

## ZIA shortcomings

*Govt should immediately address the problems of the airport*

It is worrying news that foreign airlines have lodged more than a dozen complaints about the risk factors that, according to them, have made Zia International Airport (ZIA) unsafe for landing and take-off.

They have identified a number of flaws like cracks in the runway, inefficiency of the air-navigational equipment including the radar systems etc. The complaints need to be addressed for very obvious reasons. It is a bit surprising that the civil aviation authorities could not act before such complaints were actually made, given the huge stake of human lives involved in flight operations. Let us have a look at the complaints. First, a rutted runway can be a source of fatal accidents, and that is equally true for the domestic flights as well. Not maintaining the needed structural soundness of the runway amounts to inviting grave trouble. Second, our sky is now congested as so many airlines are operating flights to Dhaka. This is a highly positive development, but a poor radar system could cause serious trouble any time.

Meanwhile, new aircraft are being purchased or taken on lease, but unless we have the right kind of infrastructure for safe landing and take-off, all the ambitious plan to add to Biman's existing fleet will begin to sound hollow.

Our aviation related infrastructure has been termed to be the poorest in the world, despite the industry having great potential. The Danish proposal to invest TK 33 crore for improving the aviation infrastructure is taking a rather long time to get the relevant ministry's nod. It is reported to have already been delayed by a year. However, it is not clear why an issue, as serious as maintaining aviation standards, did not receive the kind of attention that it deserves. The government should immediately okay the project and make sure that things are set right at ZIA. That will not only address the complaints of the foreign airlines, but will also restore ZIA's status as an international airport with all the required safety standards and other facilities.

## CCTV at public places

*Good move, but things have to improve in many areas*

THE government decision to install closed-circuit televisions (CCTV) at important public places as part of intensifying vigilance against all sorts of subversive activities is a move in the right direction. There is ample reason to be worried about the proliferation of terrorism across the globe.

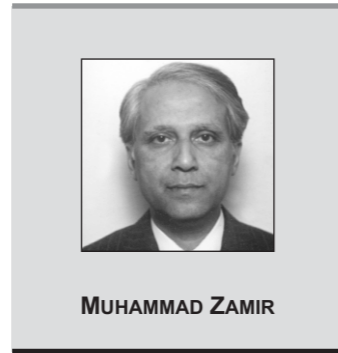
However, the capacity to combat terrorism and contain crime has to be enhanced in many areas. The introduction of CCTV will add to the logistic support that the law enforcers need to work efficiently. Much will depend on proper maintenance of the device. Unfortunately, maintenance is one area where our track record is extremely poor.

The CCTV is a modern device which cannot produce the desired results if glaring flaws remain in the modus operandi of the law enforcers. There is perhaps no point in handing over a new glittering toy to the boys when they don't have the training or equipment to address some of the basic issues of crime detection. For example, the investigative capacity of the police still remains very low, as they are not adequately supported by forensic facilities and the capacity to collect and preserve evidence. The point needs no elaboration, as even ordinary crimes go undetected.

The police also lack mobility and motivation. Criminals are now carrying sophisticated communication devices and in some cases fast moving vehicles. The limitations of the police only contribute to worsening of the crime situation. So the situation calls for overhauling of the police force on the basis of a well thought out reform plan-- a point this newspaper has raised several times. The decision-makers are also convinced that we need a modern police force to face the challenges of the present day crime situation. But the reform agenda is not making much headway, despite being fully agreed upon by both the experts and the decision-makers.

The police must be well trained, equipped and motivated. Only then can we expect modern devices to serve our purpose-- the human factor being crucially important here. The decision-makers should not be oblivious of the fact that many such experiments failed in the past. So they have to concentrate on overall improvement of police efficiency.

