

# UN resolution on Iraq

## Multilateral approach welcomed

AFTER weeks of deliberation and negotiations, the UN Security Council has approved a resolution asking Iraq to 'eliminate its weapons of mass destruction or face serious consequences.' We welcome the unanimous decision that entailed a significant degree of compromise among the Big-5. The fact that it was a unanimous decision on a matter of grave importance to the world's future restores our faith in the UN system.

It is no doubt a positive sign for the first time in so many years that the UN Security Council has been allowed to play its designated role in a test-case international relations situation. But it was not easy. As some members, especially France and Russia who earlier objected to George Bush's unilateral tough stand against Iraq, said that a very complicated compromise was arrived at after weeks of negotiations. They maintain that the resolution only deflected the direct threat of war and if Iraq again violates it, the Security Council will be reconvened to discuss the matter and decide the next course of action. Even the only representative from the Middle Eastern nations, Syria voted in favour of the resolution after receiving assurances from Britain and US that 'the resolution will not be used as a pretext to strike Iraq.'

So, the ball is now in Iraq's court. Iraq has already been threatened of serious consequences if it fails to comply with the demand in any manner, but whether Saddam Hussein is prepared to dare the world and face the wrath is something we will have to wait and watch for. Iraq has seven days to accept the resolution and thirty days to make 'a current, accurate and complete declaration of its chemical, biological and nuclear programmes' available to the UN inspectors. There have been strong suspicions about Iraq's newly gained weapons, especially since the last inspection took place almost four years ago. It is now time for Iraq to come out clean. As we have seen the United States shift from its earlier stance in the face of criticism from some of its allies on its unilateral bent of mind so we hope Iraq would now show a similar compromising attitude towards the new resolution. We would like to join UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in urging the Iraqi leadership to accept the resolution for the sake of its own people as well as for the sake of world peace and security.

## Death after arrest

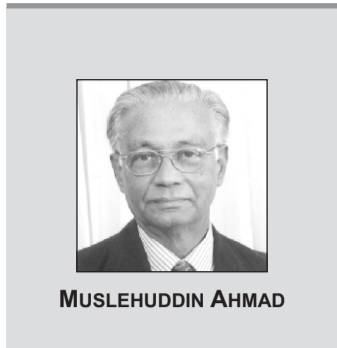
### Human rights concern needs attention

IN light of newspaper reports on custodial deaths since the joint anti-crime drive began on October 17 Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has more than once called for avoiding harassment of innocent people. She in fact exhorted upon all concerned to make sure human rights are not violated in any way during the drive. Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Hassan Mashhud Chowdhury has also quite a few times given similar instructions to his soldiers. However, continuation of sudden deaths in or after detention suggests that their words have not had a fulsome impact on the field-level troops and law enforcement personnel.

Even if we assume each of these 22 had criminal records, they still needed to be taken to court and subjected to a due process of law. Since anti-crime drive is all about asserting rule of law in the country we need to be sensitive to standard legal procedures. After all, the whole world is watching us.

When the prime minister called the army out in aid of the civil administration to crack down on criminals, the common people heaved a sigh of relief. While the Army-led joint operations have helped curb crimes drastically, reports of deaths allegedly following arrest and detention have given rise to questions that call for probes. We understand the investigations are going on and hopefully these will put a lid on any possible untoward incident in the near future.

# Israel's politics in turmoil and so is the peace process



MUSLEHUDDIN AHMAD

PRIME Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel had set up a trap to oust President Arafat of Palestinian Authority (PA). Now it seems that Sharon himself has fallen into that trap. His term as the Prime Minister of Israel may end soon. His survival as the Likud leader is extremely doubtful and hence his return as the Prime Minister of Israel again is also uncertain. Sharon was forced to announce an early election, nine months ahead of schedule, due to the withdrawal of Labour party from the Unity government of Ariel Sharon. Sharon tried his best to forge an alliance with the ultra-rightist parties but failed as those parties' demands were unacceptable to Sharon. Sharon tried to position himself 'at the center of Israeli politics' and delivered rebukes to the rivals both right and left as 'irresponsible and self-interested' forcing to choose election as "the least bad option".

On an assurance from the Prime Minister that he would call an early

election, Netanyahu, a sly political fox, joined Sharon's government as the Foreign Minister. But he openly threw a challenge to Sharon for Likud's leadership. Through the latest poll indicates Sharon's lead, Netanyahu may go to any extent to regain party leadership which may enable him to come back as the Prime Minister of Israel. But it seems that he made a silly mistake by accepting the position of the Foreign Minister under Sharon. Sharon made this offer intentionally

may not lead to any easy solution of political and economic problems. Abraham Burg, the Speaker of Knesset (parliament) said..." Not since 1973 has Israel entered election in such a complicated political, diplomatic and economic reality."

