

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 24, 2002

Strange encounter

Police role leaves a lot to be desired

HERE are conflicting versions of the encounter between police and a group of suspected criminals in front of the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) at the Circuit House Road in the city on Tuesday. This left four persons, including a police sub-inspector, with bullet injuries. According to a Dhaka Metropolitan Police press release, the law enforcers, led by the officer-in-charge of the Ramna police station, chased a black taxicab on being tipped off that some armed criminals were inside the vehicle. At one stage, the press release says, the criminals opened fire on the policemen, who then shot back. Three of the suspected criminals were shot and so was a sub-inspector. Eyewitnesses have a different story to tell, though. They told The Daily Star that as soon as the cab came near the PIB, on-duty policemen blocked its passage, pulled the three out, lined them up against the wall nearby and shot them in their thighs point blank. Then, they provoked curious onlookers into beating the bleeding men black and blue.

What can be deduced from the conflicting versions is that police did chase the black cab, shot the suspected criminals and allowed a mob to give the injured lot a heavy beating. What's intriguing, is the mob beating. We would not like to believe that police actually instigated the crowd into beating the criminals. Nonetheless, the fact remains three injured individuals were beaten by a mob in the very presence of police. How could the law enforcers allow people to take law into their own hands? The photograph front-paged in yesterday's issue of this paper suggests the law enforcers did not even intervene when the injured men were brutalised by the angry crowd. Are we to assume that the whole episode took place with the police deliberately looking away?

We believe what could have been an efficient and praiseworthy operation was allowed to boomerang on police image through sheer indulgence in mob sentiments. There should be an immediate inquiry into the incident to find out under what circumstances the crowd got involved in a police operation.

Spiraling violence in ME

Root cause needs treating

suicide car bomb ripping through a bus in northern Israel on Monday Tel Aviv is gnashing its teeth for 'targeted response', an euphemism for reprisal. Basically, what lies in store is that some more innocents will die in the occupied territories just as the blown up bus has left a trail of casualties among civilian commuters. Reactive extremism takes its toll of civilian human lives but retribution on top of state terrorism practised by Israel is likely to see many more innocent lives felled.

The tragedy of unresolved Palestinian question exacerbated by Tel Aviv's high tech military reoccupation frenzies is that the circle of violence has expanded all the time. The only way to break the spiral of violence and bloodshed is through a resumption of the abandoned peace process

But the US which is to secure Israel's return to the path of negotiations is currently engrossed in preparations to launch a military action on Iraq. This should not be a distraction. For, Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai gives us to understand the Americans have asked the Jewish state 'to keep a low profile as the White House woos Arab states to

Rewards from research: Rice and rice farming

substitution effect worked well to

as two million deaths. Happily,

however, none of these happened.

Despite the destruction of 2 million

tons of rice, the deep-water harvest

was compensated by the next dry-

makers to divert resources from research. Nothing could be more harmful than this notion.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The rate of return from rice research is very high -- reported to be more than 40 per cent in many cases. The

policy prescriptions would point to a greater budgetary allocation to rice research, ipso facto. But it seems

that complacency with the so-called self-sufficiency in rice production, sometimes, tends to dictate policy

output than it used to deliver decades before. The ripples of that revolution also reached Bangla desh -- a country with too many people and too little land to till. Rice production in Bangladesh increased from 14 million tons in 1966 to 31 million tons in 1999. In Asia, where 90 per cent of the world's rice consumers reside and where rice is the source of 80 per cent of the calorie intake, the production rose from 240 million tons to 530 million tons during the same

period of time. The lion's share of

the incremental production could be

ABDUL BAYES

N everyday-life, people

throughout the world come

across bowls of rice on their

dining tables. But most of them

perhaps, rarely realise how much of

researches were related to that

particular product before it paved

way to their plates. The Interna-

tional Rice Research Institute

(IRRI) at Manila -- founded some

forty years back -- has rigorously

been concentrating on rice and rice

farming researches. The institute

apparently assumes the adage (a la

the DG of IRRI) "give people a bowl

of rice and you feed them for a day:

