

We demand adequate compensation

Returnees face uncertain future

THE task of rehabilitating the child camel jockeys who have returned from the UAE is proving to be a difficult one, as the parenthood claims in most cases are not genuine. The children who were trafficked out of the country to be employed as jockeys in a cruel sport have given raise to some tricky questions, both legal and moral.

The UAE government is sending the jockeys back to their countries of origin under an agreement with Unicef. The children whose future was effectively ruined by their stint as camel jockeys deserve adequate compensation -- a point that the repatriating government cannot overlook. The immorality of pushing children towards mortal dangers is not made up for by merely getting them back home. The authorities failed to show due concern for human lives and did nothing to stop the sport though there were protests from all quarters in the past.

Now that they see reason, all concern must see through the entire process of their rehabilitation, too. The children should be given vocational training and they need support until attaining adulthood. It is much more than a question of giving money to their parents.

Unicef played the key role in identifying and rescuing the trapped jockeys, but our government cannot evade the responsibility for failing to prevent them from being taken out of the country through devious means and used in a hazardous sport.

Since the lives of such a large number of children were at stake, we demand a thorough investigation into the matter. The questions that must be pursued are: how and under which circumstances these children were trafficked out of the country; who are the people responsible for their doom; and why the law enforcers failed to do anything about it? The illegal business had been going on for a pretty long time, but the government was unable to take any regulatory measure.

It was our duty to protect our children and not allow them to be used in a barbaric sport far away from their home.

Constitution crisis in Iraq

Can there be real progress until US withdraws?

THE Shi'ite and Kurdish leaders abandoning negotiations with Sunni representatives over the constitution that is being drafted for Iraq, the quest for consensus may have reached a dead-end and the country could be heading towards even greater division and factionalism.

This is not the end of the line as far as the constitution is concerned, and in fact it is unclear how things will pan out from here. There will be a referendum on the constitution on October 15, and the Sunnis can stall its passage if they are able to muster a 2/3 majority in the three provinces with a Sunni majority population.

The points of difference between the two sides -- federalism, de-baathification, women's rights, and the role of religion -- are real and need to be addressed. However, the issues over which the constitutional negotiations have apparently broken down only point to a small part of what the real problem is.

The real problem is the continuing presence of US troops in the country and tight US control over all aspects of the nation building efforts. The US has long argued that its presence is necessary to contain the violence and to maintain some semblance of law and order. The truth, however, is that it is the US presence that is fueling much of the violence.

Furthermore, the perceived US tilt towards the Shi'ites and Kurds is not helping in the constitutional negotiations. Neither is the perception that it is more concerned with its own interests and public opinion at home than with what would be best for the Iraqis.

These problems could be very much alleviated if the US were to announce plans for an orderly and dignified withdrawal of its troops. As of yet, there appear to be no signs of this on the horizon, in fact, if recent reports are to be credited, quite the opposite.

For something positive to come of this quagmire that Iraq has descended into, the Iraqis must be permitted to manage their own affairs. As long as the country remains under US military occupation and the US remains as the crucial peace-broker, things will continue to slide down-hill.

What is at stake

KAZI ANWARUL MASUD

ONE wonders whether the West is bent upon proving Samuel Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilisations. Sadism at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay notwithstanding, the strident measures on the cards of the House of Commons following the London bombings are so shockingly different from the long-held British tradition of societal tolerance that one wonders whether the leaders instead of charting a course of reason are not pandering to the momentary frenzy which afflicts any people faced with natural or man-made calamity.

That any government worth its salt should first and foremost ensure the safety of its citizens is axiomatic. A government which fails to do so should make way for others who can. The main question facing the international community is how do the authorities go about doing so.

In the present case, draconian laws are being enacted ostensibly for the "safety" of the people, but pregnant with the possibility of promoting what Samuel Huntington has predicted, that the principal conflict of global politics would occur between nations and groups of different civilisations. Huntington adds that the most important conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating these religions from one another.

His portrayal of interaction between Islam and the West as a clash of civilisations has been echoed by Princeton Professor Bernard Lewis who warned of a movement "no less than a clash of civilisations -- the perhaps irrational but historic reaction of an ancient rival against the Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present."

Lewis, credited as being the intellectual muscle (his advice is keenly sought by the likes of Dick Cheney and Richard Perle) to the Bush administration's putsch in the Middle East, sees the roots of Muslim rage being embedded in the feelings of the Muslims having been humbled by the Christians and the Jews resulting in "millennial rivalry"

between the two great religions of the world.

