

UN do anything? Saddam went to



DHAKA SUNDAY OCTOBER 6, 2002

Democratic norm flouted

Those responsible must be brought to book

E are distraught with what happened in Barisal on Friday as all right thinking people would be. The noisy disturbances and the highhanded behaviour of local ruling party cadres centring around Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the JS and former Speaker Abdul Hamid's organisational programme, were disquieting, to say the least.

Although a huge contingent of police ringed the Barisal Circuit House where the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was put up in, the latter's personal assistant Farid and some BCL and Jubo League leaders and workers were allegedly manhandled by ruling party cadres. There have been also reports of BCL convenor Milan Bhuiyan's residence being attacked on Thursday night and threats put out to houses of some local opposition leaders. It is learnt that even journalists such as Daily Purbokone's Dhaka Bureau Chief and Dhaka Reporters' Unity leader Kuddus Afrad were manhandled. The warped activism was openly obstructive as even journalists' identity were allegedly asked at the point of entry to the Circuit House.

There was customary denial of any such highhandedness and attack by ruling party sources. And, the police said there were no fetters put on the movement of the former Speaker. But obviously there is a public and media perception of what happened. Our point is, why such a law and order situation was created bringing the township to a virtual state of chaos? What was the provocation? The matter should be fully gone into and the responsibility fixed for 'excesses' committed, so that these things don't happen again.

Why must some overzealous activists be allowed to tarnish the government's image when this is all so very eminently avoidable? It is in the maintenance of the fundamental norms of democracy that the common interest of the AL and BNP lies. We urge the BNP central leadership to rein in overzealous party cadres in deference to democratic norms and the ruling party's natural responsibility to enforce high standards of political behaviour at all levels.

Regulating rickshaw movement

Consultation with owner and worker associations welcome

HE authorities have set January 1 as the date for imposition of some new restrictions on the movement of rickshaw and rickshaw-vans through the city streets. If the objective behind the phase-out of leadspewing two-stroke three wheelers was anti-pollution that of disciplining the pedal rickshaws is easing the city's traffic congestion. That Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda is seriously working at it -- namely, reducing air pollution and traffic jams augurs well. The persistence with which the steps have or are being taken to mitigate the problems has gone down well with most people. However, the void created by the regulatory or phase-out measures will have to be progressively filled in by alternative modes of transport with a rehabilitation scheme taken in tandem. Also, it is only proper that the communications ministry is consulting the stake-holders and trying to take them onboard before imposing restrictions on them. For instance, the ministry has held a meeting with rickshaw and rickshaw-van owners' and workers' associations to reach an agreement on longer term strategies for disciplining the movement of the manually operated three wheelers. A consensus is expected to be reached and formalised between both sides in ten days' time. Already rickshaws have been disallowed on some major arterial thoroughfares or allowed only in stipulated hours. Now, more of this squeeze is likely to be applied. Consequently, subsidiary roads will experience a swell of rickshaws which could create its own dispersed variety of traffic jams. The answer basically therefore lies in putting a cap on the number of rickshaws that will be compatible with the viability of entire traffic system. That is, the unauthorised rickshaws which now outnumber the properly licensed ones a few times over with novice pullers on the pedals will have to go off the streets.

Leave this "grave and gathering danger" man alone

them before they left in 1998

However, if President Bush is really right, which still needs convincing proof whether these weapons still exist, then it would be highly dangerous to launch an attack against President Saddam Hussein. It is possible that Saddam, before he finished physically or in terms of his power which seems to be the aim of Bush Administration, may, out of total desperation, activate all his weapons of mass destruction in 45 minutes (according to PM Tony Blair's dossier) and deliver them to some neighboring states certainly

Senators including Tom Daschle were not present that a though resolution would be passed next week giving the president what he wanted to do in Iraq. However, it would depend on several other factors including Congress's problem with CIA on some intelligence reports which it reportedly did not get. Any way, some members still have serious problems in authorising war without exhausting all diplomatic options.

