DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 3, 2002

BDR kills an innocent in custody

Custodial killings must stop immediately

fish trader, beaten to death by the BDR was dumped off at the premises of the Lalbagh thana, a fallout of the law and order improvement campaign which they are running. Inevitably the innocents are getting badly hurt.

The cycle is always the same. It begins with the failure of the government to control law and order followed by public demand that threatens to become a political threat. This gets translated into call to the para-military which has scant regard for ordinary people and it is the innocent variety that begin to be victimized. And now disregard has reached a point when a man is beaten to death and left at the doorsteps of the law order office itself, a strange tableux of a society's failure to provide protection to its own people.

Bangladesh has a long history of para legality in maintaining law and order. The rot begins with giving a long leash to the political elements and criminals in political garbs which overwhelm the conventional policing system. The police also show their toothless regime partly because they are under political pressure and partly because of their own inefficiency. So in response to the public call for security, para-military gets called and the bashing begins. For the first few days, there is some relief but concerns and fear rise as soon as body counts rise. In Bangladesh, this has happened before under many regimes. Even the present phase had notched an instance in Naraynagani where citizens were tortured

What seems to be the ignition for such behaviour is the perceived lack of accountability that lies at the bottom of law enforcing agencies of whatever hue they may be. Calling BDR may be fine provided they are given to understand that this isn't handing over a subject population to be disciplined but an act on the part of the state to

There is a deep helplessness and irony in this. It seems that people not only have no right to protection but complaining and seeking redress can also be difficult. Thus people lead lives as prisoners of a situation where safety has been made a casualty in the search for the same. The one who is supposed to protect appears to have been issued a licence to maim and kill.

These are sad and frightening times as death swoops down in many guises but the ultimate responsibility will lie with the elected government and it is they who will have to answer to the people for their action.

Manpower business at watershed

Quality of immigrants key to

export success

ANPOWER export, our biggest foreign exchange earner, has come to crunch. There has been an inflow of returnees but new grounds are yet to be broken in terms of marketing surplus labour. The only redeeming feature seems to be that remittances through official channels have increased as compared with those via hundi. But this is a small consolation.

Sky, however, remains the limit otherwise. If only we can change the pattern of emphases we will have gained immeasurably by way of an expanded manpower market overseas. The first priority will be to concentrate on immigration and employment abroad through legal channels. In other words, it has to be a well-managed immigration linked to job offers or location of market for employment. Much that the approach ought to be demand-driven we can also create fresh demand for our manpower overseas by training them up.

It's here that the efforts of people like Brunson McKinley, Director General of International Organisation for Migration (IOM), sounds so relevant. The opening of a centre in Dhaka by the IOM to impart English language skills to Bangladeshi professionals will access them to higher positions in several western countries. We suggest that government private sector coalitions be formed to properly groom up intending immigrants to facilitate their suitable placement abroad.

The approach needs to be holistic to yield sustainable results. The other components of the strategy should be: (a) helping the stranded migrants to return to their homeland; (b) one-stop service to returnees in general to facilitate their rehabilitation at home, given that the cycle of immigration and return is an integral part of manpower export; and (c) simplification of the remittance procedure for the Bangladeshi Diaspora.

Overall, we must improve the quality of immigrants from Bangladesh, earn the confidence of exporting countries as a dependable supplier of manpower and explore avenues of employment in newer countries and regions.

Gujarat carnage: Now the turn for an international outrage



M ABDUL HAFIZ

HE Gujarat carnage, one of the worst such atrocities in recent history is by now adequately in focus thanks to science that seldom tired of putting up resistance to the aberration of any kind affecting the polity. It dutifully exposed each minute detail of butchery, brutality and bestiality perpetrated in Gujarat to a horrified crimes the full detail of which would never perhaps be known it was indeed gratifying to witness among the Indians -- their politicians. intellectuals, human rights activists, artists, and journalists rising in protest everywhere from the streets to the parliament in a renewed solidarity. As a result, at least the aggrieved survivors would know how many fellow Indians and how much do they care for them. They were again Indians -- and from the majority community -- who threw lights even on the darkest spots of the scenes of the crimes and took great risks in doing so. Harsh Mander left his lucrative job to be able to tell the truth. Or how else would we have known of his account of Godhra vandalism by Karsewaks travelling in Sabarmati

Express from Ayodhya?