# The Cyprus question remains unresolved



MUHAMMAD ZAMIR

WE stand here in the north of Cyprus, at a crossroads of great historical eras and an intersection of far-ranging geographies. For thousands of years our island has been home to the civilisations of East and West. And now the Turkish Cypriots, the Greek Cypriots, and the minority groups who share this common history and heritage, have arrived at a turning point. A point, where we must create a new Cyprus within the European Union for our common future and the future of our children' (Mehmet Ali Talat, Leader of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, 24 April, 2005).

The Cyprus question is again dominating news. The need for a comprehensive settlement of this unresolved issue has again come to the forefront of international attention.

Sir Kieran Prendergast, UN Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs has just submitted his latest report and briefing on 22 June, 2005. This has been placed in front of the UN Security Council. It was prepared after his latest visit to Cyprus, Greece and Turkey between 30 May and 7 June, 2005. This step was taken in pursuance of the UN Secretary General's Mission of Good Offices in Cyprus. Apparently, the trip was undertaken to 'take the pulse' and to find out where the parties stand, to seek their views on what, if anything, the United Nations should be doing in current circumstances. It is this which made the UN initiative important.

It is clear from the findings that the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot side continue to differ on elements like territory, property,

resettlement of dislocated Turkish Cypriots, financing and guarantees against usurpation of the settlement arrangements by either side. A significant reason for this appears to be because of the lack of confidence that exists between the two parties.

These differences in perspective have also been compounded by the fact that Greece continues to believe that certain aspects of the UN comprehensive plan on Cyprus reflected the fears of the past more than it did the challenges of the future with Cyprus as a member of the European Union. Nevertheless,

Cypriots, quite understandably, are sensitive about the fact that there was insufficient acknowledgement by the international community to the positive gestures made by them in the referendum. In this regard, they highlight that the Turkish side had accepted the compromise UN plan and yet the UN Security Council refrained from taking the necessary steps to end the unjustified isolation that continues to punish the Turkish Cypriots.

In several statements in the recent past, Turkish Cypriot leadership have demonstrated their posi-

plan, to facilitate the securing of majority support for the UN plan in both communities. Direct phone calls have again become operational between the northern and the southern parts of Cyprus since August 2004. All churches in the north are also being permitted to conduct liturgies. New crossing points are also being opened on the border between the two parts. These are constructive steps.

In the coming months, the UN Secretary General will have to give attention to many contentious issues. Cyprus will have to be one of

-- one that meets the minimum requirements of all concerned. It is for this reason that I have started today's article with a quotation from the Turkish Cypriot leader Talat. He has correctly pointed towards the future and the need to overcome existing differences.

Such a view is consistent with reality. Over the years, the people of North Cyprus, majority of whom are Muslims, have paid a very dear price for trying to protect their interests and rights. Today, they are seeking a balanced compromise. Like their compatriots in the South,

(Case C-432/92) has held that member states of the EU could not import fruit and vegetables from the northern side of Cyprus without a certificate (which is most unlikely) issued by the Greek Cypriot authorities. This has most unfortunately, even extended to an embargo against the participation of Turkish Cypriot sporting clubs in international events. Even cultural contacts are not permitted. There is need for re-thinking on these issues.

The international community, on the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, needs to take appropriate steps to go beyond propaganda. There has to be more intensive public diplomacy and fewer complications arising out of de facto and de jure recognition questions. Meanwhile, the Turkish Cypriot community should be allowed to engage in direct economic, commercial, social and cultural contacts under the broad supervision of the United Nations. Similarly, to facilitate and encourage normalcy, permission should be accorded for establishing direct air and sea links with the northern community of Cyprus. This will facilitate tourism which can bring into that area much needed funds. These steps will also make the northern Cyprus community more self-reliant, less insecure and also help in the growth of its multinational and multicultural identities.

Bangladesh, a moderate country with a large majority of Muslims, needs to assist in this process within the United Nations. We have already gone along with the consensus with regard to a resolution on the situation in Cyprus adopted during the 32nd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Sana'a, Yemen (28-30 June, 2005). We should now urge the UN Secretary General to finalise a comprehensive settlement plan that meets the core interests and concerns of the two sides in Cyprus and permits them to live side-by-side in security, peace and harmony without one having the ability to govern, exploit, oppress or threaten the other.