But even with a tough resolution President Bush will serve the world well if he awaits the decisions of the

acceptable to all members and particularly to the US and Britain as they are the ones which have been insisting on tougher resolution for unfettered access. The acceptance of Iragi government is also a factor. One does not have to resort to war to find access to the Presidential sites If the issue is disarmament, then the best way is to allow the inspectors to go and work and the rest to be tackled as and when further reports come in from Hans Blix

The views of other permanent members like France, Russia, China are also to be taken into account.

They all are against war, at least not

to have a resolution that could

weapons of mass destruction. In any case, he has not used any of such weapons against his neighbours, not even when he was about to be finished in the Gulf War. Only possibility was Israel about which the US appears to be so worried; but he did not use any chemical and biological eapon even against Israel during Gulf War when he was in desperate situation. He sent only a couple of empty Scuds which even did not hit the targets.

best be a sleeping danger. No problem, let him sleep. He has been

leeping for over 12 years as he was

not involved in any terrorist activities

nor attacked any other neighbour

including Israel. If his neighbours

are not panicked any more, then

should Bush Administration.

As President Bush has been

talking so much and so often about

Saddam, he, probably in an

unguarded moment or out of senti-

ment, made it a personal issue. He

said, "...The guy wanted to kill my

issue." If it is entirely an American

issue, then what Tony Blair who

looks after Britain has anything to do

with it? Why did he go so far to prove

that Saddam is dangerous and he

must be stopped immediately,

otherwise we will lose "the collective

will" and in the process lose "the

authority of the United Nations.

What authority the United Nations

has on Israel? Israel showed thumb

to the UN every time a resolution

was passed by it on Israel. Israel

violated more than 70 UN resolu

tions as various reports show. Did

Fischer's Green Party has saved the

day for the leftists. It has been an

dad..

It's entirely an American

So the best course for the US would be to leave him alone. He is not a "gathering danger", he could at

occupy Kuwait but Israel has been in occupation of Palestine for about 50 vears Israel also has nuclear and biological weapons. These are the major issues which have divided the world. And this is why the world can see so much of protests all around. In Britain too a protest march of over two hundred thousand people took place some days back against US and British policies against Iraq. Indeed, 40 per cent members of Tony Blair's own Labour Party opposed any military attack against Iraq and others rightly insisted that any action has to be through the UN. This is why Tony Blair ultimately accepted the multilateral path.

So far as the US is concerned, it should understand that the principle of "Regime change" by the US Administration is not only undemocratic, it is totally against international law. It will also be a very dangerous precedent for the entire world. Indeed the "Regime Change" appears to be a gathering danger for the regimes of the rest of the world as nobody knows when its turn will come and this Administration or any other mighty nation will go against it. Therefore, let the world continue to feel and believe that America being a democratic country will not take any step that will tarnish its democratic image which is undoubtedly a treasured thing for all Americans. Unfortunately, its international image has also suffered considerably because of its unbalanced Mid East policy and now it is up to the US Administration and the Congress to reassess its policy options with a view to regaining its earlier image. A big never says I am big. Let others

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cultural policy of the EU, which in my

SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST The principle of "Regime change" by the US Administration is not only undemocratic, it is totally against international law. It will also be a very dangerous precedent for the entire world. Indeed the "Regime Change" appears to be a gathering danger for the regimes of the rest of the world as nobody knows when its turn will come...

to Israel and possibly to other locations where American troops are stationed. The result will be the total devastation of not only of Israel but also of the entire area. Of course, America and Britain will not suffer as Saddam certainly does not have any missile that could reach American or British soil

Therefore, it will be disastrous to disturb this "grave and gathering danger" at this stage. In any case, practically the entire world including a large American population including considerable number of Senators and other Congressmen have been pleading with Bush Administration not to go to war on mere speculation that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction. Mention may be made of Al-Gore, tom Daschle, Edward Kennedy, Robert Byrd, three Congressmen who visited Iraq recently and several others including former Advisors of senior Bush. But latest report show that President Bush has managed to get assurances from some Senators and Congressmen through his personal consultation at the White House where some important