It is however a different thing that the traditional Indian fraternity left behind by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawharlal Nehru or Moulana Azad is diluted today with the likes of Narendra Modi who, it is now almost established, had pre-mediated the killings of Gujarat with the state apparatus at his disposal. While Modi is already the hero of a new generation of Hindutva, Atal Behari Vajpayee, his RSS mentor may be inventing in his poetic anguish

Dubey to Salman Haider seem unanimous in their view that India has already been inflicted with a severe blow on its prestige. They all agree that Gujarat pogrom is bound to have its disastrous effect on India's standing in the world. This lost prestige can be somewhat restored through effective steps on the ground -- providing succour to survivors, rehabilitating the displaced now living in the refugee camps and stopping further attacks on the Muslims and not by scolding

Muchkund Dubey the philosophical basis of the EU (European Union) involving as it does diluting sovereignty in favour of larger principles such as Human Rights makes it natural for EU to express strong feeling about the events in Gujarat.

In the mean time the truth is that the government of India has been rattled by a flood of demarches and expressions of concern from the international community especially the EU and numerous donor countries including Britain, Canada, summit. Plastered with numerous demarches, comments and concerns from various quarters the MEA's continued contortion of the EU'S demarches became a big controversy by itself when the nation's policy planners remained more worried of reviving India's traditional image of non-violence and religious tolerance as propounded by India's founding fathers. The patriotic Indians are today more concerned that the terms like genocide, Narendra

sense findings of most Indian observer groups from the UK conclude that the Gujarat state government with chief minister Narendra Modi had played a very dirty role. As long as Modi remains at the helm there would be little prospect of repairing the embittered inter community relations. With Britain's 70,000 Gujarati

Muslims Chief Minister Narendra Modi is the most hated figure -- a man they hold directly responsible for the scale of communal violence which had claimed the lives of many of their relatives and friends in Gujarat. The families of Muhammad Aswat, Saeed Dawood and Shakit Dawood who were killed by a mob near Ahmedabad are moving for prosecution of Modi on charges of crimes against humanity. There are moves to file three separate cases against him in the court in Britain, the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

As regards India's tattered image after Gujarat it would be worth glossing over the editorial that appeared in the Financial Times representing the voice of the most enlightened section of international business. The editorial endorses the independent investigation that Godhra was no more than a pretext for the communal violence which was planned months before. The paper reports that some diplomats described the Gujarat events as "genocide". But the EU report stopped short of using that word. It nevertheless, concludes that India's treatment of the minority population has become a matter of nternational concern.

Brig (retd) Hafiz is former DG of BIISS.

PERSPECTIVES

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something yet more dangerous. Amidst a relentless hate campaign the violence continues in Gujarat two months after it started and Sangh Pariwar campaign to spread communal hatred gains strength by the day seemingly aided by the governmental apathy.

From the beginning the Indian authority wanted to treat Gujarat as one of those domestic developments and in its external dealings brushed it aside as an 'internal affair'. In responding to a stream of concerns expressed by the foreign governments over Gujarat. India called them 'interference in our internal affairs' with a measure of petulance. It is only of late, that India's leading foreign policy experts from SK Singh to Muchkund

the envoys and ministers of the foreign countries. Much would depend on the sincerity of both central and state governments. The prognoses are already bad. Vajpayee has already levelled blanket allegation against the Muslims that they do not want to live in peace with other faiths. The RSS warns that the security of the Muslims is contingent upon the good will of the majority community. These may be the innocuous and selfsatisfying pronouncements of the Hindus, but they can be interpreted in many ways at this critical Junc-