As opposed to Lewis' diatribe against Muslims, Stephen Zunes and Professor John Esposito identify the root causes of the deep malaise in the widespread feeling of failure and loss of self-esteem, failed political system and stagnant economies, US tolerance of "democratic exceptions" in many Islamic countries on grounds of national interest, and in the process perpetuating unfair distribution of wealth in those societies. In addition Zunes points out that from the time of the crusades through European colo-

ny western misadventure by unleashing Hamas and Hezbollah against the US, or by promoting instability in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia. Besides, any US strike on Iran would renew the anger in the Muslim world and could lead to a sharp and prolonged increase in oil price, triggering a global economic crisis.

It would more likely than not serve the West and the non-radicalised Muslims whose interests are contentious if the Anglo-American combine were to use soft power to face the menace of terrorism. Vigilance on countries incubating terrorism should not, however, be lowered given the protean nature of Islamic extremism.

At stake is not only the western way of life. At stake is the existence of universal values of democracy and freedom inscribed from the Magna Carta through the English Bill of Rights to the US Bill of Rights to the UN Declaration of Fundamental Human Rights and all other international covenants entered upon by the community of states ensuring peace and stability in the world.

prevented them from flinching in ordering the extinction of "disobedient" Third World leaders like Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Salvador Allende of Chile, Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh (as concluded by Lawrence Lifschultz), among many others.

These "imperial" leaders had much in common with the "new sovereignists" (term coined by Professor Peter Spiro) -- a group of highly credentialed academics who are dedicated to defending American institutions from alleged encroachment by international law. They believe that US sovereignty is absolute, illimitable, and non-dissipatory.

The new sovereignists find international law as too amorphous to justify US consent, intrusive into domestic affairs, unenforceable, and international law making progress unaccountable. They would, however, have no qualms in justifying the Bush doctrine of preemption and to insist that sovereign states to retain their sovereignty must remain accountable to the international community and demonstrate to their

jurists (such as Ann-Marie Slaughter of Princeton) argue that international intervention would be justified in countries ruled by brutal, aggressive, and irrational leaders who, having muzzled all domestic dissent, have embarked upon acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. In Slaughter's case, as distinct from Evans' recommendation, emphasis is more on security than on humanitarian considerations.

The activism by the international community in Sudan could be cited as a case in point where the international community have successfully brokered a peace between armed combatants who have been fighting a war for decades. There is indeed eminent logic proffered by LSE Professor David Held that our mutual interconnectedness and vulnerability have grown so rapidly that we no longer live "in a world of discreet national communities (but) in a world of overlapping communities of fate where trajectories of other countries are heavily enmeshed with each other."

Tony Blair had also recognised the mutual dependence of states in pursuit of shared values --

democracy and human rights being core goals -- while enunciating the Doctrine of International Community. Ironically he who had recognised the centrality of the UN in a world ruled by law and international cooperation and advocated humanitarian intervention because "acts of genocide can never be a purely internal affair" had thrown his advocacy of the UN as the preferred destination to the winds in his waging of an unjustified Iraq.

Intervention, humanitarian or otherwise, is fraught with danger. More so if it is undertaken to effect regime change. Increasing casual-

ties in Iraq several years after the ouster of Saddam Hussein, exit of Paul Bremer, election of an Iraqi government, and the framing of a constitution have not lulled the ferocity of resistance against US occupation. Iraq remains embedded in the quagmire of economic difficulties, political uncertainty, and absence of law and order.

Despite sharp controversy around the concept of regime change, Council of Foreign Relations President Richard Haas argues that regime change allows a state to solve its problems with another state by removing the offensive regime and replacing it with a less offensive one.

Citing examples of Tehran and Pyongyang, Haas argues that the Bush administration's preference to deal with these two members of the "axis of evil" as it did with Iraq, however tempting, is unlikely to work because of prohibitive cost in terms of loss of life of South Koreans and US personnel stationed there, and the inevitable tremendous physical destruction in South Korea.

The US is acutely aware that Iran has the ability to retaliate against

any western misadventure by unleashing Hamas and Hezbollah against the US, or by promoting instability in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia. Besides, any US strike on Iran would renew the anger in the Muslim world and could lead to a sharp and prolonged increase in oil price, triggering a global economic crisis.