Israel's Labour party led by Ben-Eliezer at long last left Sharon's coalition government, but left it after having bloodied its hand by participating actively in killing hundreds of innocent Palestinians. The most

settlements." Indeed a couple of weeks ago Ben-Eliezer, as the Defense Minister, ordered dismantling of some settlements that led to serious riots between settlers and Israeli security forces in the settlement areas in the West Bank and Gaza. Though he will be facing challenges from two of his rivals, he is apparently trying to echo campaign theme of late Prime Minister Rabin who had said that it was time for a "change in priorities". As it seems, by joining Sharon's

attack would "enable us to get rid of Saddam Hussain and provide a good opportunity to get rid of Arafat. In response to this remark, Arafat however said, "No one can deport me from my homeland. They have to remember, they are dealing with Arafat". Netanyahu also opposes the creation of the Palestinian state. Indeed, Netanyahu said, "our immediate problem today isn't the political problem with the Palestinians, because there we simply need to complete the process of conquering

towards far left. The recent Congressional election victory for Republicans in the U.S. is the proof of the U.S. politics moving towards political right. The danger is obvious. The world would continue to face terrorism from the far left and counter-terrorism actions which some see as virtual "terrorism" from the U.S. Thus the world today stands polarised. President Bush is apparently set to lead the U.S. to an unpredictable political and military situation. Bush Administration has been pressing the UNSC for the last 8 weeks to accept a harsh resolution against Iraq. It succeeded in a limited way as France, Russia and also China were against the original draft with an automatic military strike. The resolution that was approved last night was strong enough though the "automaticity" in terms of military strike as put by French President Jacques Chirac was not there. In other words, for any violation by Iraq, the UNSC has to be reconvened for consideration of the next step including use of force. But the war preparations by the U.S. and the U.K. are continuing in full swing. President Bush has given the World Body and Iraq the last chance; he may not wait for the next. The war looks inevitable as Iraq must be disarmed to make Israel's position safer in the region. Arafat is considered to be a problem in terms of suicide bombings, but Saddam in terms of Israel's very existence in the Arab world.

Muslehuiddin Ahmad is a former Secretary and Ambassador and founder president of North South University

## SPOTLIGHT ON MIDDLE EAST

**Bush Administration has been pressing the UNSC for the last 8 weeks to accept a harsh resolution against Iraq. It succeeded in a limited way as France, Russia and also China were against the original draft with an automatic military strike. The resolution that was approved last night was strong enough though the "automaticity" in terms of military strike as put by French President Jacques Chirac was not there. In other words, for any violation by Iraq, the UNSC has to be reconvened for consideration of the next step including use of force.**

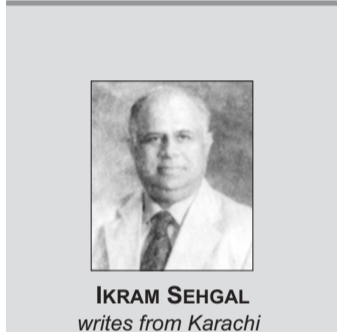
and cunningly to downgrade Netanyahu politically. Netanyahu criticised Sharon for failing to provide security to Israel and for mismanaging the economy. He said, "The public is looking for a way out of the country's quagmire and the man to lead it out. I believe, I have the way and the solution and that most of the public knows this, so my assessment is that I will be able to lead the country in the future". In any case, political situation in Israel is highly complicated and with the present down-hill economy, election

pathetic was the role of Shimon Peres, a co-recipient of the Nobel peace prize, who used to sit by the side of Sharon, an alleged war criminal, and lend support to Sharon's repressive policies and military actions against the Palestinians. Labour ultimately left on the issue of Sharon's insistence on giving unreasonably big budgetary support to the settlers over the Israeli poor. At last Ben-Eliezer realised that settlement policy of Israel was wrong. He said, "There will be no peace without taking down

unity government which ultimately failed but in its term of over two years Sharon counted many many Israeli dead due to Palestinian suicide bombings, Labour Party indeed lost the popularity it enjoyed earlier. Recent polls suggest return of Likud again and with Netanyahu as the Prime Minister, M-East peace process has no immediate future. Netanyahu already said that government made a serious mistake by not expelling Arafat. But he said that it could be possible during an American strike on Iraq. Such an

terror. Afterward, we can deal with the political issue". What a stupid idea! He wants to conquer terror without dealing with the political issues. Indeed, the terrorism is the result of non-implementation of the "land for peace deal" which both Israelis and Palestinians agreed to. It's a major political issue and this has to be resolved in an acceptable way and that would bring possible peace in the region. Unfortunately, both the U.S. and Israel have been moving towards radical right thus pushing the left