Muhammad Zamir is a former Secretary and Ambassador -- any response to mzamir@dhaka.net

## POST BREAKFAST

**Bangladesh, a moderate country with a large majority of Muslims, needs to assist in this process within the United Nations. We have already gone along with the consensus with regard to a resolution on the situation in Cyprus adopted during the 32nd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Sana'a, Yemen (28-30 June, 2005). We should now urge the UN Secretary General to finalise a comprehensive settlement plan that meets the core interests and concerns of the two sides in Cyprus.**

The UN Envoy was informed that the Greek Government would want to see the two sides in cooperative negotiations based on the UN plan so that outstanding concerns could be addressed and a settlement achieved.

The Turkish Government has also indicated that they wished to see a settlement based on the UN plan. More importantly, they have expressed flexibility by suggesting that they are open to the Greek Cypriot side furnishing 'a clear and exhaustive list of changes it would like to see to the plan'. These views have been reiterated by Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan during his lunch with the UN Secretary General in New York on 9 June.

The Turkish Cypriot side wants to see a settlement as soon as possible based on the UN plan. They also wish for intensive negotiations under the auspices of the UN Secretary General for this purpose. On procedure, the Turkish Cypriot side favours a process with UN arbitration and clear time limits for negotiations. This is to avoid the prospect of negotiations dragging on indefinitely. The Turkish

approach. Mr Talat has gone on record and said that his people were prepared to accept the UN plan not because it was ideal, but as a compromise.

From what has been stated above, it is clear that some important positives have surfaced. All parties wish to see some sort of resumption of active UN good offices. There are still wide gaps in the stated positions, but all parties, also accept, that the UN plan should serve as the document on which negotiations could resume. This view is strengthened by the fact that political figures on both sides are initiating contacts with each other. This is bound to result in greater mutual understanding.

There have also been reports of useful contacts at other levels -- among ordinary people, now that they are able to cross to the other side. It is also encouraging to know (from representatives of certain civil societies) that grassroots opinion on both sides is being obtained through independent bi-communal survey. Polled attitudes are also being identified, with regard to possible and potential changes to the UN

them. It is true that it will be difficult. It will also be natural for each party to seek to protect its own interests on both procedure and substance. It will however be equally important to encourage both sides to focus on their over-riding common interest, namely, the need to agree on revisions. This will enable the UN plan to command majority support within each community.

Responsibilities in this regard will also devolve directly on the Governments of Greece and Turkey. Probably, more so for Greece (as a member of the EU, which stresses so much on human rights and equal opportunities) than Turkey. Greece, in particular, will need to think afresh on certain aspects of the problems, so that a solution can be achieved on the basis of a revised UN plan.

Cyprus entered the European Union on 1 May, 2004, but, despite its entry, it continues to remain divided and militarized. Such a situation is affecting its population living on both sides of the divide.

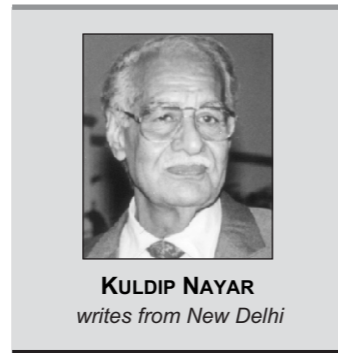
I also strongly believe that time has come to arrive at a fair, viable and carefully balanced compromise

they have equal rights to share economic prosperity and development on the basis of a federal structure based on political equality.

The European Union has a moral responsibility. It has admitted within itself only a section of the Cypriot population and indirectly perpetuated isolation. Despite its preference for accession of a reunited Cyprus and its support to the good offices mission of the UN Secretary General, what we have today is absence of integration and compromise. The EU must not permit an entire generation of the northern community being reduced to poverty. It needs to come forward with a comprehensive package of aid and trade measures. They are playing a very constructive role in the Balkans and this has to be replicated in Cyprus as well.

