

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.

# SHANIR AKHRA Another Kansat!

Your editorial titled "Power minister explains" (DS: May 6) is not the real scenario. The power minister's explanation does not answer your basic question "What then has his ministry been doing for the last four and a half years?" raised therein. The answer is not acceptable to the public. The real reason for delay was perhaps that they were looking for most efficient availability of "percentage", not efficient availability of power. Now as their term is coming to an end, they have no option but to go for whatever "percentage" is available in "skid mounted" and other such dubious solutions.

The search for percentage perhaps started when the BNP-led govt cancelled the power proposal finalised by the preceding AL govt. There was no "percentage" allegedly available to them so it had to be cancelled despite donors' finance being approved! Was BNP annoyed that all percentage was gone between the AL and the "donors"? There is no logic otherwise to cancel a viable proposal! Would the "powerless" Power Minister give a logical response? Now lack of power has led to lack of water. Meanwhile the BNP parliament member is planning another "Kansat" in Demra! (DS: 6 May). Is the BNP so jaundiced that it is looking for "AL" everywhere? Unfortunately BNP Demra MP sees no shortage of power and water, as stated in your Staff Correspondent's item (May 6) on the matter. May be the hierarchy has gone deaf, dumb and blind! How many citizens have to loose their lives to realise a logical and

reasonable demand for power and water and abused like the mother who was mercilessly beaten escorting her school going son at Dhanmondi?

**A citizen**  
On e-mail

The violent insurrection at Shanir Akhra in demand of water and power supply by the locals has traumatised the peace-loving denizens of the city. Although, I usually do not oppose any passive demonstration, which justifiably aims to meet people's demands, I couldn't help regretting the devastation of properties and assaults on innocent people by the enraged mobs. I think it's quite easy to agitate the general public in a country like Bangladesh, where we gravely lack sufficient resources to meet all the earthly needs of the massive population. As a consequence, it's relatively easier in this country to become successful demagogues, who are adept in inciting the poverty-stricken multitudes to disrupt the law and order through riotous anarchy.

Political factions also play their crucial roles, which are constantly eager to inspire the public to interpret any crisis in a way that must benefit their respective political aspirations. For example, according to the opposition any trivial crisis is an evident sign of the complete failure of the government. On the other hand, the ruling party never fails to censure the opposition even when the origin of the dilemma has nothing to do with them. As a matter of fact, the social hindrances that our country has confronted in the recent time

definitively illustrated the very nature of our political groups. Now it's imperative that they must be prudent enough to envisage the 'democratic future' of the nation in the light of their self-destructive deficiencies.

**KH. Asef Safa Kabir**  
Lalmatia, Dhaka

7th April television and 8th April most newspaper headline was "Sanir Akhra turns into battlefield" for demand of water and electricity by local people. They fought pitch-battle with police and later with BNP supporters.

Public fury erupted only when the local lawmaker appeared at the spot and suddenly slapped an old man and ordered police to fire and baton charge. People turned more violent for his unscrupulous behaviour. Earlier people staged procession and laid siege to Dhaka-Chittagong highway. A lawmaker should not show such unruly attitude.

In the recent past we witnessed the Kansat tragedy. However, here the metropolitan fatherly tackled the situation apparently giving lip service to people. It would not have happened this way if Salauddin had tried to implement his pre-election pledge.

Lawmaker Salauddin known to his local people as pompous and inconsiderate, perhaps thought his constituency's people are docile but the reality was different. He gives short shrift even to union council chairman.

Lawmaker Salauddin owns a few filling and CNG station, set to start new TV channel, reportedly bought luxury apartment in USA, is banded

about in locality. BNP high command should contain his temper.

**An aggrieved citizen**  
Demra, Dhaka

We got another Kansat in Shonir Akhra on 5th May. The outrage of Kansat got burst in Shonir Akhra. The insufferable condition of people turned Shonir Akhra into a battlefield when they came up with their demand of water. Even they did not fear to stand against police and army. Their commotion was so furious that authority and local MP could not solace them. In Shonir Akhra we have seen how people are deprived of their fundamental rights. Not only Shonir Akhra, when the whole country is facing huge shortage of power supply, we may get a number of Shonir Akhra all around the country in future if it remains unmitigated. The condition of Shonir Akhra has given birth to the question, how much our government is willing to solve such kind of problems?