help them grow better rice and you

feed them, and their families, for a

lifetime". Needless to mention,

perhaps, that rice research con-

ducted by the national agricultural

research systems of rice-producing

nations -- supported substantially

by IRRI -- made important progress

in many areas, including Bangla-

Initially, rice research involved

genetically improved seeds. But

with the passage of time and grow-

ing needs, innovative, environment

friendly and cost-effective cultiva-

tion practices constituted the core of

IRRI-led research. Enpassant, one

needs to recall that a revolution

started with the release of IR8, the

first modern variety (MV) of rice, in

1966. That is better known as the

Green Revolution. The new variety

went to put vield potential from 4 to

10 tons per hectare! In other words,

the advent of the MV enabled a unit

of land to produce 2.5 times more

Malthusian nightmare

desh

denied

put them on an even keel. Bye to beggar's bowl The 1998 flood -- the worst ever in history- should be a pointer to the pleasure of getting rich in rice research. There were predictions of famine, epidemics of sickness, widespread unemployment, and spiraling food prices and as many

whose prime concerns hover around maximisation of short-run profits. There are many researches which could not click ever and the investment sunk: there are others which benefited less than the costs incurred while some researches featured fabulously fine in generating benefits. Rice research falls in the last category. I shall mention

carried out by a grocer or a banker

insect naturally and environmentfriendly.

Weed infestation is one of the serious rice pests. If not controlled in time, even in transplanted rice, weed could cut grain yield by 30-40 per cent. However, for ages, farmers in Bangladesh addressed this problem through hand and rotary rice weeder. But both the methods are time consuming, tedious and about the benefits that Bangladesh costly. Use of herbicides and insecbagged from rice research and ticides are also in evidence but their allow me to paraphrase the obsertoxic effect tending to adversely vations of Dr Mahabub Hossain of affect health, environment, fish and

animals

could be saved in the face of ducks effectively controlling weed and insect population.

The Daily Star

! Labour costs are saved since no additional labour is required for the application of fertilizers and for the management of pests and insecticides

! The technology helps improve soil health and reduce soil degrada-

! The yield is raised by 1 ton/hectare compared to conventional farming system

! The participation of women could be increased

! Demand for rice, meat and eggs are met

Thus the ducks bring good luck to farmers. Farmers tend to fetch good fortunes in terms of rice output, meat and eggs from ducks and also in terms of reduced costs on fertilizers and pesticides. Bangladesh has to lean on indigenous sources of developing and maximizing cultivation practices. Only rice research and farming practices can go to forestall food security today and tomorrow

Bucks in the buckets

the ducks. In the rice-duck farming system, 20-30 days old ducklings The rate of return from rice research are released in the field 7-14 days is very high -- reported to be more after transplantation of seedlings. than 40 per cent in many cases. The Seedlings are to be transplanted in policy prescriptions would point to a lines within space of 25cm by 20cm. greater budgetary allocation to rice Organic manure needs to be research, ipso facto. But it seems applied during final land preparathat complacency with the so-called tion. During the entire period, self-sufficiency in rice production around 60 days (prior to flowering), sometimes, tends to dictate policy a constant level of water supply (5makers to divert resources from 7cm) is to be maintained so that research. Nothing could be more ducklings can ply and move easily harmful than this notion. Banglaaround the field. About 400-500 desh has to have more ways and ducklings are required for one means to eke out meals for the hectare of rice field. The ducks millions in a regime of severest land should be withdrawn from the rice scarcity in the years to come. The field at the beginning of the floweravailability of cultivable land is likely ing time. The following benefits to be constricted in future but food come from the newly emerged has to be produced by economising cultivation practice: on land use. That calls for more research than ever and hence for

The costs of chemical fertilizers (Tk.2600/hectare) could be saved substantially as duck dropping act as substitute of fertilizer.

The economics of the rice-duck

farming system help farmers with all

the essential nutrients to rice plants

This comes from the droppings of

Abdul Bayes is Professor of Economics at ! A large part of the weed and Jahangirnagar University insecticide costs (Tk.1300/hectare)

Brazil swings to the left

reduce poverty.

majority (50 per cent plus one vote) required for outright victory-- to his opponent Jose Serra's 23 per cent. Da Silva (commonly known as 'Lula' by his people) is the nominee of the left-wing Workers Party and this is his fourth attempt to contest the Presidency. He has to go through a second round of voting on 27 Octo-

Da Silva swapped his jeans for a business suit but did not shave his beard. The trade union leader

that creation of new jobs has not kept up with the 1.5 million or so young Brazilians who join the labour market each year.

Da Silva promises big changes if he wins the election. He continues

to promise big social improvements. He is committed to guadruple the minimum wage within four years, guarantee a minimum income, fight hunger and poverty, improve education and health care and the pension system. He presents himself to be a

try. Politicians from the Left, Right and Centre jumped on the Da Silva wagon. As Da Silva increased his popularity, the two political opponents who contested the first round lent their support to Da Silva at the second round of voting and this has increased his chances to be elected

> as President. However the stock markets in the country fell to record lows. The local currency (the Real) fell 42 per cent lower than where it was in early

Spain (Prime Minister Felipe Gonzales) in the 1980s that achieved many of the economic reforms that set the country on the road to growth. People believe that Da Silva may be able to do it for Brazil.

