

## JU teacher's death deeply saddening

Holding traffic to ransom unacceptable, Police action needs probing

We are shocked beyond measure by the death of Professor Kausar Hossain of Jahangirnagar University in a terrible highway accident in the prime of his life on Friday morning. Only 39 years of age and already highly regarded as a teacher of English literature and a writer, he was first hit by a coach speeding in from the wrong side as he was standing with his bicycle beside him to cross the road. Knocked off, he lay prostrate on the highway and it was then that he was run over in a split second by the same vehicle. The emergency treatment got off to a wrong start without an ambulance.

Even though we are as outraged as the students were by the circumstances of the professor's death, we find no justification whatsoever for the day-long siege on the highway bringing traffic to a grinding halt as thousands of innocent commuters suffered. In the rumpus, vehicles were bashed, too. Their sentiments were understandable but not their action. It amounted to taking their hard feelings out on people who must have been themselves hurt when they heard of the professor's death. Did they deserve the hardship?

However, what the students eventually did could have been the thrust of their reaction from the beginning making for some peaceful demonstrations in the end. For they have put forward a list of demands which must receive utmost attention of the authorities: widening the road, putting a proper road divider in place and having speed breakers facing the four gates of the JU campus.

That said, we must unambiguously express our outrage over the police excesses committed within and outside the campus which seemed eminently avoidable. When talks were in progress at 6 pm at the VC's office attended by deputy commissioner, police superintendent, vice chancellor, teachers, transport operators and student leaders to end the blockade, the police swung into action on the street without any provocation. They lathi-charged the students and hurled rubber bullets and tear gas canisters at them. Then the police enter the campus and resort to indiscriminate beating of students.

The application of force by the police needs to be investigated and the personnel found responsible for any excess committed brought to book, so that it is not repeated in similar circumstances in the future. But what's equally, if not more, important is we ferret the driver out and bring him to justice.

We would also urge compensation paid to the professor's bereaved family knowing well their loss is irreparable. Our heart-felt condolences to them.

## Brutal jails harden criminal not reform them

Post-colonial attitude towards penal reform needed

AILS become famous only when famous people go to jail. Otherwise, it remains invisible. We want to forget how people live and what people do there. Like the insane, the disabled and the starving we want to deny them space in our mind. There has been a report in our paper where the situation has been exposed to the public world showing that life inside is incredibly difficult. What makes the horror even less palatable is the fact that there are many children in jail.

Penitentiaries have been part of society since laws came into existence. It's also an indicator of the state of that society. Prisons reflect public attitude regarding how people actually wish to see them managed. Thus the dismal state of the jails means that once inside, everyone would much rather forget the inmates and also not know what is happening inside.

This situation is the cruellest when it comes to children because the jail is no place for them and by law. Yet we know that there are many of them inside, many unaware why they have been arrested. It's particularly cruel for the undertrial child prisoners because they will have had an extremely cruel experience which by law is forbidden.

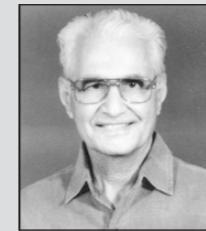
But it's the same system, which puts adults into jail, keeping them inside for years and forcing them to become brutal "enemies of society" as the normative penal culture forces most into extreme ends of negation. Instead of reform they become hardened criminals. The jail forgives none although the law may do so.

The problem is that our jail administration as we know it was installed by the colonial rulers which had the specific task of isolation in mind. These were meant to keep people inside away from society while our jails should have been managed with reform in mind.

With crime rates soaring, this is a growth sector in all its sarcastic sense. Growing crime rates are here to stay and that means the queue will get longer. Whether we like it or not, improving life within jails is essential because brutalised men and children will go out only to return as quickly as possible and we can't afford that many prisoners.

Since we can't ignore them even if we want to, we are under a compulsion to improve the state of our jails.

## Musharraf's 'real' democracy parameters



M B NAQVI  
writes from Karachi

politicians --- and top vote catchers --- out of the election. The CE has called his third major parameter on Thursday to be the fine tuning of democracy he intends restoring and some of its other characteristics. One particular substantive change in the Constitution he wants is to introduce a system of checks and balances. While to the world, democracy is nothing but a system of checks and balances in which the Parliament acts as a great check on

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would remain the President makes the election suspect: it would be so tailored or rigged or hedged with rules and regulations that its results will ensure that the new Assembly's majority will comprise his supporters. Would these election be free and fair? Who in the rest of the world will trust it. Special rules can only mean that the playing field is made more amenable for some and less for others. Would it devalue and discredit the elections?