The extent and severity of the restrictive measures imposed on the northern community in Cyprus has affected their living conditions. The UN Secretary General has described the population as being under a veritable siege. A decision of the European Court of Justice

# US shouldn't ask for more



KULDEEP NAYAR  
writes from New Delhi

EXTREMISTS at Srinagar gave their reply by killing four within 24 hours of the joint resolve by the US and India to wage a global war against terrorism. In Delhi, General J.J. Singh, the Indian Chief of the Army Staff, said that 2,000 infiltrators lodged in 53 camps were waiting along the line of control (LoC) to cross into India. Intrepid Herald, a monthly from Karachi, wrote in detail how the training camps were beginning to hum in Pakistan.

BBC said the other day that 17 lakh students attended 20,000 madrasas in Pakistan and that "many students developed an intolerant prejudice and narrow-minded view of the world." Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said at Dubai that she never allowed during her regime the type of terrorist attacks which took place in London or earlier on the Indian parliament (an admission of terrorism but of a less lethal type).

All this makes eyes turn towards President General Pervez Musharraf who has himself declared "jehad" against religious extremists following the 7/7 bomb

blasts in London. He may appear to be going over the same exercise which he did after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington. But he must be a worried man. Religious fanaticism that he used one time as a tool to frighten the West to support him is a menace, nearly out of his control.

In a society where fundamentalism has seeped in due to official patronage and lack of democratic temperament, there are not many options left, more so when you need the extremists for political purposes. You cannot dismount the tiger you

dent's office with that of the Chief of the Army Staff.

The MMA government in the NWFP felt that it could get away with the Hasba law, a move towards enforcement of clerics' dictatorship in the state. Probably, it would have if bomb blasts had not taken place in London. Musharraf had to challenge the law's constitutional validity before the Supreme Court. Either he has forgotten how to ride two boats at the same time, encouraging religious elements as well as chastising them softly, or has succumbed to pressure by Washington

democracy should be deepened and strengthened in different parts of the world. But America defined democracy when it attacked Iraq without the Security Council's sanctions. People in horror have come to question the very ideology.

What happened first in Ayodhya and now in Srinagar are desperate attempts by religious fanatics to provoke India to stall its peace process with Pakistan. I wish the peace process had been mentioned in the joint statement issued by Bush and Manmohan Singh in Washington. At least, the latter who

technology and plants to produce energy. The joint session was the right place to say that India and Pakistan were making progress on the peace process. Islamabad would have been touched by Manmohan Singh's gesture.

However, Pakistan has been positive on America's leeway to India on the latest nuclear technology. Islamabad feels that it can probably get the same status one day. The snag, however, is that Dr A.Q. Khan, father of Pakistan's bomb, has been running a clandestine business to sell nuclear know-

Again, the discussion is which country got more, America or India. This is what was discussed when the world was divided into two blocs led by the US and the other by the Soviet Union. Nuclear disarmament should have been discussed, not nuclear armament.

My greater worry is that Washington may insist on New Delhi not to proceed further with the Iran gas pipeline. It may argue now that India can buy nuclear energy plants, why go for costly gas? (My impression is that nuclear power may be costlier if you take into account the money spent on maintenance, protection, etc.) The Bush administration's bias against Tehran is so banal and so blatant that it would like to sour amiable relations between India and Iran. Since new nuclear policy will come up for the Congressional hearing, the administration may egg on some members to argue that if New Delhi expected reciprocity from Washington, India should also pay attention to America's sensitivity on Iran.

The question is not gas, although it is important. The issue is that of age-old relations with Iran and the Muslim countries beyond. The pipeline, passing through Pakistan, may also span the distance between New Delhi and Islamabad. This is where India's strategic interests lay, unlike America that sees nothing beyond force. Washington has already got the maximum from India by offering nuclear advance technology and the wherewithal. It should not ask for more.