It would more likely than not serve the West and the non-radicalised Muslims whose interests are contentious if the Anglo-American combine were to use soft power to face the menace of terrorism. Vigilance on countries incubating terrorism should not, however, be lowered given the protean nature of Islamic extremism.

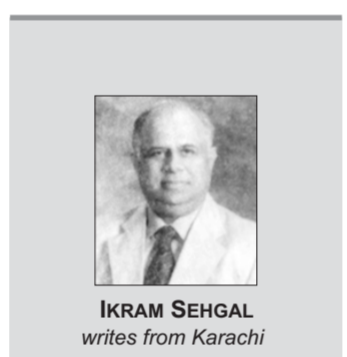
At stake is not only the western way of life. At stake is the existence of universal values of democracy and freedom inscribed from the Magna Carta through the English Bill of Rights to the US Bill of Rights to the UN Declaration of Fundamental Human Rights and all other international covenants entered upon by the community of states ensuring peace and stability in the world.

While these values have to be preserved and protected, the West has to guard "against the dangers of a foreign policy that combines unilateralism, arrogance, and parochialism" because, as Harvard Professor Joseph Nye tells us, throughout history, a coalition of countries have arisen to balance dominant powers.

Besides, the democratisation of violence, spelling the state loss of monopoly of instruments of violence, makes it imperative for the powerful to temper their power with reason, so that the culture of "shoot to kill" does not take the life of innocent Brazilians, and thereby fuel the anger of the dispossessed. One hopes that the cradle of democratic values would continue to follow their age old syncretic tradition as an antidote to ideologues of hatred.

Kazi Anwarul Masud is a former Secretary and Ambassador.

Money laundering in Pakistan



IKRAM SEHGAL
writes from Karachi

PAKISTAN is on top of many lists, each of these could put the country in a special category considered "rogue" among the comity of nations. While in the present world environment eradicating terrorism is of the utmost priority, there are inter-linked problem areas that need to be simultaneously tackled. Among the most important is to curb, if not altogether eliminate, money-laundering.

Today Pakistan is awash with liquidity, the very legitimate reasons for the large influx of foreign exchange (FE), being 9/11 and the events immediately thereafter. The crackdown on "Hundi" payments by western governments was emulated by Arab governments, all employers were instructed to make their employees send home remittances through official channels. Official inward remittances climbed three times to beyond \$4 billion annually.

As a "frontline ally" because of support in the "war against terrorism," US aid in the form of credit, outright grants, and rental payments for use of our air bases/transit facilities added to our FE reserves, added to by other countries of the developed world. Debt-forgiveness by some countries aside, many other countries re-scheduled debt to very favourable terms, virtually making it interest-free. Countries to whom our textiles (and other tradi-

tional exports) were targeted for export eased their quota restrictions and encouraged entrepreneurs to look at economic opportunities in Pakistan. And then came the most important ingredient, the non-resident Pakistani (NRP) suddenly re-discovered Pakistan.

Previous to 9/11, and for many months thereafter, the NRPs did not go beyond routine remittances to Pakistan, blue-collar workers started increasingly using the official route. Both Pakistani businessmen

a house on Margalla Road in Islamabad, valued at \$400,000-500,000, now costs \$2-2.5 million, if it is available. It has driven the middle class out of the property market, the poor do not even dream about it. The five times "great leap forward" has taken place in the span of 2 years, and while not the average jump countrywide (the average increase being 2.5 to 3 times), land speculation has positive promise, making it one of the most lucrative real-estate markets in the world. Is it

suspicious origins, remittances could be tainted by criminality, corruption and/or could be illegal transfer of wealth to evade taxation. There is a very fine line between the legal and the illegal, but there must be concern about funds going to Islamic extremists, close monitoring by SBP must ensure that "hot money" does not flow into (or through) our economy, after all a lot of funds from abroad flow into Islamic religious institutions as charity.

will acquire real estate, shares in manufacturing companies, stakes in financial institutions, etc. Illegal money will thus become an official part of the economy. The usual practice in an underdeveloped country like Bangladesh would be to transfer surplus cash to evade taxation. Corporate entities and individuals will acquire "loans" from financial institutions and transmit these through third, fourth, and even fifth countries to Pakistan. These lost funds from its economy would

sure. While researching this article we were politely told to "lay off" the individual concerned, one gives benefit of the doubt to the senior bureaucrat as he must not know the background. How long before such elements burrow themselves into the bureaucracy and start dictating official policy? This is classic "white-collar" criminality! It would be prudent for our intelligence agencies to seek out those in the country who suddenly seem to be so awash with liquidity that they are buying up everything in sight, real-estate to leasing companies to telecommunications, etc. For a person with an endless supply of money, the man being "researched" for this article had no tax records in the country he lived in for 15 years, maybe his records have turned "yellow."