Virtually, when the common people are confronting of such problems there may break out such kind of rebellion. Government's inability, mismanagement, and corruption have given birth to such kind of miserable situation. On the otherhand, we have not seen government's will to solve such miserable conditions of common folk. If they did so, we would not have faced such kind of abominable situation repeatedly. To get ride of these problems government have to take some immediate actions like:

\* establish more water pumps,



- \* keep WASA and DESA free from mismanagement,
- \* activate Water Ministry appropriately,
- \* improve the condition of rivers,
- \* control extravagant use (wastage) of water,
- \* ensure power supply properly to water pumps.

**Abu Bakar**  
Rupnagar R/A, Mirpur, Dhaka

How much ferocious and rebellious can be the general populace, being deprived of their rights and demands, the 'battle field' at Shonir Akhra in Demra is real evidence. We know the whole city is experiencing the massive shortage of power supply. The life of citizens is but confronting the dreadful threat of becoming standstill because every aspect of their daily activities

is prohibited due to shortage of power and water. To get relief from such insufferable situation the general people of Shonir Akhra raised their voice against the authority like the people of Kansat. Their demands are so much mighty and genuine that the police and army men could not console them, even they did not hesitate to attack their local leader. However, Shonir Akhra is one of the parts of our capital city, if the government does not try to overcome this shortage very soon then there and also elsewhere such situation will emerge again and again.

I think, the government has to take some effectual and long-term policy to ensure proper supply of power and water. We should have highest allocation to power sector.

We need some efficient agreements with India for proper distribution of water in dry season.

We have to establish more water treatment plants to increase the potable water supply.

**Mehedi**  
BUBT, Mirpur, Dhaka

Power shortage has become acute in recent time and we have seen two unfortunate incidents at Kansat and Sonir Akhra. But it seems that nobody has any solution to this power problem. I have a humble suggestion regarding this. I have heard that many countries like Singapore, UAE, and Pakistan are applying daylight saving method; in the system people advance their clocks by one hour so that they can use that extra day-

light hour to their advantage and save valuable electricity. If we can implement this system in Bangladesh I am sure we can save a good amount of electricity because then people will start their day an hour earlier and finish their work one hour earlier. I think we should seriously ponder on this suggestion.

**Mohammed Sohel Hara**  
Tophkana Road, Dhaka

# Tagore's birth anniversary

Rabindranath Tagore's 145th birth anniversary was observed on Bengali 25th Boishakh May 8 in English calendar -- in the most befitting manner across the country. Tagore -- poet, philosopher, musician, writer, educator, Nobel laureate ...was the idol before the Bengali nation.

It was the personality of Tagore's stature that the Bengali people shaped their mental frame through. The unbelievable vitality of a human psyche that he possessed and let it work on the varied canvasses ultimately unveiled the eternal human mysteries.

His amazing creative-faculty swept through the multifaceted fields of novel, poetry, short story, music, essays, and state affairs.

