The Daily Star

Dhaka, Tuesday, May 11, 1993

JS off to a Rocky Start

For the Jatiya Sangsad, it was far from an ideal start to its current session. For those who counted on the press reports that were pouring in for a few days prior to the session on an understanding between the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the largest opposition party Awami League (AL) alongwith its alliance partners, this was a huge disappointment and an unnerving rude shock. What has happened at Bangla Motor involving the sit-in demonstration of the Nirmul Samannaya Committee will perhaps remain shrouded in the mist so long as the ruling party and the opposition continue to contradict each other's claims only with the motive of reaping political dividends from the muddle. But following this incident on the street, what was enacted in the House — and that too on the first day of a session - should be considered most unfortunate.

The promise of a fruitful long session of deliberations has received a serious jolt - if not brought to a premature conclusion - by this unhealthy development. It is no longer important whether the police excesses and brutalities were let loose to the extent the opposition has complained about, for the police already have had to its credit far worse records in the meantime. What is really important is the fact that nobody seems to have learnt any lesson from the past mistakes. The ruling party had the responsibility to set the tone of the sombre occasion by demonstrating restraint, a task they have not carried out in any satisfactory manner. The opposition, in their over anxious and impetuous drive for political gains, also seems to have blown up the inci-

dent out of all proportion.

Under the circumstances, it was only natural that the two shall never meet. And that exactly is the worst fear we have time and again expressed through this column. When in power, a party is bound to be constricted by compelling circumstances and obligations and, therefore, at times, has to go back on its promises. This, however, does not mean that it should drift dangerously away from the fundamental principles and spirits. Unless the position of the present government on this contentious issue changes, it will indeed be difficult to conduct the JS business in a reasonably smooth way. The Indemnity Repeal Bill and the trial of Golam Azam are issues that can be settled if both the ruling party and the opposition come to a consensus on these matters. Deferment of the decision on the former for the umpteenth time, leaving the Parliamentary Committee in the cold, will give people enough cause for misgivings and in the process it will create further confusion. It is time the government came out clean on both the issues.

The needless controversies must come to a rest and the sooner it happens the better. The priority areas then will inexorably emerge before them to demand their full concentration. Economy will certainly top the order of the list but a very close second will be the law and order situation of the country. If these figure prominently, the relations between them and the pressing problems of population boom and the mess in the education sector will be easier to handle. The members of parliament (MPs) may argue over the finer points of JS proceedings and rules, but for the common people what matters most is their MPs' performance that gets translated into practical measures in changing their lot.

So Much Water, So Early!

The ferocity of both the shower- 90 mm or 3.5 inches in a couple of hours — and the storm hitting velocities of around 154 km/hour on early Sunday night was an unusual fare. Living with world's heaviest downpours and fiercest cyclones for thousands of years, we have hardly seen both happening at a time.

On Friday, only a day apart that is, Dhaka was swamped in a snap downpour spell- and there was not much of a storm. Throughout the country, however, that rainy spell came as stormy visitation killing at least 24 and injuring 300.

If those were disquieting information, one should better keep one's worries for a more fearsome development- flood waters are already licking vast tracts of land. And Baishakh is yet with us and this is no season for the waters to come down from the catchment areas beyond our eastern borders.

First it was Habiganj and Moulvibazar to be hit with the rivers Khowai, Sonai and Sutang in spate and 14 unions of Kulaura, Rajanagar and Kamalgani losing standing crops extensively- all due to continuous downpour and downrush of rainwater from the hills of Tripura. Then it was the turn of Brahmanbaria, Comilla and Feni. It is flood all over these places and so early.

What can we do, indeed what's in our power to do, to diminish the ravages the waters wreak on our precious crops and our scanty housing and suffering that is caused to our people most of whom are in no position to take another spell of hard time? We can only repeat the Boy Scouts motto— Be Prepared— and pray to government

and society that this be done in all earnest. Too little water and resulting siltation are the root cause of an excess of water enveloping evernew areas of our small landmass. We must have not only more water but water flowing at velocities that can flush the silt out to sea. Water we can harness by going for catching and keeping the excessive rainwater in reservoirs called pukurs and dighies. Where can we get the all important rush of water if it doesn't come down our great rivers? As the water debate impasse continues, so continues the dying process of these rivers at their mouth. And this is, sure enough, not going to be helpful to our big neighbour either—in the end.