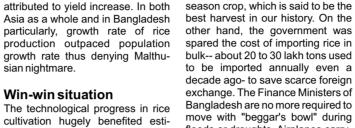
It appears that the leader of the Workers Party Da Silva is poised to become the first working-class President of the largest and most populous country in Latin America. It is a historic turn of events for Brazil

Tony Blair's "New Labour Party" in Britain was modelled on his big idea "the third way". Mr. Gerhard Schroeder of Social Democrats in Germany talked about a "new middle" to govern his country. In Europe Left-governments were ousted by the Right in Austria, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Denmark Portugal, Spain, and Norway. This demonstrates Europe's inexorable move to the Right and in Germany it is called Zeitgeist (spirit of the age).

more bucks in the bucket of

research.

Across the Atlantic, the US Administration is a Right wing Republican government and many of the Latin American governments have accepted capitalism as the model of their economic growth. However, free market forces have landed Argentina, Mexico and a few other countries in severe economic difficulties and there seems to be disillusionment among people as to the benefits derived from freemarket economic model in the context of the state of economies in the Latin American countries. Brazil seems to break the mould by voting the trade union leader as the country's President next Sunday (27 October). It reflects that Brazilians have reacted in different way to address poverty and inequality in the country. Socialist Presidential candidate Da Silva told Time magazine (21 October, 2002) : "I am the result of the political evolution of Brazilian society.'



floods or droughts. Airplanes carrymated 250 million rice farmers and ing rice and wheat are not seen to nearly 2.6 billion rice consumers. land for emergency relief. There With higher yields, the unit cost of has been a rise in the resilience rice production declined drastically. through improved farming prac-The supply curve shifted to the right tices, development of varieties with indicating a fall in marginal cost of resistance to pest attacks and production. Growers reaped home innovative approach to the cultivareasonable profits and consumers' tion practices in low-lying areas. All surplus accrued to the buyers. It of these miracles owe mainly to the was, by and large, a win-win situamanagement practices initiated by tion. And among rice producing rice and rice farming research countries, perhaps, Bangladesh under the umbrella of national and could be cited as a success story international research agencies. where the benefits of rice research

spilled over to the poor. Monotonic **Reward from rice research** declines in real prices of rice reached the poor to enhance their How to quantify the reward from rice exchange entitlements and thus research? An answer to this question is always on board but empirical response to this effect is scanty. Since the poor tend to spend more than half of their budget to rice Perhaps, it is mainly because research is unlike the activities purchases, the income and the

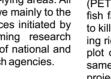
Bangladesh case concluded that, for a total investment of US\$18 million per year in rice research, irrigation development and agricultural extension, the country's total cost saving amounted to \$229 million per vear over 20 vears. Had this saving been invested to vield a 10 per cent annual return, the total benefit to Bangladesh would have been a staggering \$33.5 billion!

IRRI: An economic analysis of the

Ducks and lucks

Allow me to finish this write-up with an innovative farming system developed recently with the help of Poverty Elimination Through Rice Research Assistance Project (PETRA). We are aware about ricefish farming system. Farmers tend to kill two birds by one stone: growing rice as well as fish on the same plot of land and using almost the same technology. Of late, PETRA project of IRRI helped introduce an innovative rice-duck farming system in some experimental plots in different parts of the country. Japan and other Asian countries such as Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Indonesia

are reported to be adopting riceduck culture to manage weed and



back a possible invasion of Iraq.' The question is: should that be the US perception of Arab sentiments over the Palestine question what stops Washington from pressuring Tel Aviv into vacating her siege of Palestinian cities to endear the US to the Arab world? If the US had done that successfully an atmosphere for dialogue would have been fostered automatically.

Yasser Arafat has condemned the bus massacre in Israel. But the officials in Tel Aviv "held him responsible (for it) by direct commission and omission". The obsessive Israeli demand for leadership change in the Palestinian Authority (PA) is nothing but a ploy to perpetuate their stranglehold around the territories reoccupied by them. It basically means disowning of all peace deals so far made with Yasser Arafat. This is also the Israeli way of saying that since they have no acceptable person to deal with from the Palestinian side resumption of peace process can wait ad infinitum as they went about implementing their own agenda.

vorker Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva (56) is poised to win the Presidency at the second round of voting on 27 October. Brazil, the largest country in the Latin America is the fifth largest country in the world and achieved its political independence in 1822. Brazil has the largest Gross Domestic Product

HARUN UR RASHID

RAZII seems to show a new

trend in political direction.

