

Common sense takes leave*Arrogance of power manifestly at its worst*

THE first question to arise from the bedlam in the cantonment area on Saturday is: was it not natural for opposition leader Sheikh Hasina to head for the Combined Military Hospital to see the critically wounded litterateur Humayun Azad? It certainly was, to say nothing of her rightful duty to have a glimpse of the writer under ICU care and in comatose, obviously from a safe, allowable distance. So, debarring her from entering the CMH was essentially wrong. And, the way her visit was stonewalled by a series of measures from Jahangir Gate to the CMH entry point acting under orders was even more reprehensible.

It is unheard of and totally unacceptable.

The authorities' announcement to the effect that the CMH advised all and sundry against visiting Humayun Azad in his critical condition is perfectly in order, but it appears to be an afterthought of an explanatory note insofar as denying entry to Sheikh Hasina went. She is not only the leader of the opposition but also a former prime minister of the country with a high protuberant standing on the warrant of precedence. Likewise, it is inexplicable why former president of the republic AQM Badruddoza was debarrred. The entries could be restrictive but not denied to people of their standing.

It seems the government has lost all sense of propriety; for, the affront given to opposition leaders was entirely avoidable if only a little bit of administrative imagination was brought to bear on the approach. To think that there was not even an intent to do so was the most unfortunate part of it.

It basically boils down to an arrogant use of executive power. The government in no way can justify the denial of common courtesy to opposition leader Sheikh Hasina and former president AQM Badruddoza. The treatment meted out to them is reflective of an arrogance of power that is blindfolded to democratic considerations and humanitarian sensibilities. That the image of the country has not been brightened can be said without any fear of contradiction.

Treatment of women opposition activists atrocious
We are disgusted at the lack of decency

RECENTLY we have been witnessing a very disturbing trend of using highhanded measures against women activists of the opposition during *hartal* hours. Police again manhandled the women activists of Awami League led by former minister and frontline leader Motia Choudhury during the daylong strike on Saturday. Though it was not the first time that we saw such an outrageous way of stopping women activists from exercising their democratic rights -- beating them, tugging at their clothes, dragging them onto the nearby van -- what happened on that day was the height of indecency. In fact it crossed the border the civility. They are perhaps labouring under the notion that since women cops are handling women activists the former can take liberty with the latter.

We simply ask the government -- is this the only way to handle or tackle some perceived disturbances? One should realise that expression of dissent does not necessarily mean defiance of law and order. The authorities will have to draw a line there. One thing is certain -- the police could not have done it on their own, they must have acted on a perception and tenor of thinking permeating from the top. And that makes us wonder what kind of deplorable thinking circulates in the hierarchy.

It was another example of denying any space to the opposition. We can see with alarm that the tactics to handle *hartals*, pickets are becoming extremely violent day by day. Sit-in demonstrations, assembling to express dissent and taking out peaceful processions are some of the democratic rights that must be normally respected. The government has not banned them, so that it should feel obliged to ensure that the opposition gets the space they need to put across the points of view to the public.

The fate of Pakistan's bomb!

M ABDUL HAFIZ

PAKISTANIS are still trying to catch up with the realities surrounding the country's recent infamy -- peddling of the nuclear secrets indiscriminately without being caught by its ubiquitous intelligence services. They are equally nonplussed at the multi-dimension personality of Dr A Q Khan, Pakistan's architect of bomb, a national hero and the country one of the best known celebrities who can at the same time cause ignominy to his country without compunction and accept full responsibility for it. An immaculately arranged confession statement and what followed, however fail to set things at rest. Even as Dr Khan's statement is replayed thousand times over the TV channels the whole world continues to appear askance if he could proliferated without official support and connivance. Even if the confession story is indeed bought questions are bound to be asked whether the country incapable of guarding its own nuclear secrets can be trusted with

nuclear arsenal.

Dr Khan's bizarre admission on national TV that he headed a massive international smuggling operation supplying Libya, Iran and North Korea with assorted nuclear technology was not just an unprecedented political and public relation disaster for Pakistan. It also handed Washington a cudgel with which to thrash Pakistan over nuclear issue. Washington's long standing notion that Muslim countries are

assets. His voice was visibly defensive. But the Western media with its strident views remained blatantly hostile -- dressing Pakistan down and even suggesting de-nuking of the country. In the meantime the canards of all sorts spread like wild fire. Officially however the United States seems circumspect although she never liked Pakistan's nuke capability.