Kuldeep Nayar is an eminent Indian columnist.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

**The question is not gas, although it is important. The issue is that of age-old relations with Iran and the Muslim countries beyond. The pipeline, passing through Pakistan, may also span the distance between New Delhi and Islamabad. This is where India's strategic interests lay, unlike America that sees nothing beyond force. Washington has already got the maximum from India by offering nuclear advance technology and the wherewithal. It should not ask for more.**

are riding without harming yourself. Getting off without building a popular structure is equally hazardous. Musharraf knows that. The military regime at Islamabad is still dependent on the Muthahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), a group of religious parties. Musharraf now feels embarrassed over managing the election of many religious extremists to the National Assembly. But he realises that he cannot afford to go beyond rhetoric. They are the ones who have legitimised his stay in power and they are the ones who have blessed the merger of the Presi-

and London?

Unfortunately, what the fundamentalists are doing in Pakistan or their counterpart elsewhere is giving a bad name to Islam, a noble religion. Because of a few, millions of Muslims all over the world are experiencing mistrust and bias in their day-to-day life. But then if rulers use religion for their own purpose, extremists are bound to proliferate and act in the manner they do.

President George Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh are correct when they say that

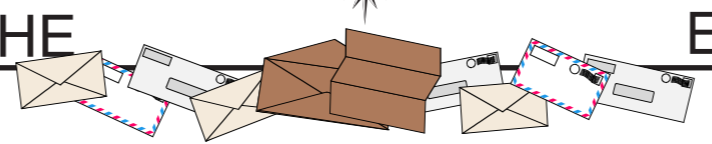
is meticulously following the process, should have mentioned it in his address to the US Congress. The success of the process is the best hope for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan, light at the end of the tunnel.

America honestly believes that the conciliation between Delhi and Islamabad is the key to the stability in the region, including West Asia. The Senate and the House of Representatives are the bodies to give their consent to the legislation on lifting the restriction on India's purchase of the latest nuclear

how to other countries. India's record on this point has been impeccable. Still the US administration will face a lot of difficulties in getting India the virtual membership of the nuclear club. Already a member of the US Congress has said that he will block the legislation to remove restrictions on India's access to nuclear fuel and technologies.

Reactions to the nuclear deal appear to have been conditioned by the cold war hangover. How does the handicap in piling up nuclear devices matter? One bomb is enough to wipe out northern India.

# 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.

## A disease of our own making

I want to tell you about two Bangladeshi families from my area, because these families have something very similar to the political situation in Bangladesh. It is about two young boys from these families (neither family are related to each other). Both of the boys are currently in prison.

Boy 'A' used to make all sorts of troubles, be abusive to locals and vandalise properties. So, sometimes people would go to his parents to bring the matter to their attention, or to seek compensations. Whenever parents face a situation like this, the usual practice in our Bangladeshi society is to apologise to the victim, promise them that you will look into the matter. And also thank them for coming to you instead of breaking your child's neck, and finally apologise to them once more. But this lucky boy had the best mother in the world. If anyone came

to her with complaints she will be very harsh on them, deny that her son is capable of ever doing such things, and a lot of people have said she would even testify that her son was in the house (one English gentleman also had a similar experience, he told me).

Boy 'B', also had a mother very similar, but he was even worse. He has been arrested many times for theft. If anyone came to his mother with complaints she will start arguing with him or her, deny everything and whenever police came she used to hide him and say she didn't see him. It is no wonder that every time this boy came out of police cell he immediately went back to his usual. Currently he is behind bars this for drug abuse, theft and a number of other crimes.

In Bangladesh when the BNP does something wrong, all its supporters look the other way and keep pointing to the misdeeds of the AL. And whenever the AL does something wrong, the exact happens. It is not just the masses; intellectuals,

journalists, lawyers, teachers, press; we all are doing it. We support organisations like the AL and the BNP with money, with muscle and we fight for them, kill for them and even die for them. And now we have made them so strong and arrogant that they no longer listen to us and instead they hold us hostage to their demands. They even try to allegedly kill us if we come up with different ideas. Do you still remember the attacks on B. Choudhury and Dr Kamal Hossain by some BNP cadres few months ago?