The Leftist candidate and a

in Latin America. It is a country with 170 million people (115 million voters) of whom about 77 per cent live in urban areas; 55per cent are white Brazilians that include Portuguese, Italians, Spanish and German. 89 per cent of the population are Roman Catholic. The official language is Portuguese, that of the former colonial power

Brazil appears to sail to the Left in its political direction. In the first round of Presidential election on 6" October, former trade union leader a metal worker and an out and out a socialist Da Silva took 47 per cent of the vote -- just shy of the absolute

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BOTTOM LINE

comes of a very poor family and who at the age of 6 is reported to have a 1600 km. journey with his mother to city (Sao Paulo) in a rickety wooden truck. He started work at the age of 12 and speaks no foreign languages. Politically he is friendly with two unpopular leaders of Latin America, Cuba's Communist Fidel Castro and Venezuela's left-leaning mercurial President Hugo Chavez. The present Cardoso govern-

ment in Brazil, although checked the inflation, has not been able to resolve violent conflicts between landless peasants and landlords. The low growth that the country experienced since 1998 has meant

great negotiator, achieving things that the present government could not, besides bringing faster economic growth and faster progress on overcoming social ills. The current economic model, he says must change because IMF and World Bank dictate how to run Brazil's economy. He promises 10 million jobs and will intervene statecontrolled Petrobras buying foreign made oil platforms. There will be less talk of privatisation during his term of government.

Brazilians of all walks of life are backing Da Silva after frustration with poverty, high unemployment and rising crime levels in the counmonths of this year. Investors' main worry is that he may rip off his moderation style and become a fiery socialist leaving little opportunity for private sector investment. He may not take tough decisions to stabilise the national debt (US\$ 260 billion). may impose a further fiscal squeeze if needed in short term and is unlikely to cut the fat pensions of public servants who tend to vote for him.

Da Silva dreams of Brazil following the example of Spain, which has gone from being poor to wealthy and modern in the generation since its return to democracy. Interestingly it was a socialist government in

whose small elite has always governed the vast working and lower classes. If Da Silva wins the second round, it will be a memorable event for Left wing politician to capture power at a time when socialism and trade union movements are considered as past relics.

It is interesting to note that after the collapse of communism in Europe, leftwing policies have retreated and have emerged with a large dose of right wing policies. Public sector is gradually being privatised and there is often hardly a difference between re-constructed socialists and conservatives in their

attitude towards market forces

Barrister Harun ur Rashid is a former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

"Policemen do it in daylight"

This incident of the police egging on members of the public to finish off suspects is unbelievable. It boggles the mind that something like this happens and we just move on.

The army is torturing suspects to death, plain clothes police are trying to incite mob beatings, what sort of a country are we living in? Riki Dhaka

Army crackdown

Either the army is torturing the suspects to death or our deshi criminals all have heart problems.

We are all privately applauding the detention and summary punishment being meted out to these criminals. But we should remember that surrendering such rights to the army has always, in every case, resulted in loss of freedom and liberty. Today alleged criminals are being rounded up. tortured and detained. Tomorrow it could be you.

The government must come out and explain what powers it has given the army. Who is choosing which alleged criminals to arrest and which to ignore? I am perfectly willing to

protecting terrorists. But in that case why are BNP maastan ministers being let off the hook? If Sheikh Selim and Saber Chowdhury deserve to be arrested, which I am not in a position to comment, then most if not all the jumbo cabinet deserves to join them in iail.

under what orders and guidelines the army is carrying out this operation and the subsequent interrogations. What degree of torture is permitted by the Bangladesh Army? Under what circumstances can torture be used in interrogations? What rights do I have when I am being 'interrogated' by the army? **Kishore Pasha**

Dhaka

The PM's decision to deploy army to 'Deshnetri'.

accept that senior AL leaders are other criminal activities we won't be able to achieve our goal. And I like to see Khaleda Zia's government succeeding in freeing the country crime and terrorism. Don't look back, please go ahead and complete your mission Jkobir Mirpur. Dhaka

We also have a right to know

Welcome army

curb crimes is most welcome. PM Khaleda Zia is called 'Deshnetri' (Leader of the Nation) by her party people and supporters. I am confident if she proves to be successful in this historic and courageous mission, the entire nation will consider her as

Without uprooting this evil of extortion, murder, toll collection and four hours.