However, a different picture is likely to emerge once Pakistan's military and strategic usefulness in

Even if the timing of the AQ Khan episode is an incredible coincidence, many believe that is a part of brilliantly orchestrated campaign to eliminate Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. Even earlier Pakistan's nuclear programme never enjoyed the sort of immunity from criticism that was afforded, for example, to Israel and to an extent which subsequently became recognised nuclear power with the west's subtle patronisation. Nor was there any hullabaloo about South Africa's

fully implicated in the transfer of nuclear expertise to North Korea, Libya and Iran as a result of debriefing conducted by Pakistan military such sleazes are inherent in the international nuclear regime. Like important part of Delhi's nuclear arms development was based on US technology stolen by Israel and then sold to India, Pakistan also extensively shopped for nuclear materials through shady middlemen and secretive dealers. The dubious deal involving third world countries

cloak the proliferation issue with a measure of legality it was always political consideration and a matter of expediency that guided western policy whether or not to help an aspirant in obtaining nuclear technology. Researchers opine that allegation against Pakistan for supplying URENCO centrifuge design information to Iran pales into insignificance when compared with the official documents detailing the supply of nuclear technology to oil rich ally Iran by the US, Germany, France and other European countries -- of course before the Islamic revolution of 1979. It was a matter of political imperative and was not certainly done as charity for Iran. What is happening now with regard to centrifuge scandal is viewed by the analysts as a ploy by Washington to presserise General Musharraf to shut down perhaps half of his nuclear weapon project.

The reluctance of the West to complete the negotiated Bushehr nuclear plant in a changed politico-strategic milieu, it may be mentioned, forced Iran to look towards Russia to complete its first nuclear power plant. On July 28, 1998 President Clinton announced that the US had imposed economic sanction against seven firms under investigation by the Russian government for proliferating WMD to Iran, Libya and North Korea.

Such information abounds about proliferation even today.

Brig (ret'd) Hafiz is former DG of BLISS.

PERSPECTIVES

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too irresponsible, corrupt and unstable to be allowed nuclear weapons has now been vindicated by Kahuta disaster. It may now be a matter of time that the US would demand at least joint control over Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless it was an embarrassment both at home and abroad. President Musharraf busy in placating both domestic anxiety and external scrutiny did a deft balancing while repeating his resolves to preserve the sanctity and security of Pakistan's nuclear

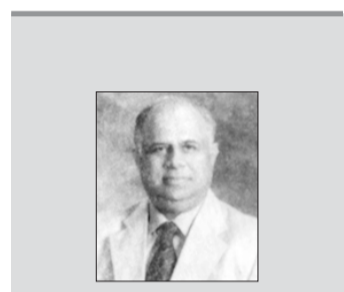
Afghanistan is over and normalcy is restored on anti-terror war front. That will be a crucial juncture when UN Security Council may, at the behest of the United States, icily ask Pakistan to open up its uranium enrichment laboratory for inspection. Pakistan will have nothing to protest because the charge of the proliferation against the country stands proven with the confession and pardon drama staged earlier. Obviously the trauma befalling the nation persists.

nuclear capabilities which was revealed and then hastily dismantled as a matter of principles when the nation moved out of apartheid although the dismantling was sold to the world as an anti-proliferation measure. On the contrary the application of Pressler Amendment, occasional threats of sanction and frequent scrutiny of the US dogged the progress of Pakistan's nuclear programme.

Although Dr AQ Khan and some other scientists of KRL have been

could have been struck along the way, Pakistan's path to success has been long, arduous and painful. The same way each nuclear-capable nation has its own history of reaching the capability, each part of which might not have been savoury.