Because the sheer magnitude of the atrocity and the collusion of the state have deeply shocked people everywhere. According to Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and Finland as well as adverse press comments appearing virtually throughout the world on Vajpayee's appalling mishandling of the situation in Gujarat and particularly shielding Narendra Modi even after his complicity in the crime. Even if the MEA (Ministry of External Affairs, government of India is piqued by a large number of demarches. Muchkund Dubev defends them saying that they do not constitute an 'interference'. Demarches verbal or written is nothing but a diplomatic communication of a state of its feeling or sentiment with or without soliciting a response from the other state. The EU had indeed issued a demarche on May 2 at India-EU biannual Milosevic Modi and ethnic cleansing in Gujarat are now associated with India in international media.

The European Union team concluded after its investigation that the aim of the violence was clearly to purge the Muslims from some Hindu areas. With a group of British nationals being among the first victims of mob frenzy in Gujarat the High-Commission of UK in India had a legitimate interest in ascertaining the facts on the ground. The UK team also concluded that the carnage was pre-meditated. It observed that the Godhra incident was undoubtedly the spark but even in absence of that a pretext could have been found for unleashing the forces of ethnic cleansing on the hapless Muslim population in the

OPINION

To be or not to be ...

OMAR KHASRU

URING the last recession, prior to the current worldwide economic downturn. primarily a consequence and ripple effect of the 11 September 2001 New York terrorist assault, the graduating seniors at a reputable and prestigious US university were glum and somewhat despondent. The job prospects were gloomy and dismal. At the commencement (convocation) ceremony there was little excitement and no joy, especially among the humanities, social science and language graduates. In the midst of the doom and gloom, Engineering and Computer Science graduates stood up and started gleefully chanting in a cacophonous chorus, "we got the job, we got the job --." The clamorous contemptuous retort from the Business graduates, who sprang to their feet in unison, was "working for us, workina for us---. That was University of Califor-

nia, Berkeley (UC, Berkeley) over ten vears ago. And this is now in Bangladesh. Most students, pragmatic. materialistic and hard-nosed and less altruistic and dainty than ever before, prefer to study Computer Science or Business Administration at all private universities. It is difficult to attract quality students in seemingly less gainful and perceptively less prospering fields such as English, Environmental Studies or even Economics. One problem is the field of study in most cases is not merely the preferred department of the concerned student but is a collective decision, often imposed on the student by overbearing, dominating and pushy parents or quardians. The result frequently is that one is induced and cajoled into a department that he or she is neither well suited nor has the knack for. You see parents pushing their wards, with scant knowledge or interest in Mathematics or technology, to study Computer Science. It is like swallowing a bitter pill. Similarly, students, with no acumen, proclivity or desire, are forced to study Business. These have students lose interest, flunk out or stav stuck in a spider web of frustrating field of endeavour for the long haul, when their true calling may be something different, and not so job and ready-cash oriented and money centric field. Many people have little understanding and scant notion of the concept that it is good to be in any field rather than mediocre or outright inferior in the most lucrative or prosperous profession.

Wiley, the infamous 1920s US

bank robber was frequently nabbed, prosecuted and sentenced to long prison terms. A Judge once asked him why he kept on robbing banks. His simple and candid response was "your honour, that's where all the money is." You get a similar retort when you ask students why they are pursuing the study of Business or Computer Science. The response, with a variety of permutations and via numerous meandering modes, boils down to 'that's where the iobs are.' That is well and good. Students should plan their future in a way that bears fruits to their long un and hard work. They perhaps even should be interested in pursuing a field of study that has plenty of opportunity to garner high financial reward and opportunity to climb the social ladder. But they should in no way have to try to fit into a proverbial round hole if they are the metaphorical square peg. The reasons for their pursuit of Business or Computer career unfortunately often have nothing to do with their preference, caliber, inclination, interest or