* * * Prime Minister Begum Zia has taken a bold step by calling the army to control the increasing criminal activities throughout the country. As initial reports indicate our troops are conducting their operations in a fair way as both BNP and AL men have been captured for their alleged involvement in various crimes Congratulations to PM for ignoring

the party affiliation of the listed crimi-

Monzur Murshed Houston, Texas, USA

Human rights should

nals

be the key concern

The government has deployed army to improve deteriorating law and order situation. The government had so far failed to achieve any significance improvement before it decided to deploy army in almost all cities

Though there was no other choice in the hand of government, it should give special instruction about human rights. Innocent people shouldn't be harassed and a criminal has his own rights also. He should be appeared before a magistrate within twenty-

Apart from this, army has taken action impartially. Members of the ruling party were caught in the largest number. If people find peace and security again, only then this action would be justified.

Oli MD. Abdullah Chowdhury Sylhet

BAF crash

Another BAF aircraft has crashed. Again my condolences to the families of the deceased. Again we are lucky that the third crash in as many months did not take place in an inhabited area.

God forbid but the fourth crash may well be in Farmoate. Karwan Bazar, Gulshan or just about anywhere else in Dhaka. Every day helicopters from the old airport and fighters and transports from Zia, take off for training flights over our heads. Who knows, maybe the fourth crash will wake us up? Actually imagine if a BAF fighter crashes into the US

They fly overhead most days anyway. Maybe when hundreds of civilians are killed in a crash avoidable by the simple means of not flying military iets over one of the most crowded cities in the world, will the public take

note? Shonku Dhaka

"Fuel less electricity generator"

In Response to Mr. Atig Helal's letter (October 23), I would like to mention that, Mr. Huda may be offered membership from some society, but no one can deny the facts, which I wrote in my last letter. For instance, can Mr. Atiq deny that Mr. Huda called a press conference or the big advertisement in the newspaper? To disprove the facts I quoted, one

should be particular to those points

Afzal Hossain Mirpur. Dhaka

Politics and mastanism

I am sure everybody will condemn the recent attack on Sheikh Hasina. But we must not stop at that. We must

THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR EDITOR TO

aim at eradicating "mastanism" from politics

Mastanism in politics is helping lawlessness to spread in all spheres of our society. Some political leaders want to suppress their opponents with the help of the mastans. But I don't know whether they understand that these mastans have gone out of control. If they have not understood this already, this incidence should help them to understand. If the politicians don't do anything to stop mastanism immediately, the out of control mastans will eventually destroy them.

Waheed Nabi Sheffield, England

Your oil highness

On a rather different note, I keep wondering what would happen to all those "rich" Arab countries once their oil runs out! Countries like Iraq, Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have been blessed by the almighty with the most demanding product in the international market; the oil! Many powerful countries today are ready to start war and bring chaos to all of us for this precious gift of nature.

The West however, gets its money by selling technology and weapons, which are far superior. They will continue their dominance, as they invest a lot of money on Research and Development and continue to invent new "killer" products e.g. mobile phones, computers etc. It is unlikely any Asian or Arabian countries will make much money by selling technologies which are no match for the West. Arabs are not investing enough in any "other" areas, while some Asian countries are not investing at all e.g. Bangladesh. They are busy torturing the opposition! Of course, there are still huge

reserves that would last for some time, but they are NOT going to last forever! One day those countries whose main source of revenue is oilwill have to feed their people by other means. But, what "other" means? Azad Miah

Oldham. U.K

Bangladeshi football!

I came to Qatar two weeks ago. So when I heard that Bangladesh football team is in Qatar, I was very happy. I along with a lot of enthusiastic Bangladeshis was present in the first match of our team against India. What a show they put on! They conceded only six goals! Their star defender was shown red card by the

15th minutes of the match. He awfully fouled the advancing Indian forward. I was listening to the comments of the crowd. They seriously believed that the team was made from the relatives of the officials and sent here to visit Qatar rather than to play for their country.

My plea to our sports officials don't send such teams to abroad, that bring only shame to the expatriates.

Norconsult-Telematics. Qatar

In the name of peace

If Osama bin Laden, Mullah Umar, Saddam Hussein, Ariel Sharon, L K Advani, Yasser Arafat etc. are terrorists of the highest scale then why the UN is so silent about it?

The UN has the power to arrest them by adopting emergency resolutions. They can be declared as international terrorists, threat to the world community and could be tried at the International Court of Justice at The Hague. But, who gave the authority and right to the US and UK to violate human rights in the name of

Golam Ashraf Gulshan, Dhak

iustice?

M. Mashiul Hug