the Generals, getting a particular kind of Parliament from an election in which there will be no obvious coercion of the voters and procedures correct, may not be easy. Doubtless the regime has been vigorously politicking. It is still uniting the half a dozen factions of the Muslim League, more or less vainly. But PML is anyhow an army of generals with few foot soldiers. Minus Nawaz Sharif, the vote pulling power of the various PML luminaries

cell of the Army would be savvy enough to know that the top generals need the support of Benazir, if not also of Nawaz Sharif. It is logical. She has been making brave statements about democracy and about inadvisability of the Army participating in politics. Yet everyone knows that she was trying hard to make a deal with Gen. Musharraf which will permit her to participate in the general election for becoming the Prime Minister a third time. In exchange she was prepared to concede President Musharraf with the powers desired to be written into the Constitution. Since the General has abused Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto as utterly corrupt and otherwise incompetent for so long, he finds it hard to eat all those many words. It remains to be seen whether in the latest stage of behind-the-scenes struggle between Benazir and Gen. Musharraf will have to accept her as the possible PM if indeed she can win.

One has not mentioned the people of Pakistan. Not that they have ever mattered. But living conditions of the common people unemployment is widespread. Poverty is growing rapidly. Law and order even under the military rule continues to worsen. Crime graphs everywhere are going up. Ordinarily it should create restlessness and should radicalise people. The government thinks that old certainties have remained largely intact. Old political families, usually big landholders, will send their children in the new Assemblies. And they will be malleable material for the generals to remake into political shapes they want. Are the generals right? Who knows.

M B Naqvi is a leading columnist in Pakistan.

## PLAIN WORDS

The fact that the military ruler has declared before the election that he would remain the President makes the election suspect: it would be so tailored or rigged or hedged with rules and regulations that its results will ensure that the new Assembly's majority will comprise his supporters. Would these election be free and fair? Who in the rest of the world will trust it.

the executive led by its own majority leader. It ordinarily implies that the country's Chief Executive should be made accountable from day-to-day to the Parliament --- but not to anyone not a member of the Parliament. That is not what Musharraf means by checks and balances.

Musharraf is referring to a bogus constitutional debate within the country that the supporters of the Army and the previous dictator Gen. Ziaul Haq had initiated. They want to balance the power of the Prime Minister not by the Parliament but by the President. Since Ziaul Haq had forced an elected Assembly to confer on himself the power of life and death over the Parliament and the rest of the electoral system --- which he in due course used by his own handpicked Prime Minister by unceremoniously sacking him. After that two other Presidents sacked another four Prime Minis-

ters in the space of eight years, making Pakistan a laughing stock. Those supporters of Army rule argue that why Gen. Musharraf had to take over was that the President was deprived of the power to sack the PM and the Parliament. Apart from implying that the previous sackings were at the instance of the Army Chief of the day, Musharraf should have Zia-like powers of sacking the elected PM, and if necessary the Parliament.

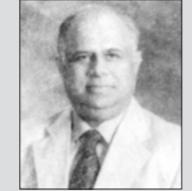
Then there is the question of scheduling of the polls for Oct next. The CE is announcing reforms in instalments. So far he has given two reform pieces: both pertain to increasing the number of seats in the National and provincial Assemblies a non controversial matter in itself but can become one when questioned for its criterion --- and arbitrarily raising the voting age to 21 from 18, as was to be. No one whether these polls can actually be held in the next in the eight and a half months. Because delimitation of constituencies is sure to take a fair amount --- and it has yet to be taken in hand. Then there is the question of qualifications for the deputy-to-be. Each new deputy should be at least a BA. That has been widely criticised and other conditions will come in small print.

It is passing strange to say things like that. But apparently it was needed. According to some acute observers, an assurance to US President George W. Bush was required. According to his theory one of the main purpose of the War against Terrorism was to purge Pakistan of the virus of Islamic extremism. Even as the American bombed the Taliban regime and hounded Al-Qaeda men, a press ganged Musharraf had to transform himself into a moderate and modernist Muslim ruler. The Americans' love for democracy does not go so far as to take the risk of seeing Musharraf going out of power; they need him. Unfettered democracy can wait. Hence the blatant declaration that what is wanted is a controlled or pliable democracy that would not hinder or alter Gen. Musharraf's course. Despite the American wishes and the power of

can only be rather limited.