Under Dr Ishrat Hussain, the SBP has gained a tremendous reputation, it has developed into one of the finest financial monitoring institutions in the world. What his predecessor Dr Yaqub started, the SBP governor has force-multiplied many times over. While institutionalising impartial checks and balances, he has set in such practices that even if his successor is a favourite in-law or remains drunk in office, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be difficult to circumvent in the foreseeable future. However the SBP governor cannot be everywhere, more importantly the SBP cannot have knowledge of everything. Therefore a coordinated effort is required, along with other governments and their intelligence agencies working together, to ensure that Pakistan does not become a haven for money-laundering.

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

AS I SEE IT

The usual practice in an underdeveloped country like Bangladesh would be to transfer surplus cash to evade taxation. Corporate entities and individuals will acquire "loans" from financial institutions and transmit these through third, fourth, and even fifth countries to Pakistan. These lost funds from its economy would be catastrophe for Bangladesh. As the recipient of funds, Pakistan may not look a "gift horse in the mouth" -- still such funds should be a matter of great concern.

and white-collar workers held their breath for nearly 2 years after 9/11 before their new-found insecurity in their adopted land hit them, and hard at that. With accusations of nuclear smuggling, terrorism, drug smuggling, money-laundering, human rights abuses, etc proliferating against Pakistan in the new world environment (every important visitor to Pakistan bombards President Musharraf with these questions).

Pakistanis abroad became increasingly apprehensive about physical and monetary security, they began to sending part of their hard-earned savings home to Pakistan. At first it was little more than a gentle stream, later it turned into a flood.

Whether official or unofficial, most of it unofficially, money did not stay in the banks. Some of it went into the stock markets, a very heavy amount started a real-estate boom,

any surprise that other than NRPs, many other "investors" want to ride the boom in Pakistan? While most of it is destined for (and is from) legitimate transactions, what guarantee that money tainted by criminality in one form or the other is not seeking a profitable haven? Genuine investment targeting profit is welcome, but one must take care that it is not from the coffers of drug smugglers, mafia funds, diverse underworld gangs, etc.

There are clear signs that Arab investment is seeking institutionalised profits in financial entities and real estate, this will enhance and sustain development, incentives must be given to divert the money flow into manufacturing also. However the large cash remittances must be monitored, countries like Singapore have for years required banks to report large inflows with

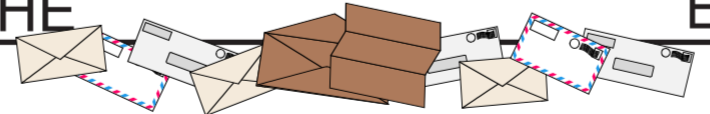
Also what about funds for permanent refugees? A fair percentage of Afghans may be genuine refugees, how and why are they owning businesses in Pakistan? Before the Afghans we got an influx of Iranian refugees when the Shah of Iran fell in 1979, they remain in business today as Pakistanis. To make matters more serious, what about their involvement in businesses and real estate, even in the country's capital? What precautions have we taken to stop illegal money from countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, etc being invested in Pakistan to take advantage of the recent bonanza?

Whether Bangladeshi or Afghan or Iranian or Sri Lankan, etc what is the modus operandi for money laundering? A trusted Pakistani or a Pakistani entity will be employed as a "front" -- with a treasure chest he

be catastrophe for Bangladesh. As the recipient of funds, Pakistan may not look a "gift horse in the mouth" -- still such funds should be a matter of great concern.

Both Pakistan and Bangladesh (and other countries) must work together to ensure that money-launderers are not allowed to run riot. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz should get into the act, as the former head of Citigroup's "Private Banking Unit" -- mandated by Citigroup Chairman John Reid to clean out the stables after a select US Senate Committee took Citigroup to task for money-laundering -- he knows a thing or two about money-laundering. For Pakistan, the danger is that unscrupulous elements will use money to build up "contacts" in official circles so as to not only keep the SBP out, but also intelligence agencies away from cyno-

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.