In the inflexible and archaic British system that most of our public universities are still immersed neck deep, there is little possibility of change of subject without loss of valuable chunk of time and wasting precious energy and effort. In the US model, slowly but surely taking over the education systems all over the world, including the motley group of some thirty private universities in Bangladesh, there is a degree of flexibility. One can have a particular major and change it, if s/he finds it unsuitable and inconvenient, even after two

years. In two years most students are able to comprehend if they are suited or misfits in their field of study. Then it comes down to convincing their parents and guardians. With \$ sign painted in their pupils, any indication of their son and daughter altering the major from a lucrative subject to a more cerebral and personally preferable field, many are likely to go bonkers. They often lay a heavy dose of guilt trip, emotional outburst, coaxing and cajoling, and forceful persuasion to bring him or her back in line with their preferences rather than that of

the student

This frequently has a deleterious effect that can last from a few days to perhaps a lifetime. Students who are submerged in the wrong field of endeavor against their will, penchant and proclivity, desire and interest are like the proverbial lost lamb in the wilderness. Some get over it, fall in line after some introspection, self-inducement and accepting the inevitable bitter pill. Others, viscerally opposed to the imposed field of study from above rebel, lose interest, fall by the wayside and even ruin a possible bright future in an alternative and more appropriate field. According to a character in one of the US made TV serials. "It is an endless life in purgatory, frequently interrupted by

We should have software engineers, computer programmers marketing managers, management whiz kids and business prodigies. We should also have great linguists, classicists, litterateurs, scholars, economists, scientists, language fisheries and agricultural experts, philosophers, sociologists and environmentalists. Private universities should expand their programmes and parents should broaden their horizon with a liberal bent to listen to their children, their aspirations, goals and dreams rather then forcing them into something that they find dull, dreary, intractable and unattractive, incoherent, incomprehensible, baffling and uninteresting.

Let sanity prevail Command said it was not deter-

LUTFUL HAIDER (SHOROZ)

S India and Pakistan are A intensifying their sabre-rattling over Kashmir, deep concern and anguish is being expressed by nations around the world. The two belligerent nuclear powers have amassed one million soldiers along the line of control in Kashmir. High-ranking Indian military officials have told western journalists that India is realistically looking at September as the deadline to teach Pakistan a final and decisive lesson. Already hostility around LOC has begun and artillery fire is causing causality every day. This hostility is deeply rooted in history and of late has been amplified by resurgence of religious militancy in both India and Pakistan.

India, which once used to avail every opportunity to launch virulent attack on the "abhorrent doctrine of nuclear deterrence" as "crime against humanity" has gleefully embraced the same doctrine with its so-called "explosion of selfesteem". Pakistan followed suit. monkey does what money sees, rendering millions of people of the sub-continent at the mercy of a lunatic leadership that contemplates the idea of a nuclear holocaust. Pakistan likes to argue that after India had detonated its nuclear bomb, Pakistan was left with no choice but to develop its own nuclear arsenal. But the assumption that nuclear weapon acts as deterrent is a myth. No country however powerful can unilaterally resort to the use of nuclear weapon at present times. Hence the very idea that nuclear weapon provides security is an unrealistic assumption. On the contrary, the probability of accidental use poses a far greater threat. Despite spending over \$900 billion on sophisticated command and control system to prevent the accidental, unintended and unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, nearly 10,000 'nearmisses' occurred during the cold war. Gen Lee Butler, who for a long time headed the US Strategic

prevented disaster. India and Pakistan, with their lax control and unreliable line of communication are not in a position to prevent accidental use. In a recent policy paper, Pentagon drew a possible apocalyptic scenario of the circumstances leading to the use of nuclear weapon in the subcontinent. It believes that Pakistani leadership in the event of a losing conventional war will be forced to use their nuclear weapons on the premise that 'if you don't use it, you will lose it'. Thus a nuclear disaster is substantially, qualitatively, more probable in South Asia than it ever was between the Cold War adver-Both India and Pakistan are

