The Enam Committee will always lack credibility because a bureaucrat turned ruling party politician heads it.

If the governing group really want to put an end to unfair hiring and firing in the bureaucratic world, they need to appoint a neutral person with universal credibility to look into the issue and decide independent of political pressure.

Breaking the ice?



KULDEEP NAYYAR writes from New Delhi

Was it necessary for the government to ask Chief of Army Staff S Padmanabhan to give Pakistan a war-like message...

At a time when New Delhi is pursuing diplomatic efforts and succeeding with America and the UK, the army chief jumped the gun.

Our reply was timid, sparse and halting.

True, Musharraf has yet to win our confidence because he started his career with the intrusion at Kargil. We have also bitter memories of earlier betrayals at Tashkent, Shimla and Lahore.

war against religious forces in Pakistan. It is a tough job because they have had complete freedom all along.

Even Zulfikar Ali Bhutto used religion for his political purpose. He declared the Ahmedias non-Muslims and declared Friday a weekly holiday to placate the mul-lahs and mautivs.

pointed out that jehad had a different connotation in India he stuck to his words. For him to say that jehad means an onslaught against poverty, hunger and ignorance, is quite a volte-face.

But when he has made a u-turn on Afghanistan in, what he called, "the national interest," he can do the same on Kashmir.

Pakistan's former foreign minister, asked the Pakistanis sitting around our table how they felt about Kashmir.

Muslim population. Had Jammu and Kashmir gone to Pakistan at the time of partition, people in India would have regretted it but would have taken it in their stride.

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Kuldeep Nayyar is an eminent Indian columnist.

BETWEEN THE LINES

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from the eyeball-to-eyeball position. In the meantime, Musharraf carried accolades of approval practically from all over the world.

We have always wanted Pakistan to be a democratic and secular country. Is it happening? We will have to wait till October this year to find out whether Musharraf respects the Supreme Court verdict to hold elections by then.

Qaide Azam Moahmmad Ali Jinnah announced on the eve of Pakistan's birth: You cease to be Muslims and Hindus. You are now either Pakistanis or Indians.

religious elements. He should be given that time. Large-scale arrests and sealing of offices will not satisfy India. It wants to see whether Musharraf's action would end cross-border terrorism.

Musharraf has defended at Islamabad the jehadi violence in Kashmir before a gathering of journalists from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

indeed, in his national interest. If he lives up to his promise, the two countries can be friends again.

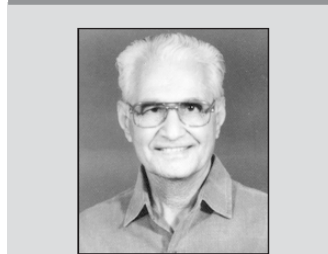
The hostility with India has not helped Pakistan in any way. It has suffered economically and internationally. No doubt, the chapter of hate and hostility going back to 50 years cannot be closed overnight.

Musharraf has said that Kashmir runs into the vein of every Pakistani. I am not so sure of that.

out between yourselves." Still Kashmir has plagued relations between the two countries and it should be discussed peacefully as Musharraf has said.

The problem of Kashmir has become intractable over the years. The state has got communalised. The Hindu-majority Jammu wants to integrate with the rest of India, giving up the special status which the state enjoys.

Logic of the change



M B NAQVI writes from Karachi

Last Saturday's (Jan 12's) speech by President Pervez Musharraf certainly represents a courageous new beginning by a general.

The general-President has also to anyhow cope with unrelenting American and Indian pressures for curbing Islamic fanaticism during the electioneering, polls and effecting amendments in the much-mangled constitution for legalising his own status.

based on heavy emotionalism: the Kashmir dispute was exploited and an anti-India psychosis was promoted that gradually yielded it the Jihad in Kashmir.