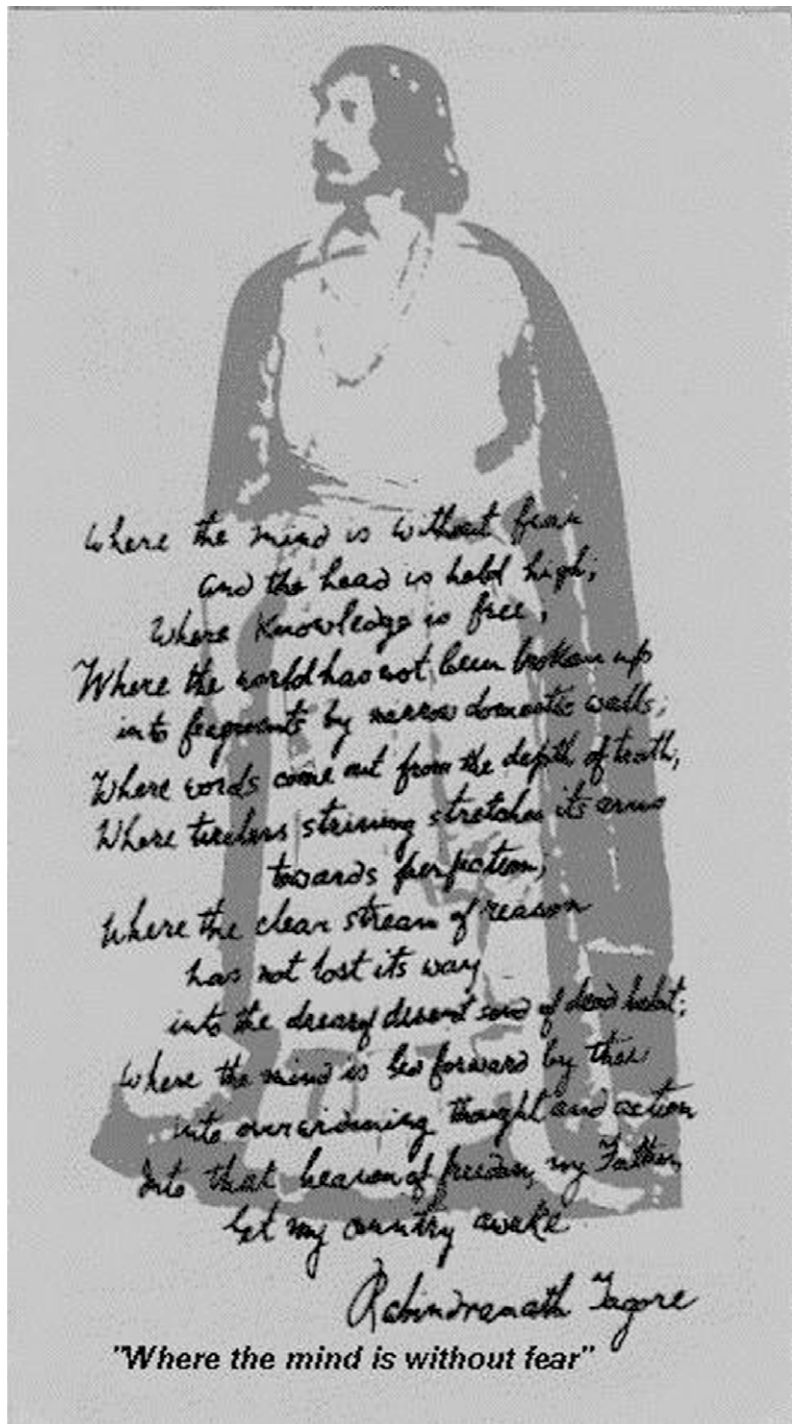
His short stories are so vibrant and unique that they'll survive through the universal human psyche. His songs will be pouring forth the soothing spirit to the tired and confused minds as long as a single mind keeps on listening to it.

Today, recalling him is an act that will lay bare the path to conforming to the universal values attached to mankind. Today, we reaffirm our spirit of mind through recalling the poet we reaffirm our secular spirit and state of mind through recalling his works and spirit. We reassess and refresh our stand on the values of a harmonious co-existence, friendship and humanity. We sing of our Bengali-self through remembering Tagore.

**Rafiqul Islam Rime**  
Agrabad, Chittagong

Although Tagore wrote mostly in Bangla, his works, it is said, have an appeal, which strikes a chord in the minds of the speakers of other languages. In other words, he does belong not only to Bangla literature but also to world literature. His vision is inclusive in the sense that it embraces both eastern and western values. He was an exponent of "Bengal Renaissance", elitist though it was, confined within the circle of those literate city-dwellers of Calcutta. The fact remains that he gave a huge boost to Bangla language and literature. However, now it is imperative that we should reassess his works from the perspectives of the recent linguistic and literary theories. Again, we should also think about those illiterate masses that lack the basic education to appreciate the literary outpourings of Tagore. We will do a great disservice to his legacy if we fail to address these issues.

**Zabed Wali**  
On e-mail



## Sugar price: a few suggestions

Much is being written about the high price of sugar in the retail market. It is now hovering between Tk.62 and 65 per Kg. The reason behind the rise is the high price of imported refined sugar, which is now around US\$ 480/500 (FOB) per metric ton. However, importers, stockiest and wholesalers, the usual line in the sugar retail sale have taken advantage of this to raise the prices of their stock in hand. I do not know how many days stock was in this selling chain, which was priced at around Tk. 45 per kg retail, ensuring reasonable return on the investment for each of the participants in the chain

These people have reacted very quickly to international posted price (available on internet). Had the price fallen, their reaction would have been slow. In that case they would have inflated their stock figures and stated that they could not lower prices of goods in stock, imported at higher price! Today they are making a windfall, because the higher priced sugar needs at least six to eight weeks, if not more, from opening letter of credit to reaching Bangladesh port and another two weeks before it reaches the retailer. Meanwhile the higher retail price is a windfall!

At US\$ 500 per metric ton and assuming US\$=Tk. 68 (open market) the landed cost at our port (C&F) comes to US 55 cents per kg. Including cost of handling, transport and usual product loss in handling, storage and transport and adding a modest ten percent margin at each stage the price at the retail shop works out at around Tk. 58 per kg. Probably the profit margin is around 20 percent at each level when the retail price per kg comes to around Tk. 65.