rence, but "God's grace", that

leaving no stone unturned to perfect the delivery system of their deadly cargo. The nomenclature of the rooted revulsion for each other. The Pakistani missiles have names like Ghauri, Ghaznavi and Tipu and Indians have named their missiles as Prithvi and Agni. Though Prithvi and Agni in Sanskrit means earth and fire yet the fact that the name Prithvi also makes a peripheral reference to the name of Prithvirai Cahuhan, 12th century king of western India who had lost of decisive battle to Sahabuddin Ghauri. Pakistanis named their missiles as Gahuri, Gahznavi with obvious connotation to the earliest Afghan invaders who successfully defeated their Indian counterpart and amongst them Shababuddin Ghauri was able to establish a kingdom in India in 12th century. It is apparent that the leadership of both the countries is aiming at setting their historical grudges with the help of nuclear bombs. US intelligence estimates that while Pakistan has "couple of dozen", India has several dozen warheads. Pentagon officials report that a

full-scale nuclear exchange could kill up to 12 million people instantly and injure more than seven million. Even a limited nuclear war would

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

have cataclysmic results overwhelming hospitals across Asia and requiring vast foreign assistance to combat radio activity, famine and disease. "The humanitarian crisis that would result would be so great that every medical facility in the Middle-east and South-west Asia would be overwhelmed", one US Defence department official said.

For those of use who live far away from this deadly theatre of war, recent military escalation in the sub-continent and its ominous ramifications is a matter of extreme trepidation. Even though an innocent by-stander, Bangladesh would be adversely affected by a nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan. The monsoon clouds will scud across the sub-continent with lethal radioactivity and contaminate every blade of grass, every drop of water in every lake, pond, and river in Bangladesh and affect every living creature.

Meanwhile, the future of Kashmir would remain in limbo. Long ago, India has reneged on its promise to hold a referendum in Kashmir and its Army has been accused of gross violation of human rights. Pakistani ruling elites and the Army, on its part has used the Kashmir issue to divert the attention of its people from domestic problem and continues to train and fund Kashmiri militants in order to advance its agenda in Kashmir. Both of these countries persistently affirm their unrelenting love for the people of Kashmir but resolutely oppose the idea of creation of an independent Kashmir free from either's influence

Irrespective of political or religious belief, the people of the subcontinent should united together to avert this very possible catastrophe. It is a solemn duty of every conscious citizen of the subcontinent to unwaveringly oppose the dangerous brinkmanship that the leadership of both the countries is engaged in. Against the backdrop of this impending nightmare one can only hope and pray that sanity shall eventually prevail.

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

Bali vacation

The talking heads at Bali have again proven the futility and wastefulness of these conferences cum free vacations.

By denying the Tibetans a voice in their little talkathon. the delegates have again proven to the world that any forum where the representatives of the third world are lumped together will only cry for handouts from the rich, be hijacked by special interests and if they have time attack Israel. Is it any wonder that the US routinely ignores these countries?

Any guesses which nice comfortable resort will be chosen for the two new Centres the delegates did manage to decide on? MA, Dhaka

Matir Moina

What a sad day for the Bangladeshis as Tareq Masud received his "Critics Award" at the

Cannes for his film "Matir Moina" and the people in Bangladesh are deprived of enjoying his film. still don't know why the film was

banned. Had Tareq Masud made a movie named "Moina Keno Chaakor?" or "Mastaan Moina" and added a few obscene dance numbers with some ludicrous fight sequences, perhaps then it would have gone unnoticed by the Censor Board. After all these movies are what Bangladeshi cinema is all