## Trading dark horses



IKRUM SEHGAL writes from Karachi

THE process of the General Elections of Oct 12, 2002 was completed by Saturday Nov 2. Due to meet on Friday Nov 8 the National Assembly (NA) was postponed for a week at the request of some political parties to give them some time to shore up their coalition arrangements. A proposed alliance led by PPP-P and MMA is pitted almost equally against the grouping led by PML (Q). With the bogey of "hung Parliament" hanging in the air, one doubts whether a stable government could be formed in the Centre. Both the PPP-P (which privately had called for a delay) and the MMA immediately condemned the postponement, labeling it as a machination of the incumbent military government trying to contrive a PML (Q)-led government coalition.

Who are the main players in the power game? PML (Q)'s Ch Shujaat Hussain with the largest number of MNAs must be counted as a major player, followed closely by PPP-Ps self-exiled leader Ms Benazir Bhutto (and her incarcerated spouse Mr Asif Zardari). One must not forget Qazi Hussain Ahmad, the Jamaat-Islami chief who is the chief architect/planner of MMA's strong showing, MQM's self-exiled Altaf Hussain in London or the Jeddah-based exiled brothers Mian Nawaz Sharif

and Mian Shahbaz Sharif of PML (N). The name of the game is acquisition of power, somehow! What of consequence is that all the political parties are talking to each other i.e. except for PML (Q) and PML (N), an anomaly that needs to be corrected. And who are the contenders for the prized post of PM? The horses in contention are Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali of PML (Q), Makhdoom Amin Fahim of PPP-P and MMA's Maulana Fazlur Rahman. While

the elections as her choice for PM, thus nearly contriving the disintegration of the MMA even before they have entered Parliament. Maulana Fazlur Rahman has been a net beneficiary of Ms Benazir's benevolence, he is not known as Maulana "Diesel" for nothing (befitting the diesel permits he was given by the previous PPP regime for the border areas of Pakistan adjacent to Afghanistan). Since Maulana Fazlur Rahman's

Asif Zardari has borne his extended incarceration extremely well and in excellent humour. He may have entered politics as Ms Benazir's husband and in her shadow, he is now clearly a major political leader in his own right. During the process of selection of electoral candidates by PPP-P it became clear that there was a Bhutto-Zardari divide on choice of MNA/MPA aspirants in the stam-

walking around free; there is no justification for keeping him confined (for over six years now). At present the NAB law seems to be Zardari-specific, that is not a just application of justice. What does this do to the MMA? Regretfully, the MMA has been hostage to Maulana Fazlur Rahman's soft corner for Ms Benazir and may ultimately to find itself out in the cold everywhere except in NWFP. As the party win-

electorate. By that token and given the present election statistics, they fall far short of aspiring to govern Pakistan.

This gives rise to another major concern. In the present situation, if the Senators are to be elected on the basis of voting by Provincial legislators it would not be correct. The MMA has nearly 50 per cent of the seats in NWFP and Balochistan but only 11% of the votes cast, they will walk away with more than 30 per cent of the seats in the Senate, is this true reflection of democracy? Every party should be allocated seats in each Province on the basis of what votes they actually got in each Province. The Seats in the Senate must be on Proportional Representation basis, that is a must for the stability of the Federation. This excellent suggestion in the proposed amendments to the Constitution should never have been revoked. The President must take immediate action to rectify this situation as otherwise we will become hostage to special interests of one particular party.

Given all the jockeys and the horses for the prized job of PM, the likely outcome is still uncertain but the hard fact remains that in entering into serious dialogue with each other all the parties have had to abandon some of their fixed premises. That is a major plus point which the long-suffering electorate has managed inadvertently for the future stability and prosperity of Pakistan.

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

## AS I SEE IT

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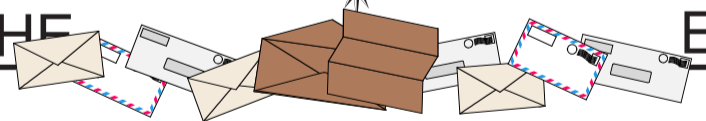
PML (Q)'s Khurshid Kasuri and Humayun Akhtar cannot be ruled out as possible choices, compromise candidates can be Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao of PPP (S) or Hamid Nasir Chatha of PML (J). In this world of horse-trading, is there a dark horse somewhere? Just before the NA postponement the news spread that the PPP-P had reached an understanding with MMA, proposing Maulana Fazlur Rahman as the joint candidate for PM-ship. This was rather mind-boggling as for the past month Ms Benazir has been bemoaning the "Talibanisation" of the future Pakistan government to all and sundry in the western world, in public and private, most recently in an appearance on the same platform with former Israeli PM Ehud Barak in a seminar in Michigan, US. On the other hand, she cleverly stoked Maulana Fazlur Rahman's ambitions by telephoning him a day after