Indeed, a pathological anti-Hindu sentiment was promoted as a glue that was to hold Pakistan together and counteract the

and put paid to Taliban rule. Indians have thought it to be the right time to force the issue of Kashmir insurgency. US President George Bush and British PM Tony Blair have bought the Indian line hook, line and sinker.

fourth military takeover. After the U-turn in Afghanistan policy and Islamabad's joining of the World Coalition against Terror, it was supposed that Pakistan was no longer isolated.

PLAIN WORDS

Tolerance has to extend to all religions and other forms of beliefs. How to set up such a tolerant and plural society is the urgent task Gen. Musharraf has undertaken.

regional nationalists' campaign against an unnecessarily strong centre sans democracy. Now, this military government is embarking on undoing all that -- if only it correctly understands the concomitants of what is required to be done and how best to go about it.

suspicion of Islamabad's complicity the basis for an intended punitive military campaign and massed 700,000 troops on Pakistan borders. The West did not overtly endorse all the Indian charges but it also did not express any clear disbelief of Pakistan's possible culpability.

the methodology Pakistan has employed in sympathising with Kashmiris. Credibility of the change demands one consequential, if specific, measure: riding Pakistan politics of the blight that is inaccurately expressed as 'agencies' or ISI.

suffered a crushing military defeat -- and was dismembered. Its economy was on a life-support drip, requiring much foreign support. It is in no shape to bear the burden of the war that India may still be threatening.

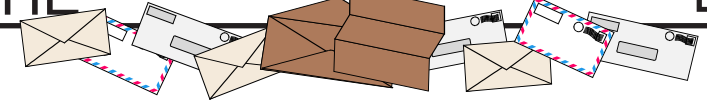
must. The new initiatives --- obviously based on new thinking --- have to be thorough-going and all their concomitants have to be implemented, if they have to succeed.

The task is to transform the society as it now is into, at the very least, what was before Gen. Ziaul Haq's Islamisation of an otherwise quite Islamic country began. Zia's net contribution was to define Islam in orthodox (sectarian) terms.

The resources of the state must transparently be devoted to improvements in people's living conditions in an ambience where popular wishes are freely expressed and the government has to implement them.

MB Naqvi is a leading columnist in Pakistan.

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



BAU protest
Aside from the fact that this incident has shown that the BSS is simply a mouthpiece of the ruling party, I have another question.

Stop torturing the opposition
During the recent two hartals, the opposition leaders were beaten up mercilessly by the law-enforcing agencies.

A few words on Simi's death
Simi's tragic death has shaken our conscience. She tried to be independent, we tried to put her into shackles. She sought help from us, we turned our face.

Home coming queen!
10th January 2002 was the home coming anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. And just two days later it was the home coming day of Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina.

Moin ul Alam
Mintoo Road, Dhaka

Nur Hossain
Bangshal, Dhaka

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I am really touched after reading your mail, Mr Abul Ashraf Noor. The truth is, you are not only among those victims and needless to say, you are known to your achievement.

London in early January couldn't dent the image of Justice Shahabuddin; it only confirms the narrow-mindedness of a political party no more than one count: not facing the election result squarely (rigging is mostly marginal, not massive); and finding fault with a president after ten years. AL appears to be trying to convince foreign delegation that the BNP-alliance government needs to be smashed, leaving a vacuum as usual.

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relief in sight. The very approach was wrong: that the chanting of mantra of Sk Mujib's name would make the party faultless, and above judgement. This magic is not working, and won't work, as vindicated during the last general elections.

Syed Ahmed Faruque Dhaka
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guilty, though I know personally that many Pakistanis feel otherwise. It is the duty of the saner section of Pakistan to erase this shameful incident from the pages of history by exerting heavy pressure on their government and convince them to tender a formal apology.

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whole-hearted consolation to the misery that you had to go through. The compensation you are demanding that has just come out of

Denver, Colorado, USA
Musharraf is a true statesman
Musharraf's 12 January speech was the best under the current situation.

Some Possible Poets
Denial is not a strategy. Denial is a strategy that leads to disaster. Denial is a strategy that leads to disaster. Denial is a strategy that leads to disaster.

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