There are sources to supply nuclear material to Iran, for example, from many western countries including the US which ridiculously raise their eyebrows at the scale of proliferation by Pakistan. In spite of an attempt to

Nuclear trails and trialsIKRAM SEHGAL
writes from Karachi

IT is becoming increasingly difficult for Pakistan to distinguish between friend and foe, with even former PM Ms Benazir Bhutto who one would hope would be a friend and as a former PM more of propriety, choosing to hunt with the hounds rather than helping us run like hares. Because of his "nuclear moonlighting", Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan (AQK), our hero-cum-villain combined, is an albatross around Pakistan's neck that has brought us to ground zero of world public opinion. While the internal lapses must be investigated thoroughly so that more skeletons do not appear on an already hot tin roof, those wishing Pakistan ill are targeting Pakistan (and the Army) on all sorts of counts, giving lip-service only to AQK's illegal activity but ignoring the foreign network of companies and the personalities involved.

BSA (Bashir?) Tahir, a trusted Sri Lankan businessman confidante of AQK, was actively involved in supplying centrifuge components for Libya's uranium-enrichment programme. Tahir used SCOPE, a Malaysian subsidiary of SCOMI GROUP BHD, a Malaysian company involved in the petroleum services industry. Tahir, whose Malaysian wife was one of three of SCOPE's sponsor directors (she subsequently sold the shares to one of the other sponsors, PM Badawi's son), told the Malaysian police that his involvement with

AQK started sometime in 1994/1995 during Ms Benazir's government when AQK used Tahir's services to tranship two containers with used centrifuge units through Dubai to Iran. US\$ 3 million was paid in UAE Dirham by the Iranians, two briefcases of cash being kept in an apartment used as a guesthouse by AQK whenever he visited Dubai.

Libya contacted AQK in 1997 (again during Ms Benazir's regime), to obtain help and

discussions between AQK and Iran to supply centrifuge designs. Gotthard Lerch, a German citizen residing in Switzerland, once worked for Leybold Heraeus, a German company that is alleged to have produced vacuum technology equipment. Gotthard Lerch is alleged to have tried to obtain supplies of pipes for the Project Machine Shop 1001 by sourcing from South Africa but failed to obtain it even though payment had been made by Libya earlier. Selim

consultant arranged by Tahir to set up the SCOPE factory in Malaysia, and was actively involved in manufacturing operations of the factory.

Nearly all the personalities/corporate entities in the nuclear smuggling/procurement racket were foreign nationals with various expertise. A vast majority of domestic critics are blissfully ignorant of not only the facts but the horrible consequences for Pakistan if there really was an

in the 90s as to the legal heirs. The recent nuclear contact with the Libyans is recorded between 1994 and 1997 during the period of Ms Benazir's regime, therefore her present diatribe against Gen Musharraf and the military could be a pre-emptive strike to ward off the charges of nuclear proliferation against her. Even without any direct "smoking gun", she is street-smart enough to be apprehensive that any such "nuclear taint" in the present post 9/11 environment

objectives well knowing she was causing immense damage to the country. As an admirer of Ms Benazir's political talents and charisma, one expected her to uphold the national interest "even to the peril of her life".

Ms Benazir has a "crying wolf" history of going in for pre-emptive strikes to ward off corruption (and other) allegations, etc. Even her father went on and on about his making public the "Tashkent secret", four decades later we still do not know what it was! Wonderfully eloquent and media-wise, she has an inherent ability to state things straight-faced she knows to be patently wrong e.g. the Swiss money-laundering case which she denies ad nauseam even exists. Comparing herself to her late illustrious father "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto", the acknowledged "father of Pakistan's clandestine nuclear programme", she claims the title of being the "mother of Pakistan's missile programme". The best one can acclaim her is as the "midwife of the Talibaan", they came into being under her regime's initiative in 1994 when the respected Maj Gen NK Babar was Interior Minister and Lt Gen Javed Ashraf Qazi, the then DG ISI. The government should trot out Qazi to detail on primetime TV as to the nexus between Ms Benazir and the Talibaan. She may have more charisma than her father had, but Ms Benazir does not display the same vision. While one does not question her patriotism, it is certainly sad that she did not exercise better judgment in leaving the Army alone, particularly at this critical time. Regrettably she is not the only one taking pot shots at us while we are staggering along on the nuclear trail, facing trial thereof in the kangaroo court of international public opinion.