UNSC. He already went to the UN and he should not deviate from that path. Indeed, during the last couple of days Hans Blix and his associates under the authority of the UN sorted out the details with the Iraqi regime and latest statement of Blix shows that he will have unrestricted access and full authority to visit all suspected sites in Iraq. Iraq has also authorised the weapons team to visit all sensitive Ministries including the Defence ministry without any prior approval of the Iraqi government Thus the access is unrestricted.

Only exceptions are Presidential sites where there are some restrictions like accompaniment by some diplomats and prior notification to the Iraqi government, which were already approved by the UNSC. In his last briefing to the UNSC Hans Blix said some "loose ends" are to be sorted out. He also used the world "minor" while he was talking to Therefore, the better the press. course would be to allow the inspec-

automatically authorise war. French President Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in a joint press briefing to the press clearly expressed their views war to disarm Saddam against Russia was indeed against any new resolution at this stage and was of the view that the present resolutions are enough to start the work in Irag. However, one has to see what Russia does after Hans Blix's latest briefing. China was always of the view that all problems should be sorted out diplomatically and not

through war. If Saddam has those weapons. these will certainly be detected by the weapons inspectors and could immediately be destroyed by them. Again, to go by the argument of Bush Administration, in case Saddam succeeds in hiding some, he may not really have the courage to use them when he will see that he can be overthrown any time as the war could be authorised by the UN and indeed the whole world is against him in terms of his use of

September elections in Europe The tide has turned, at least temporarily

inward-looking than before. Luckily, the September elections in Sweden and Germany proved otherwise Now, it seems the tide has turned. The first of these two events took place on 16th September, 2002 in Sweden, Goran Persson's social-

democrats with 40 per cent of the votes cast in their favour, won a resounding victory in the general elections. they won 36.4 per cent votes.) They also won back the municipal control of Stockholm after four years. The ex-communists won 8.3% of the

Chaklader Mahboob-ul Alam writes from Madrid

MUSLEHUDDIN AHMAD

T least 10 per cent of the total

world's population have

been suffering from mild

mental illness while one per cent

from serious mental diseases.'

[UNICEF report]. No wonder why

there happens to be so many prob-

lems around the world terrorism.

racism, occupation, bombings to kill

innocent civilians, state sponsored

assassinations, craze for weapons

"grave and gathering danger" as

stated by President Bush. The

allegation is that Saddam has weap-

ons of mass destruction chemical,

biological and n-weapons. Presi-

dent Bush's concern appears to be

based on facts, as, reportedly, it is

his own country which supplied the

strains of all these germs to Iraq in

1980s 'when the United States

supported Iraq in its war against

Iran'. The exports were reportedly

approved by the Department of

Commerce of the USA. 'The disclo-

sure put the United States in the

uncomfortable position of possibly

having provided the key ingredients

of the weapons America is consider-

ing waging a war to destroy,' said

Democrat Senator Robert Byrd.

Indeed, he entered the documents

into Congressional Record this

month. It seems from the same

report that 'Irag later admitted to the

United Nations that it had made

weapons out of all three.' [The Daily

Star October 2, 02.) But it appears

from various other reports that the

weapons, Inspectors destroyed

President Saddam Hussein is a

of mass destruction and war.