To create a buffer stock and prevent large price fluctuations, and stabilising the sugar market the government should as a matter of policy speedily encourage local sugar refining form raw sugar, as Bangladesh needs to import at least around

60 to 65% of its sugar needs. By refining sugar locally and giving them the needed support to import raw sugar at lower price, the import duty should be drastically lowered if not eliminated to encourage local sugar refining. Here, the long market chain will be eliminated, as sugar refineries will directly import sugar and the refined sugar will go directly to the wholesalers and / or retailers. FOB price advantage of over US\$ 40 per ton for raw sugar should encourage local sugar refining industry, create new economic activity, save foreign exchange, boost local value addition and contain the retail price of sugar. The government can easily monitor sugar-refining costs and ensure a proper wholesale and retail refined sugar price. This is more pragmatic and permanent solution, rather than what we are doing now.

**Engr. S. A. Mansoor**

Gulshan, Dhaka

## Indo-Bangla border issues

India has emerged as a major power in respect of both economy and defence. As a big power, India always wants to prove its superiority over the neighbouring countries. And Bangladesh is the main victim of it. Bangladesh is surrounded by India; as a result, we are subjected to tensions as a result of BSF action in our border area. It seems that, they do not care about the sovereignty of Bangladesh. Shootings, pushing, fencing, by BSF have become a regular feature on the border. Even after the official visit of our prime minister to India, problems remain as before. It shows that India does not take Bangladesh seriously.

**Kazi Abubakar Siddique**  
Lalmatia, Dhaka

## Lessons from the CEC

We all know how our Chief Election Commissioner had condemned the journalists for projecting the 'negative image' of the country. And what an occasion he had chosen! While

addressing some foreign dignitaries at a function organised by the American Chambers of Commerce in Bangladesh, he took a snipe at the journalists. His personal aversion to journalists, who had depicted his act of illness as a sham to avoid meeting the members of European Union, is well known. His vindictive act surely did not create a good impression. He clearly made a point that there was nothing wrong in lawlessness, terrorism, corruption, socio-economic problems engulfing our life, but as soon as these get published in the media that's awful; and the journalists are doing some criminal act bringing up such matters in front of the nation. The CEC will have us believe that no terrorists, militants, no corrupt politicians or businessman are our problems, only journalists are the culprits!

Mr. Justice M. A. Aziz, considering the importance of your constitutional position as CEC please be assured that your comments, and which get exposure (through the journalists you condemn), reflect the clarity of your position! We only hope that your personal feelings should not overshadow the integrity that a man in your position MUST not only have but also demonstrate.

**S. Reza Shosme**  
Dhaka University

## Ex-students problems

We are ex-students of Agricultural University, Mymensingh, doing our higher education in Australia. According to Australian Immigration Law if we have done our bachelor in Bangla, as an Australian 'communal' language we will get bonus points for applying as an immigrant in Australia. Regrettably, though our University's medium of studies was in Bangla (especially in Agriculture faculty-including examinations), our University refuses to certify to the effect that our medium of studies was in Bangla.

Therefore we need your help

by writing about us (hundreds of students) whose fate is totally dependent on the administration of the Agricultural University, Mymensingh.

**Touhidur Rahman**

(On behalf of the students studying in Australia)  
Victoria, Australia

## Unhealthy games

Everyday the nation is witnessing unhealthy games of the Bangladeshi politicians, which are being played with only one aim in mind - to eliminate the rivals. The recent incident of a mysterious fire at the Baridhara residence of a former president and Bikalpadhara chief, that damaged furniture and valuables of the house worth Taka 4,00,000, is an instant and burning proof where political grudge have taken this country. Some might raise the question as to how can one be so sure that the fire did not breakout accidentally? According his son, who is also the elected MP from Bikalpadhara, 'The way most of the windows of our house were found broken and fire broke out from the side of the window it is clear that some one first broke the glasses of the windows and then poured gun powder or something like that inside the room through the windows and finally set the fire coolly with a clear motive of killing us all.'

This grievous and horrifying incident has simply made us all dumbfounded. We simply don't know who did it but it is crystal clear that this is nothing but the sheer outcome of dangerous political rivalry. We urge the government to probe the whole incident immediately and bring the culprits to book at once us. There is no scope of ignoring such a serious thing that might give birth to many such stories.

**Asif, On e-mail**