JULI (F) provided the maximum recruits from Pakistan for the Taliban, this "partnership of convenience" may be really difficult to explain to the western world if it is consummated, but then Ms Benazir is no ordinary politician and "double-speak" is a part of the armoury of any consummate player. Ms Benazir's PPP-P desperately needs a deal wherein (1) the charges against her are dropped and ostensibly also (2) the charges against her jailed husband are dropped. Used to calculated risks, she has gambled big time, using MMA, the PML (Q) into a coalition with her. On the other hand, with Asif Zardari entering into the discussions with senior government officials late in the night in his PIMS hospital-jail, the negotiations could turn serious, only the finer details remaining to be hammered out. Without commenting on the charges of corruption against him, the fact remains that

pede for PPP tickets. Despite all the lovey-dovey rhetoric, would Ms Benazir really like Asif Zardari to emerge from imprisonment and take over the reins of the Party? Zardari has proven he is a strong leader and by not succumbing to deals he has shown, he can take the heat, his presence may change the complexion of the present PPP-P stance which is totally dependant upon remote control by Ms Benazir. All things said and done, we have seen over the years that when he gives his word Asif Zardari will keep it but that Ms Benazir is always hard put to keep hers once she gets what she wants. There is always the question where will be the credibility of the military regime and its accountability process if Zardari is allowed to walk free? In the absence of NAB proving the charges against him, the rule of law is on Zardari's side. Others far more guilty than he has ever been accused of in a court of law are

ning the third largest number of NA seats, it still has a possibility of getting at least one slot, either that of the NA Speaker or the Senate Chairman if it goes into coalition with PML (Q). Ms Benazir has been very skilfully using her two major pawns, Maulana Fazlur Rahman and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, the octogenarian politician who will not go away quietly. If there is a PPP-P coalition with PML (Q) to make a government, it would be interesting to see how she discards these two. The MMA may have given strong showing in the elections but is trying to carve out a niche for itself which is not commensurate to its electoral strength. For MMA to have the PM-ship of the country, or even the Senate Chairmanship or NA Speaker's slot, would be a travesty of justice on the citizens of this country. After all, 3.5 million votes out of the 33 million or so of the votes cast represent only 11 per cent of the voting electorate and only 4 per cent of the available

## TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR



Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

### Well done, Tipu Sultan

As a journalist, Tipu may feel proud as he has been honoured along with Daniel Pearl and other journalists from Colombia, Kazakhstan and Eritrea. It is also a triumph of *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo* who created a fund for the treatment of Tipu in Bangkok and carried out a yearlong campaign to complete his treatment.

Though the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked whether Tipu had any accreditation card, Tipu has now gained international recognition. Ironically, Sheikh Hasina's party men who were involved in torturing Tipu are now absconders. The godfather who was backed by the former PM is now staying abroad and it is the lesson of history.

Apart from this, it is a landmark in the history of freedom of expression in Bangladesh. I think journalists throughout the country would feel inspired seeing Tipu being honoured this way.

It has been proved again that men can be destroyed but not defeated.

Oli Md. Abdullah Chowdhury  
Khasdabir, Sylhet

Our leaders are the designers of Kala Faruqs

news for us. A most wanted man got permission from all the relevant ministries, got a new passport and was caught fleeing from the country! How could the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs etc and even the immigration at ZIA disregard this matter? This certainly demands an explanation from the elected government.

Kala Faruq et al are being fed/clad/paid/ supported/used by those people who are sitting on those chairs. The leaders who use/d Kala Faruq et al should be tried first and then only the turn of the criminals will come trial. Nobody is born a criminal. Circumstances and situations compel a person to be so. Most of the prominent godfathers have not been arrested so far. Those who are committing crimes are being punished but those who have introduced the crime in the society are being spared/overlooked. Being a citizen of the country-- I throw a challenge to the government and the opposition-- punish and help punish the individuals concerned who are contributing to the society by fetching drugs/arms and destroying the younger generation of the country. I know neither the government nor the opposition would bother about that-- because both are contributors to it.