OR those Europeans, who do not consider heartless conservatism as their guiding political philosophy and runaway capitalism as their panacea for all economic ills of the society, September, 2002 has been a good month. It has been specially so for

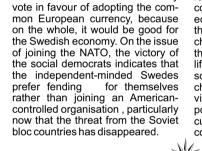
prefer fending bloc countries has disappeared

Then came the floods, which ravaged the eastern part of the country, which also happens to be victims, but also

incredible performance for a man, who was maliciously branded as an anarchist, and even worse, as a terrorist. It can also be considered as a personal triumph for Joshchka Fischer, a rebel who left school at 15, worked as an ordinary labourer, taxi driver, a salesman, a translator, participated in street demonstrations as a young man and yet today happens to be the most popular politician in Germany. This is also a great personal achievement for him

opinion, is both immoral and uneconomical, in the long run. In stead of tax cuts, it is quite possible that new taxes . (which will further dampen private spending)will have to be evied to finance the social security system and to improve the state education system, which according to a recent OECD report is in a disastrous condition. In order to save the welfare state from disappearing for lack of funds, it will be necessary to trim the social benefits and eliminate the abuses . In order to avoid further economic stagna tion and consequent social unrest (in which the immigrant community will inevitably be targeted), it will have to take further unpopular measures like structural changes and labour market reform. The coalition will need the trade unions co-operation to do all this. But now the questions are : Will the trade unions, after giving their support to maintain a leftist coalition in power,

reform is





The socialists and the like-minded people all across Europe breathed a sigh of relief when the Swedish election results were published. But the nagging worry did not disappear. Swedish elections were important but in the overall European context what was even more important was the German election in a week's time. After all,

near future. Although it is difficult to predict the results, most analysts think that the Swedes will finally (In the 1998 elections

tors to go to Iraq and start their work. In the meantime, the UNSC may work out a resolution on the issue of Presidential sites, that could be victory

economically more depressed than the western part. The German chancellor's decisive role in easing the suffering of the flood victims lifted the sagging fortunes of the social democrats. Not only did the chancellor personally visit the flood immediately postponed an already planned taxcut and levied a special tax on the companies to raise funds for relief

the immigrant communities all over Europe. Let me explain.

Four years ago, the only major member of the European Union (Germany, France, Italy, Britain and Spain are considered as the five major members), which had a conservative government was Spain. After the recent general elections in Holland, Ireland , Denmark and most notably in France, it was evident that Europe was swinging to the right. Not only did the right or centre-right enjoyed a majority in the fifteen-member Council of Europe, but also controlled three of the major five countries of Europe. (There are many who have serious doubts about the authenticity of Tony Blair's brand of socialism and his commitment to the leftist political ideology.) Because of the worsening unemployment problem in Germany, most opinion polls forecasted a victory for Edmond Stoiber's conservative party. Immigration problem had become such a crucial election issue in Sweden that almost everybody expected the Swedish people to follow the Danish example and go conservative in the September elections. The opinion polls, in Switzerland and Norway only confirmed the trend that all over Europe , the voters were becoming more conservative and

Germany happens to be the world's third largest economic power.

votes and the Green Party won 4.5 per cent. Why did the Swedish people not follow the trend? After all, both in Norway and Denmark, the conservatives rule the roost

There were four issues at stake the continuation of the existing benefits of a welfare state, immigration, the euro and the NATO. The conservative platform proposed a cut in social security benefits and a corresponding cut in taxation and further restrictions on immigration. The results of the elections indicate that the Swedish people prefer their model of welfare state to tax cuts. Given the current demographic structure of the Swedish population the voters have also demonstrated their realisation of the fact that in order to maintain economic growth, immigration was absolutely necessary for Sweden. Although some of the leftist elements of Swedish politics are against Sweden's joining the euro bloc, most of the social democrats and in particular the present incumbent prime minister and leader of the social democrats are firmly in favour of the euro. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect a referendum on this issue in the