There is another difficulty: In the recent elections in Punjab and in Sindh, many of the rich elected persons suddenly disclosed that they were either Muslim Leagues or PPP wallahs. The uncomfortable facts are two. The fact is PPP has made net gains in the Punjab and NWFP in addition to its stronghold of Sindh. All observers of political scene think that the party that can get majority of the seats in the National Assembly is likely to be PPP. But the PPP's ability to win a whole general election without Benazir Bhutto being there to galvanise its old workers, the results may be less spectacular. The mystique of the Bhutto name and the charisma Benazir is supposed to carry are a factor. No matter how hard the generals try, getting the desired kind of Parliament might still elude them. Doubtless the political

## With enemies like Advani



IKRAM SEHGAL  
writes from Karachi

ELIEVE it or not, it is increasingly becoming a fact that India's Home Minister L K Advani is Pakistan's biggest asset in the struggle to counter India's motivated propaganda to declare Pakistan "a terrorist State". His place on this pedestal would be a dead heat with George Fernandes but Fernandes is a Christian and despite his best efforts to sound like a Hindu revivalist, he lacks the venom that Advani generates inherently due to the basic character quirk in the conservative Hindu psyche be deviling Hindu-Muslim relationship in the South Asian sub-continent. It is no coincidence that Sindhi Advani feels that his ancestors let the side down by allowing Muhammad Bin Qasim to establish a foothold for Islam in the sub-continent in the first place. He has made eradication of muslim rule anywhere in the regional hemisphere his personal war to wage, there being no comparable word in the Hindu religion for "Jehad" or "crusade".

According to Advani's daughter-in-law, Gaura Advani, his Special Assistant for two years before she married his son, Jayant, Advani is not the devout Hindu we see in public. Her affidavit asserts that having won only a couple of Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament) seats in

the 80s, Advani (and the inner circle of BJP) decided in 1990 that the only way to come to power was to stoke Hindu nationalism. As the political arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Singh (RSS), the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) follows closely the dictates of the Hindu nationalist movement and their policies are hardly secular. In fact no sect in Islam is more fundamentalist than the militant Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) or the Shiv Sainiks. They do not spare any religion, Islam,

apologies to India's secular trappings. The already weakened, virtually leaderless Indian Congress Party, was virtually destroyed. Regional parties, many having antipathy to religious affiliations, came into power in their respective States but looked to the strongest Party in the Centre. The BJP-led coalition is a contradiction of sorts, almost all the regional parties without exception do not subscribe to the extreme religious ideology practised by their BJP partner as

stan and the resolution of the Kashmir issue was possible only if a BJP government (as distinct from a BJP-led coalition) came to power in New Delhi.

While para 3 of Advani's statement is debatable given the BJP's anti-muslim thrust, paras 1 and 2 are remarkable from Pakistan's point of view. For the first time in recent memory a very senior Indian leader acknowledges publicly that (1) gauging the aspirations of the Kashmiri people through plebiscite

persecution of muslims, not so apparent in the urban areas, but a way of life in the urban-rural and rural areas. The silver lining in all this is the rise of regional parties in India.

There is a conspiracy of silence in the international media about the horror in Kashmir. The UN Security Council resolution is unambiguous that the dispute in Kashmir between India and Pakistan can only be resolved by ascertaining the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Over the last decade as much as 75000 Kashmiris have lost their lives in

persecution of muslims, not so apparent in the urban areas, but a way of life in the urban-rural and rural areas. The silver lining in all this is the rise of regional parties in India. Unlike Advani's assertion of lasting peace with Pakistan if BJP is itself in power (more of a "final solution"), the real insurance for Pakistan are BJP's regional coalition parties and in a future Congress-led government alongwith regional allies. As their driving force, regional parties have poverty, hunger, disease, lack of education, etc. On the other hand, the two major parties see India as an emerging power on the world stage and Pakistan as the main stumbling block, BJP being the more virulent of the two.

As the senior ideologue of BJP (other than being its President during the destruction of Babri Masjid), L K Advani should be taken seriously and his views disseminated "as is" to the world. As the largest democracy in the world, India should be able to explain to the world why it is keeping majority population of other religions in many States in bondage. In some states of democratic India, foreigners are not allowed, the few permitted occasionally cannot travel freely. The world today being media-sensitive, we must invite their attention to Advani's recent statements. Commemorating the "murder of RSS volunteers at the hands of communists", the BJP may care to count how many more communists it has killed over the years, if not the multiple more muslims in every State of the Union in Hindu-Muslim riots inspired by RSS and other extreme Hindu organizations?

Pakistan should encourage international media focus on the likes of Advani, Thackeray and party. With enemies like

Ikram Sehgal, a former Major of Pakistan Army, is a political analyst and columnist.

## AS I SEE IT

We should not condemn the Indians en bloc for the present state of religious confrontation between India and Pakistan. In Pakistan religious activism was stoked on the basis of nationalism, similarly this was done in a very studied, calculated manner in India. The manifestation of that extremism is in the persecution of muslims, not so apparent in the urban areas, but a way of life in the urban-rural and rural areas. The silver lining in all this is the rise of regional parties in India.