Shamim Choudhury

### Baridhara, Dhaka "Operation Clean Heart"

I am writing with reference to Mohammed Badrul Ahsan's column "Operation Clean Heart" (October 25), in which he casually says, "sad that a few people have died during interrogation and few more might die in future". I suppose you will put it to your respect for freedom of speech, but I am surprised that your paper with a reputation for defending human rights should print an article that openly propagates violation of the right to life, which is guaranteed under the constitution, by international human rights, and in fact is fundamental to all religious doctrines.

As for Badrul Ahsan, he appears to be a person with little understanding of the implication of what he is saying when he welcomes army action in arresting a rising number of civilians which has reached over 3000. Does he question who is being arrested, who has prepared the list of suspected criminals, have these alleged criminals been given a chance to defend themselves? If the army is acting as investigator, jury and judge, what chance is there for justice? Even criminals have to

be given a chance to prove their innocence before they are allowed to succumb to spontaneous heart attacks under operating clean heart. This forms the basis of a civilised society. Otherwise what is the difference if disciplined forces act like gangsters themselves, blind-folding, torturing men and women, whether they are alleged accused or bystanders. Must we not demand to know under what law the public is now subject to such arbitrary authoritarian use of force?

Perhaps Badrul Ahsan needs to note Martin Luther King's words, "Through violence you may murder a murderer, but you can't murder murder. Through violence you may murder a murderer, but you can't murder hate. Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that."

Haseena Hamid  
Dhaka

### Corruption- a form of economic terrorism

With the news of recent joint operation against crimes, like all the peace loving people of Bangladesh (as I read from the newspaper), I do also feel a little relieved and would

like to thank the government for initiating such operation.

It is a matter of debate whether the army is doing things in right or wrongful way and I leave it to the wise constitution experts of the country. What I would like to say is, it has been enough of people's suffering. We, the ordinary citizen have elected the government to run the country and to lead us towards prosperity. Unfortunately, most of the political parties like to do mockery with people by promising a bright future when they are outside power and by forgetting those when they are in power.

The present government has accused AL that it patronises terrorism and claimed that they themselves are free from such allegations. My question is "Can we draw that conclusion, when we look at the people arrested by army so far?" It is well known that both the major parties have mixed up their politics with terrorism and it is now such a difficult task that the Prime Minister had to call army for help.

My concern is something else. I hope that the situation would improve after this drive; but don't we need to start such operations in the economic sector as well? Corrupt people who are in the government

service or elected posts are sucking the blood of people and making huge black money under different names. Starting from the very low level employees to the top level, a considerable number of dishonest people are destroying the whole system and they are also a potential threat to a democratic government. Whom the government is going to call to drive away these terrorists from the country?

Md. Omar Faruque  
Canada

### Army deployment

Thank you for your intervention to eradicate criminals from our society, which seems to be an appropriate step towards 'the security of the general public'. Contrary to this we are deeply concerned about the arrest of two senior AL politicians in the name of 'Operation Clean Heart'.

I believe your army drive should also be targeted against 'Bribe Infested Police Department'.

M Khandaker  
Portsmouth, UK

The recent deployment of army to restore law and order situation is a new addition to the volatile political state of Bangladesh. It saddens me

greatly to see that some people are happy with the introduction of army in internal affairs of the state. If we really wanted that why don't we have a 'military government' instead of a democratic government?

The idea of "Government of the people, by the people, for the people" is not to establish a government that is pure and perfect but rather establish a government that is answerable to the people. By installing different safeguards the people tries to keep the government in control. Introducing military in internal state affairs simply destroys that notion. People might argue that army was necessary to control crimes but that idea has lots of holes:

- 1. What if a government, to establish its oppressive power lets the law and order (which is its duty to maintain) to fall to a pitiful state so that it can bring in ARMY in the pretence of fighting crime but the real intention being oppression? Where is the check guard for that?
- 2. Why the people should pay for a POLICE force and Home Ministry can't do its job?
- 3. Why the Home Minister, State Minister and all others who were entrusted with the job of safekeep-

ing the country internally is not being dismissed and charged with negligence of duty when they have failed so miserably that the GOVT itself no longer trusts one of its main institutions?

4. Why the arrested persons are taken to different places while we have jails?

5. How come so many people have died in custody?

The people of Bangladesh should think and act. We can't expect the politicians to do the right things all the time. We all know how miserably AL failed us last time and how blatantly BNP is failing now. I also don't understand how a Leader of the Opposition leaves the country for 10 days in the midst of such a volatile situation prevailing in the country! As the Leader of the Opposition, it's expected of her that she will stay with the people through this testing time. At the end it comes down to WE the PEOPLE. We have to come out of the political biases and establish our morals (if we have any) and rights (if we know).

Talat Islam  
Ona Islam  
Tat-e-mail