The socialists and the likeminded people all across Europe breathed a sigh of relief when the Swedish election results were published. But the nagging worry did not disappear. Swedish elections were important but in the overall European context what was even more important was the German election in a week's time. After all. Germany happens to be the world's third largest economic power . Although politically speaking, German reunification had taken place more than a decade ago 1990), still there were significant economic differences between the two parts of Germany. The economy as a whole was stagnant .(The GDP is expected to rise by only about 1% this year). No doubt, the downturn in the world economy was partially responsible for the economic ills of the nation. The unemployment situation, instead of getting better, in certain areas was getting even worse. The companies were laying off hundreds of employees. The paranoia against the very sizeable immigrant community was increasing. The opinion polls forecasted a conservative

operations. These were popular measures which raised the ratings of the social democrats, but not enough to assure victory. Further help came from an unexpected quarter. The American president came back to Washington from his summer holidays with a determination to invade Iraq. The German public, long suspicious of the real American intentions reacted negatively to this unprovoked warmongering. The social democrats, who after all, are in coalition with the Green Party (ideologically more to the left of social democrats and are pacifists) sensed the mood of the public and came out decisively against the American position.

After trailing behind the conservatives for months in the opinion polls, the leftist coalition's victory in the election can be considered as a huge success story. This is true that the social democrats have lost a couple of percentage points in comparison with the results of 1998 election, but this loss has been more than adequately compensated by the surprising advance of the Green Party. Actually, it can be said without exaggeration that Joschka

understand that under the current economic conditions absolutely necessary for growth? to be able to turn a party of protest Will Chancellor Schroeder have the into a credible alternative to govern courage to break the EU directives a country, i.e. a party in power. The on budget deficit (or negotiate a Greens, the inheritors of the ideomore flexible application of the logical revolution of '68. the party of directives) and embark on a Keynesian programme of public the legendary figure of Petra Kelly spending to stimulate demand and although now in power, still are ecology conscious idealists and reduce unemployment? human rights activists and believers These are issues, which must be in social justice and sustainable addressed urgently by the social

democrats and the Green Party. If not, no amount of leftist solidarity or Schroeder Fischer charisma will be able to save the German left from sure defeat in the next general elections, which will set back the clock for the European ecology conscious humanitarian agenda for many years, because the rest of Europe is watching the German experiment very closely.

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TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

"Ward Commissioners" The letter "Ward commissioners'

(October 3) is rather unkind. A dead person, even if he were a criminal in his lifetime, has gone beyond our reproach and he is in the hand of the Almighty Allah. Comments from official after every murder condemning the victim as a terrorist with so many arrest warrants are tasteless reaction from incompetent beings

But the letter-writer is correct in saying that there is nothing to be frustrated about. The situation is of our own making. Various utterances of the responsible people have encouraged the criminals and have given them a sense of immunity.

MAH, Dhaka

When I read about police escort to DCC ward commissioners, I could not stop my chuckle. Police protecting the criminals! Such is the irony in our ever-colourful Bangladesh Let these criminals kill each other Since when do murderers need

escort? Please recall Dhaka's scarce police resource so that they may provide services to more worthy citizens

I feel sorry for the real victims like Simi's family who are still being aovernment.

Mirpur Zoo"

many zoos in the world that you know of, but, for your information killings of human by animals and occasional escape of animals happened to every major zoos in the world, including the ones in the rich western nations. In most cases, it happens because the person incharge was not following standard procedure for feeding and handling of the animal

terrorised by the sewage of our society, owing much to the apathy of our Home Minister and the BNP

AA California, USA

"Mismanaged

Mr Man in Uniform, I don't know how

The Mirpur zoo case is just another such example. The employee, Ismail Hossain Hawladar, lost his life, unfortunately, but foolishly. He did not follow the

standard zoo procedure for feeding the bears. I will tell you what you will never see in any other zoo in the world. The

employees shutting down the only national zoo because one of their fellow workers died in a foolhardy accident. This is unheard of elsewhere. Also worth mentioning, the zoo authority did not apply itself in

preparing for such an incident. A fatal error

Billah, On e-mail

Bangladesh cricket

This is in reference to your Friday full-page letters "Bangladesh Cricket"(October 4). I have read almost all the letters and the gist of most of these letters are that in order to improve the standard new players must be recruited. I fully agree with their suggestion. The other day as I was watching