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

AS I SEE IT

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expertise in the field of uranium-enrichment centrifuge as well as supply centrifuge units for Libya's nuclear programme. Several meetings between AQK (accompanied by Tahir) and representatives from Libya represented by Mohamad Matuq Mohamad and another person known as Karim took place in early 1997 in Istanbul, subsequently in Casablanca and in Dubai. Project Machine Shop 1001 was meant to set up a workshop in Libya to make centrifuge components which could not be obtained from outside Libya. The machines for the workshop were obtained from Spain and Italy, the middleman involved in this project was Peter Griffin, a British citizen, owner of Dubai-based Gulf Technical Industries (GTI). Earlier Griffin arranged to send 7 to 8 Libyan technicians to Spain to learn how to operate the machines, he also supplied an Italian-made furnace to Libya for the workshop.

Late Heinz Mebus, a Swiss engineer, was involved in

Alguadis, an engineer from Turkey, known to AQK since the 80s, supplied electrical cabinets and power supplier-voltage regulator to Libya. After the police action against the ship BBC China in Taranto, Italy on 4 Oct 2003, a consignment was sent by Gunas Jireh, a Turkish national who supplied 'aluminum casting and dynamo' to Libya for its 'Project Machine Shop 1001'. Tahir is alleged to have arranged the transshipment of electrical cabinets and power supplier-voltage regulator to Libya through Dubai on behalf of Selim Alguadis. Swiss citizen Friedrich Tinner, the President of CETEC and mechanical engineer, had dealings with AQK since 1980s and is reported to have prepared certain centrifuge components, including safety valves, sourcing many of the materials from several companies in Europe, arranging for the supply to reach Dubai and then on to Libya. Urs Friedrich Tinner, the son of Friedrich Tinner, was the

official "smoking gun". Not entirely blameless in failing to exercise stricter security controls, the government of the day is certainly far less culpable than the earlier civilian regimes when AQK first started to run amok. Remaining under very strict official controls during the regimes of late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Gen Ziaul Haq, AQK cleverly exploited the ambiguity and used his absolute authority to do what he pleased for the subsequent illegal "export" activities. When the executive controls and security safeguards became somewhat of a grey area between the military with advent of civilian regimes since 1989.

Unconfirmed reports had appeared in the media in the early 70s about Col Gaddafi's cheque for US\$ 5 million in late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's name for our proposed nuclear programme. This cheque being deposited with UBS in Switzerland and the purchase of gold thereof became a matter of subsequent in-family contention

would well be a "kiss of death" as far as her relations with western nations are concerned. Ms Benazir has made the astounding claim that during her first regime she set forth the BENAZIR DOCTRINE, officially disallowing exports of nuclear knowledge and material from Pakistan.

What was the necessity for such a "doctrine" unless there were specific requests (and by whom?) for nuclear exports, indeed why has no one ever heard about the BENAZIR DOCTRINE for the last 15 years given that there was no apparent reason to keep this a secret and in fact every reason to make such a pledge public? During recent TV interviews Ms Benazir alleged that "Gen Pervez Musharraf is responsible for the nuclear exports to Libya", does she really believe this outrageous canard? With the President already treading a fail-safe line for Pakistan, it was extremely disappointing to see our former PM pursuing crass political

OPINION**Enhancing efficiency of police**

A B M S ZAHUR

IN the last national election campaign BNP committed for perhaps too many things. We assume that its party leaders were fully aware of extreme difficulties in fulfilling these commitments, among the commitments the most difficult were rooting out corruption, improving law and order and separation of judiciary from the executive. Corruption is nothing new in this part of the world. It existed even during the British rule. Difference is that it was only administration which was corrupt to some extent, not the whole society. Now we see the whole society is corrupt. In regard to police personnel there was a joke in those days. Once an old woman was told by her son that he got the job of a judge. The woman was unhappy to learn this because her son could not become a police inspector instead. Because police inspector's job was both powerful and lucrative (because of ample opportunity for grafts). In those days the number of committed crimes were few and reported numbers were fewer. There was not plenty of unlicensed fire arms, no indigenous manufacturing of

arms and ammunitions, no "masthan culture," no money laundering.