Christianity, Buddhism, etc. As far back as 1990 or so, the Hindu fundamentalists united to pursue a cynical course of muslim-baiting, focussing on Babri Masjid as a viable agenda. Advani tasked the BJP's leaders fundamentalist partners to tear down the Babri Masjid as a starting point for reviving Hindu nationalism. He himself physically led a well publicized Hindu religious procession through India, duly decked out in saffron-covered conservative religious attire, to Ayodhya, the site of Babri Masjid. The conservative Hindu element rallied in city after city, ultimately this led to the razing down of the Babri Masjid by frenzied thousands and the first attempt to establish a Ram Temple there. This made a large segment of secular Hindus very uneasy but the political fallout was spectacular, the BJP became the hub of the Hindu revivalist campaign, with no

State policy. The Indian Congress did not have any viable leader after the BJP had successfully orchestrated a bumi-putra (son of the soil) political insurrection within the party against Italian born Mrs Sonia Gandhi. Thus was born the rather unlikely BJP-led "Coalition of opportunity".

In a recent speech to RSS of 429 volunteers over the last three decades at the hands of their communist rivals, mainly in West Bengal and Kerala, Advani made some very telling points that need to be publicised for a world audience, viz (1) it was the group's (RSS) ideal of national unity that kept India welded together over the last 50 years (2) losing Kashmir to Pakistan or giving it independence through a plebiscite would almost certainly break-up India, to quote "it would have a domino effect on the whole country" and (3) truly friendly ties with Paki-

stan and the resolution of the Kashmir issue was possible only if a BJP government (as distinct from a BJP-led coalition) came to power in New Delhi.

will almost certainly result in either Kashmiris electing to join Pakistan or seeking independence for the State (2) if such a situation should arise that Kashmiris opt out from the Indian federation, this would result in other States following suit, including those who are not already fighting for their independence e.g. Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Assam, Bodoland, etc (3) to ward off the disintegration of the Indian Union it was necessary, even amounting to State terrorism against those citizens it nominally calls its own and lastly and not the least it explains the reason why India must (5) go to war with Pakistan if necessary (even with resulting nuclear holocaust as a distinct possibility). The Indians may have had short term success in getting world attention to focus on "terrorism" in Kashmir, as opposed to what

encounters with Indian military, para-military and police force. While India claims they were all Pakistani infiltrators, a ground survey by neutral observers within Kashmir of the graveyards adjacent to towns and villages will confirm that most of these who died were inhabitants living in close proximity. India does not allow foreign media free access to Kashmir, moreover it does not allow any international human rights body to enquire into abuses by Indian occupation forces, atrocities are continuing on Kashmir to stamp out any attempt at independence of any kind.

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### Mob violence

The news of the mob burning three alleged muggers to death is horrifying and quite disturbing. One can clearly visualize the typical Bangladeshis on the street, cheering and participating in an act so cruel. We need to stop and ponder on the question whether the ones burnt to death were indeed criminals and if they were, whether the punishment fit the crime.

True, we are getting increasingly frustrated by the deteriorating law and order situation. True, we are increasingly losing faith in our police and hardly expect any protection from them. True, we have grown to be cynical about criminals being punished as so many of them are both used and protected by all the major political parties. True, our situation is the perfect breeding ground for vigilant behaviour. True, it may be a desperate hope that this growing trend of "instant justice" could serve as a deterrent in crimes and muggings.

But we cannot afford to lose faith in the judicial system, because it is better to let a criminal go free than to kill a person who could potentially be an innocent victim of mistaken identity. First, without a fair trial, there is no way to be reasonably certain of someone's guilt. We would never know if all three of the mob-victims were indeed responsible for the crimes they were killed for.

A concerned citizen

Dallas, U.S.A.

Is terrorism against

### Muslims kosher?

India is crossing all borders of terrorism with US issued password "War against terrorism".

Five more Kashmiris were murdered by Indian troops in recent acts of violence in Indian-occupied Kashmir. Kashmir Media Service (KMS), quoting local witnesses, says five victims of Indian state terrorism were arrested from various places in Kashmir, taken to areas close to the Line of Control in Rajouri district and shot dead in a fake encounter.

India has miserably failed to suppress the 54 years old freedom movement.

All the civilized countries should send their observers for fact finding. They will see these fast expanding grave yards and judge themselves that these are graves of local martyrs died fighting against oppression and not of any terrorists.

India's refusal to allow international media or observers is a proof of being guilty of human rights violations by its security forces.

Ironically, this terrorism is hidden from President Bush's eyes so it could not be on the agenda of US declared "War against Terrorism". Does this mean that terrorism against Muslims is "kosher" (halal)?

A frustrated university student

Dhaka

Some questions on