the first one-day international against South Africa, I began to lose heart as South African opener Herschelle Gibbs scored a fantastic 153. But once he was out my hopes began to arise and I was not as disappointed as I thought I would be in that game, because I saw Bangladesh has improved a lot with their bowling as well as fielding It is time for us to wait and see

what they do in the upcoming matches and hope for the best. Sanjana, Dhaka

Bangladesh cricket team has suffered yet another defeat. They are just one short of their own world alltime worst streak. Will they be able to end this losing streak? Bangladesh have beaten Pakistan at their very best form during the last world cup. Can they repeat that against the Protease? Only time will tell. Good luck to Bangladesh. Imrose, Dhaka

Our team's performance is deteriorating day by day especially in the batting section. First they need to improve their footwork. Almost all the players are terrible in footwork except for Tushar Imran Secondly, we should desperately seek for new and young players and

train them properly in every department by a competent coach. The time is running out fast and it is high time we did something to make ourselves proud.

AFan, Dhaka * * *

What we need is infrastructural change. There should be a fair option for the newcomers. And also research works are much needed to improve our cricket.

Rinto, Dhaka

Reducing pollution?

The government being optimistic in making the country pollution free has banned the autorickshaws leaving only 5,000 to ply for the time being. Before taking such decision the government should have sorted out an alternative for autorickshaws. In absence of adequate transport the people are suffering immensely especially those without cars. And those autorickshaws that are still plying translated excerpts including that of Thakur's and he himself says very

the plight of the commuters. The government has also decided to offer unemployment benefits to the autorickshaw drivers, which is a complete wastage of money. Instead, the government could have helped the autorickshaw owners to convert the engines into four-stroke which could have reduced the level of unemployment and the citizens may not have faced transport crisis. Farrah Hamed, Dhaka

<u>"Gitanjali in English</u> Translations..."

It was a great joy to read Fakrul Alam's "Gitanjali in English Translations: The Latest Reincarnations" (September 28). The essay while goes deep in a comparative analysis between the English and Bangla versions of the songs, informs at the same time so overwhelmingly of the recent translation works on them. this write-up. The writer especially does an excel-Zahid Akter lent job when he picks up several

Lecturer, Dept. of English,

NOTICE

tumultuous World War I behind The coming 10th of October will Gitanjali's quick popularity and transient impact on the Western make the 1st anniversary of the present BNP led alliance govsociety respectively, he appears to ernment. On this occasion we be rather contradictory. More impornvite our readers to write us tantly, his emphasis only on the letters in 200 words-- giving period when the English version of Gitanjali appeared and won the their assessment of the govern ment's performance preferably Western society may imply that the mentioning the biggest suc-cess and the worst failure. The popularity of the songs was simply circumstantial and that they have readers may also wish to refer to the BNP's election manifesto, nothing to do with their intrinsic beauty. I am sure the writer did not at all mean that but had a little space PM's pledges, role of parlia been dedicated to the appreciation ment, MPs, party activities including that of student and of the bewildering power these youth wing. -- Editor mystic songs such an apprehension

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

for themselves.

are charging higher fare increasing

development in poor countries. True, immense tasks lie ahead particularly in the economic area. The government will have to face up to the reality of the situation, which to put it mildly is difficult . With high unemployment (over four million), low economic growth, poor consumer spending, the European Central Bank's insistence on main-

taining relatively high interest rates (over which the German government cannot exercise any direct control), budget deficit (2.9% of the GDP) reaching almost the maximum allowed by the EU, the German economy is in a straitjacket. The government will have to reach an agreement with France to

reduce its share of subsidies to

French farmers under the current

highly protectionist common agri-

little on the comparative strength of

them allowing the readers to justify

to the Edwardian era and the time of

However, while the writer refers

could have been avoided At this opportunity, I would like to extend my thanks to the writer for

Darul Ihsan University