Tareque Masud is not alone There are scores of young Bangladeshis excelling in their respective fields and are being acknowledged internationally except in their own country. When will we understand that artists. sportsmen, writers, musicians are all ambassadors of the country. It is through their achievements that we can portray a positive image to the rest of the world and in order to do that, we must first appreciate them,

nurture their talents and provide them the support that will encourage them to reach the highest pinnacle of their success. The country also gains from their and what a finer example than that of Bollywood?

adverse consequences. Many

Farhan Quddus Old DOHS, Dhaka

PSC should not be the hub of political McCarthyism

It gives glittering news to the competent job seekers that the Public Service Commission, a constitutional institution is going to invite applications to fill up the vacant positions. The newly selected chairman is waiting eagerly to get green signal from the policy makers to invigorate the languorous PSC.

The chairman has taken charge of the PSC when Bangladesh is envisaged social, political, and economical as well as educational

dysfunction. The opposition is not attending the parliament, the government has slammed the door of employment opportunity, our economy has experienced the burnt of global economy and white paper was published on the various irregularities done by the previous chairman. It will not be an easy job for the chairman to operate the gangrenous limb of the PSC using ocal anaesthesia

Political affiliation or attachment should not be the prime criteria to get room in the job market. Putting the theory of McCarthyism shall not victimise job seekers other than the ruling party. The PSC is a constitutional institution. The posts of the chairman and the members are assigned to the respective persons under the aegis of constitution. So due to politics and personal gains the posts should not be bruised because the posts, persons and institution are tied into the same

Hierophant, Dhaka Waterlogged

Some parts of East Jurain, East Muradpur and South Dania are under DCC and some parts are under LGED Ministry. During the rainy season, the roads as well as the houses of these areas become waterlogged after a little rain and

the people suffer a lot. The rainwater gets trapped as the drainage network and the main sewerage system-- the Titas gas canals are loaded with wastes. But it is a matter of great regret that the concerned authorities do not take any action to remove the trapped

We plead to the authorities to save us from the misery. Sonia Sharmin South Dania, Dhaka

Question to Sheikh Hasina

Sheikh Hasina says, "They (BNP) have a two-thirds majority, they can do anything in parliament. When they are so much strong in parlia ment, why are they so busy trying to

take the Awami League back to the

My question to Hasina is, if you did not plan on attending the parliament, why did you contest the election? You think BNP looks weak because Awami League does not join the parliament? You are 'so wrong! You may make BNP weak in

House?"

the parliament, not outside. Stop listening to worthless advisors and open your eyes; before supporters like me change their mind and vote for some other

party in the next election. A supporter, USA

Visit to Dhaka

After reading Mr. Ahmed's letter ("Till something is done", May 30) regarding his nine-year-old daughter's visit to Dhaka from either Canada or California. I had to write in response

Mr. Ahmed seems to be blaming the people as well as the politicians of Bangladesh because for obvious reasons, Dhaka as a city did not live up to the expectations of this young child. My six-year-old son loves Dhaka and counts the days until his next visit from England. He associates Dhaka with his ethnic identity. unadulterated love of his grandparents and rickhshaw rides.

I strongly suspect that his love for Dhaka has very much to do with our reflections of Dhaka as a city and Bangladesh in its entirety. Nahid Rahman, England

How the news headline says it

The legendary Daily Express editor Arthur Christiansen defined headlines thus: "Good headlines are written in vigorous, conversational,

lines should be capable of being read aloud- which the mind does subconsciously. I refer to your news "Tight-rope

idiomatic language. Good head-

walk to bloated ADP."(May 31). The report is briskly written. But is the word "bloated" vigorous, idiomatic or appropriate for reporting on annual development plan? You have the words -- a little initiative by the blue-pencilers could have made the heading aloud and catchy. For instance, dropping the word "bloated" and rewriting as 'Tight-rope walk on ambitious/inflated ADP." Bloated here mismatches the subject -- the word is generally used for bovine and glutton characters Billy I Ahmed, Dhaka

NOTICE

The full page Letters to the Editor could not be published today due to unavoidable circumstances.