Mobile court

We appreciate your daily reporting on the front page about the mobile courts led by a magistrate inspecting various kinds of shops selling foods such as restaurants, sweet shops, fast food shops, milk powder traders and so on. This has been appreciated by the people of Bangladesh who would like to thank the government for the move against sale of inferior quality foods by these shops.

This should be continued by the government for a long time so that these dishonest sellers stop the bad practice that definitely is harmful to the health of common people.

In case of these law breaking people calling strike or closing their shops to protest the government action, then we suggest the government go for creating greater awareness among people through launching a campaign in the media.

The common people will come to know what they are eating and come out on the streets to support the government action.

Mizanur Rahman
Khatunganji, Chittagong

Separation of judiciary

In endorsement of the views expressed by Barrister Md. Abdul Halim in his learned article published in your daily dated Aug 13 on Separation of the Judiciary, I would like to add the following few lines.

A criminal case is set to motion either in the shape of complaint in the court of the magistrate having jurisdiction or in the police station in the shape of the first information report. Both these agencies/institutions are under direct control of the government through the Ministries of Establishment, Cabinet Affairs, Home Affairs and

Law and Parliamentary Affairs as already pointed out by Barrister Halim. After disposal of the cases in the magistrate's court, the aggrieved parties in most cases prefer appeal in the court of the Sessions Judge concerned. But this court is also under the control of the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, which is just another wing of the government. Hence, the appointment, posting, transfer, promotion, punishment etc. are all regulated by the Executive authorities. It is unfortunate that the government has not followed the directives of the Supreme Court for the 20th time since Nov 1999.

Politicisation of the government functionaries is talk of the country. But nothing has come out to mend the ills that are being reported daily in the media. It is believed by many that without an unholy alliance between the political authorities and executives the situation in the

country would not have come to such a pass. Checks and balances between the different organs of the government are the most important requirement for a parliamentary democracy to work. In our country there are hardly any means for expression of public opinion, other than the newspapers and the TV which are not heeded by the authorities.

The government should act before it's too late.
S.M. Matiur Rahman
Mirpur, Dhaka

Promotion of demonstrators

Lecturers of govt. and non-govt. colleges are entitled to promotion to next higher positions up to professorship; but there is no provision for promotion of Demonstrators, who remain stuck-up in the entry point till their retirement. It is not justified and

judicious. I, therefore, most fervently appeal to the Ministry of Education to kindly look into the matter and take necessary steps making provisions for promotion of Demonstrators with requisite service experience and academic qualifications. It is to mention here that the Demonstrators belong to the class of teachers; as such they are equally entitled to the benefit of promotion like all other teachers. They should not be deprived of the scope of promotion to next higher posts of Lecturers and Assst. Professors, if they deserve the same by virtue of their experience and academic qualification.

M. Sadeq
Tejgaon College, Dhaka

Child labour

How many times we have to count our children in the airport after experiencing a great ordeal in the

Gulf States like the United Arab Emirates? What about the international organisations that are very concerned about child labour in third world countries? What would be result if similar incidents took place in the western world? Is it not child labour or slavery? It is surprising that amusement like camel race is not considered as industry of child abuse. Let me ask the camel race organisers a plain question: why don't you use your own children as camel jockey? If your children are very dear to you why do you use other country's children for your amusement? Are not they very dear to their parents? We know, some boys are so young that they have to be tied onto the camel. Only owners get money or prizes for winning, the children get nothing. Most camel jockeys are under 10; they are seen as too heavy at 15. We do not know how many boys have died and how many were seriously injured.

Despite this harsh reality they are being used as a tourist attraction. So, what can our government do? Why don't we raise this issue in international forums? We have to make our voice heard against this heinous crime so that we can accuse those perpetrators and bring them to justice in the court like I.C.J.

Md. Harisur Rahman
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Teletalk- interconnectivity agreement

Teletalk, the state-run mobile company, recently signed interconnectivity agreement with four private operators-- GrameenPhone, Aktel, CityCell & Banglalink. It was said then that the 80,000 Teletalk subscribers would enjoy the connectivity facilities. But the private operators are violating

the agreement.

Finally, I would request the Teletalk authorities to take necessary steps to overcome the restrictions in connecting the subscribers with the mobile phones of other companies.

Ashrafuzzaman
Mirpur, Dhaka

University education

As a young learner, I have a strong desire to study at a university, which is world class, recognised and prestigious where only meritorious students will get chance.

But it seems my dream will not be fulfilled as most universities in Bangladesh do not fulfil the above criterion.

Shah Md Ziauddin
University of Dhaka