Today the police personnel who showed extreme courage and love for their country against Pakistani forces in 1971, are, unfortunately, having a very bad period of their existence. They have lost power (because of interference and indulgence) and prestige (because of politicisation). Their efficiency or prestige can only be raised through a well planned and well concerted effort. In fact all the major users of police personnel must cooperate in making the job of police more effective. Disjointed and patchy work of the ministry of home affairs cannot be effective if the government, non-government and private sector users fail to appreciate the necessity for an effective police force. They must try to give up the habit of making only uncharitable criticisms about police's performance without ascertaining the truth. Let us accept the unpalatable truth that there is no magic wand to bring high efficiency in police administration quickly.

As corruption is directly related to deterioration of law and order we may discuss about eradication of corruption (or bringing it to a

minimum level). People are talking loudly and clearly about anti-corruption commission. Only setting up of commission cannot bring any appreciable change in a 'most corrupt country'. No appreciable improvement can be brought without consensus among major political parties. The administration will automatically be free from heavy corruption if the political leaders agree not to spare any corrupt official. Possibly we need some moral regeneration. We

indeed extremely shameful for a country which attained independence through the sacrifice of an estimated 3m lives. Battle against corruption has to be started from the top through setting up of examples by leading politicians and policy makers in the country.

In a corrupt society how can we expect an honest policeman because he is very much a part of the society. A policeman knows that he cannot bear his expenses from his pay and other allowances

effective the political parties, particularly the major ones must come to an agreement that they would refrain from depending on muscle power for their political games. They will have to find some better way to utilise their party activists. If 'masthan culture' goes there will not be any need for politicisation of police force. If police force is not allowed to remain neutral law and order cannot improve to any appreciable extent.

In a democratic rule all decisions should be in public interest. Under the British or Pakistani rule police force was considered necessary mainly for maintaining law and order. In the present situation it has become one of the critical components of social security and economic development.

may have to change our attitude toward corruption. So long we surrender ourselves to money or wealth, so long we refuse to sacrifice for building the nation, so long we over look the need of the people in absolute poverty, hardly we can reduce corruption to any appropriate extent. If the party in position is afraid of losing its popularity with the monied class its statements for eradicating poverty will be a sham. Political statements to befool the public is

if he has to match the living standard of his other colleagues. If the cannot he will be regarded as a fool and a worthless fellow by his own family. Moreover, he knows that he is known to the society as a corrupt man simply because he is a police man, no matter whether he is an honest or a dishonest fellow.

The alarmingly deteriorating law and order situation cannot be effectively checked only by police force. To make the police really

Bangladesh needs foreign investment, particularly for pursuing her policy of export-led growth. Without peaceful environment she cannot attract foreign investment, because her domestic market is small and she is regarded as the most corrupt country. During the last two and a half years we have heard lots of statements about various steps taken or to be taken by government to assure the people of good governance. Unfortunately we

For improving police administration we only see good recommendations from time to time. People make scathing remarks about failures of home ministry to control crimes. The criminals are indiscriminately attacking journalists who report about their activities. Journalists are also disliked by police because the police do not like to expose their failures. Criminals know that police can be controlled either

through bribe or through political power. Thus the only problem remains are journalists who should either be controlled or killed.

If police force is to be made efficient, broadly speaking, the following measures may be considered:

(a) The police force may be provided with adequate logistics, their facilities comparable to other security/armed forces;

(b) The police force should be kept free from politics.

(c) The police force may be given adequate medical care so that they remain fit to give their best to the nation. It may be pointed out in this regard that according to certain estimate a large number of police personnel are suffering from. For cities like Dhaka and Chittagong "traffic help centres" may be set up. Electronic traffic signals may be set up at all traffic points where there are heavy traffic to reduce their stress.

(d) On entry they must be advised properly that they are people's force and they are to serve the people and not be their master and as such they should be ready to serve the people at any time without any grudge or grumbling. They must be careful about

attaining people's love and respect.

No body should ignore the fact that Bangladesh is a natural resource -- poor country. However, she is rich in human resource. If we fail to develop our human resource and concentrate more on spectacular projects we commit serious blunder. At this stage our priority should be to reduce lawlessness, vagrancy, crime and social disorder. To attain this we need foreign investment. For foreign investment we need peace and stability and no political unrest. To bring such a situation our internal security must improve quickly. We must be cautious and steady. Too much of foreign advice or finding too much dependence on foreign aid usually prove costly.

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ABMS Zahur is a retired joint secretary