The question now is, how do we save our lives from these monsters we ourselves have created? Is there absolutely anything we can do to bring them to justice? Personally, I don't think we can. Unlike those two boys, these parties are too powerful for our "deliberately paralysed" law to touch them. It is too late for Bangladesh. And we have only ourselves to blame for this. While they are committing crimes against our country, destroying our educational institutes, killing our economy,

insulting our country in front of the whole world and creating panic and chaos in our society with their different political fronts, we continue to support and protect them. Why? Would anyone kindly shed some light on this?

Azad Miah  
Oldham, UK

## Bangla band music

I'm writing this with reference to the letter 'Distortion of Bangla' by Mahfuzul Haque published in DS several days ago.

In my opinion, 'Bangla Band Music' is a very vague term. In theory, when a group of musicians get together to create music, it is called band music. However, in Bangladesh, basically any kind of music other than Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrul Geeti, classical and traditional folk songs are considered as 'band music'. The 'old' groups in general fall under the 'pop' or 'soft rock' category. The new movement can be called heavy metal, alterna-

tive rock or simply rock and metal.

In his article, Mr. Haque has tried to ridicule this movement. It is obvious that he doesn't like this genre and that's perfectly acceptable. But the way he tried to bash this genre was very irrational on his part. This was irrelevant in the argument about 'distortion of Bangla'. This just goes to show how unfairly biased his opinion towards underground metal bands is. After all, we should not waste our time arguing over the definition of good music and bad music. Nevertheless, we should have respect for all kinds of music even if we personally despise some.

I agree with what Mr. Haque said about the language Bangla. "This language certainly possesses a standard form and has a dignified history."

I agree with it hundred percent. And that's why in my opinion, Bangla is offended when we claim that some underground bands are harming the language. No band has the capability to have a negative

influence on a language with such a strong background.

Mr. Haque has not mentioned any particular band but I can guess which bands he is indicating. I can name them straight away but as he has restrained himself from doing so, I will as well. However, I confidently claim that the number of the bands with a distinct accent is very small, almost negligible.

Mr. Haque himself said that 'Band Music' did not receive the warmest of welcomes as it appeared in the Bangla music scene. But that didn't stop it from getting popular and win the heart of the audience. It is a matter of time that the current underground metal movement will be widely accepted around the country, regardless of the accent it uses. A language can have several dialects and accents. Tomorrow someone may sing in perfect Sylheti in one of these underground metal bands. Would not it be unfair to accuse them for the distortion of Bangla? Yes it would be. If we are not ashamed of different dialects of

Bangla such as Sylheti or Noakhali, we should not have issues with a Bengali accent either. If we do, then it will be sheer hypocrisy on our part.

Asif Chowdhury  
Brussels

## Attitude towards RAB

Awami League is one of the largest and oldest political parties of the country. Awami League always voiced for the welfare of the people. When it was in the power, although it had good governance, but it was not successful in ensuring safety and security of the people. Law and order situation was very bad and innocent people were virtually under the captivity of the toll collectors, ransom seekers, snatchers and killers.

Almost everyday the newspapers were carrying headlines of some killings and other unlawful activities like they are doing now. Taking this weakness of the government, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), at the time of election declared that, if

it was voted it would present a crime-free society by eradicating all criminal activities. People trusted on BNP's this election manifesto and irrespective of political affinity voted for BNP. Many die-hard Awami Leaguers also voted for BNP allegedly. In fact, people's expectation from the government is very low. People only expect to live in a peaceful environment where the law and order will be very good to protect them from unlawful activities and they will be able to move freely, carry out their business safely.

But BNP was also not able to ensure this at the initial stage. This became possible only after deployment of the elite force like RAB. RAB curbed the criminals within a short period of time and earned the confidence of the people. Now the law and order situation has significantly improved.

Khalequzzaman  
Kabul, Afghanistan