One very pertinent thing is in our power to do. We must not ever go for blocking our rivers' run to sea, in the name of development or whatever. Ever since the partition of the subcontinent we have crazily gone forward to hinder the rivers' rush to the sea. Let's be through with that suicidal mixture of ignorance and foolishness.

The Bengalees were once a seafaring people. Their vessels carried wonderful argosy to distant shores of the old world. By a tragic twist of history they forgot their home-sea and tried unsuccessfully to become a wholly land-people. The unfortunate mistake continues in our overly interest in roads rather than in waterways. We have in the past decades contributed capitally to the aridisation of one of the best watered paradises on earth. It is time we understood and gave up our bad hell-bent ways.

Why the Atomic Race Reeks of Racism

by Daya Kishan Thussu WO events in March brought the issue of

The threat of sanctions against North Korea for pulling out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has brought the issue of nuclear proliferation to the fore once again. The world's atomic club wants to maintain its exclusive status, arguing new members are not "responsible" enough to have nuclear technology. The attitude of the nuclear powers towards developing countries smacks of a holier-than-thou attitude, bordering on racism.

vote, while China, the only Third World nuclear power. voted against the resolution to invite the Security Council to

nuclear proliferation in

the developing world onto the

first country to announce that

it is withdrawing from the nu-

clear Non-Proliferation Treaty

(NPT) on the grounds that it

admitted that it had developed

six Hiroshima-type bombs,

which it had now destroyed.

This is the first time that a nu-

clear power has decided to

part with its nuclear armoury

without attempting to negoti-

powers to these two develop-

ments once again underlines

the double standards in the

While North Korea was is-

sued with threats for daring to

defend its nuclear programme,

Pretoria was commended for

coming clean on its nuclear

to withdraw from the NPT,

which it joined in 1985, fol-

lows on from refusal to let the

Vienna-based International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

visit the country's sole nuclear

reactor at Yongbyon, north of

denied it is pursuing any nu-

clear weapons programme and

insisted that the military facil-

ity was non-nuclear and hence

not open for international in-

the withdrawal also cited the

joint United States-South

Korean army manoeuvre, Team

Spirit, as "threatening our

country's national sovereignty

and security... a nuclear exer-

on North Korea to reconsider

its decision to pull out of the

154-member agreement, es-

pecially from the US. The IAEA

referred Pyongyang's decision

not to allow international in-

spection of its nuclear facilities

to the United Nations Security

Pakistan, both with nuclear

ambitions, abstained from the

THE primary responsibility

of the Security Council of the

United Nations, which con-

sists of fifteen members, in-

cluding five permanent mem-

bers, of the world body, is to

maintain international peace

and security. The specific

powers granted to Security

Council for the discharge of

duties are dealt in Articles 33-

54. Of these, Article 43 merits

attention. According to this,

all members of the UN, in or-

der to contribute to the

maintenance of international

peace and security, undertake

to make available to the

Security Council, on its call

and in accordance with a spe-

cial agreement or agreements,

armed forces etc etc. As a re-

sult of the ambiguity of the ar-

ticle it was not possible to ne-

gotiate the agreements with

big or small powers to dis-

patch troops under UN com-

mand for containing threats

and punishing breaches of

peace and acts of aggression in

the past barring the Gulf War

between Iraq and Kuwait in

1990 when the United States,

the Great Britain and France

decided to drive out Iraq from

Kuwaiti territory apparently to

safeguard the interests of the

big powers in the region. At

the behest of the US, the

Security Council adopted reso-

lution No 678 by a 12-2 vote,

with one abstention, authoris-

It may not be out of place to

mention that the world body

was practically used by the

United States to resist the

Korean aggression in 1950. It

was possible because of fortu-

itous absence of the Soviet

Union from the Security

been experiencing series of

setbacks which have consider-

ably reduced its effectiveness.

By far the most serious of

these has been the failure to

implement peace keeping

resolution No 242 of

November 1967 following six-

day war between Israel and

Arab states. This resolution

Since 1964 the UN has

ing use of force.

Council in 1950.

Significantly, India and

Pressure has been mounting

cise against our republic."

The statement announcing

North Korea has repeatedly

The North Korean decision

The attitude of the nuclear

ate any advantages in return.

And at last South Africa

North Korea became the

top of global agenda.

was discriminatory.

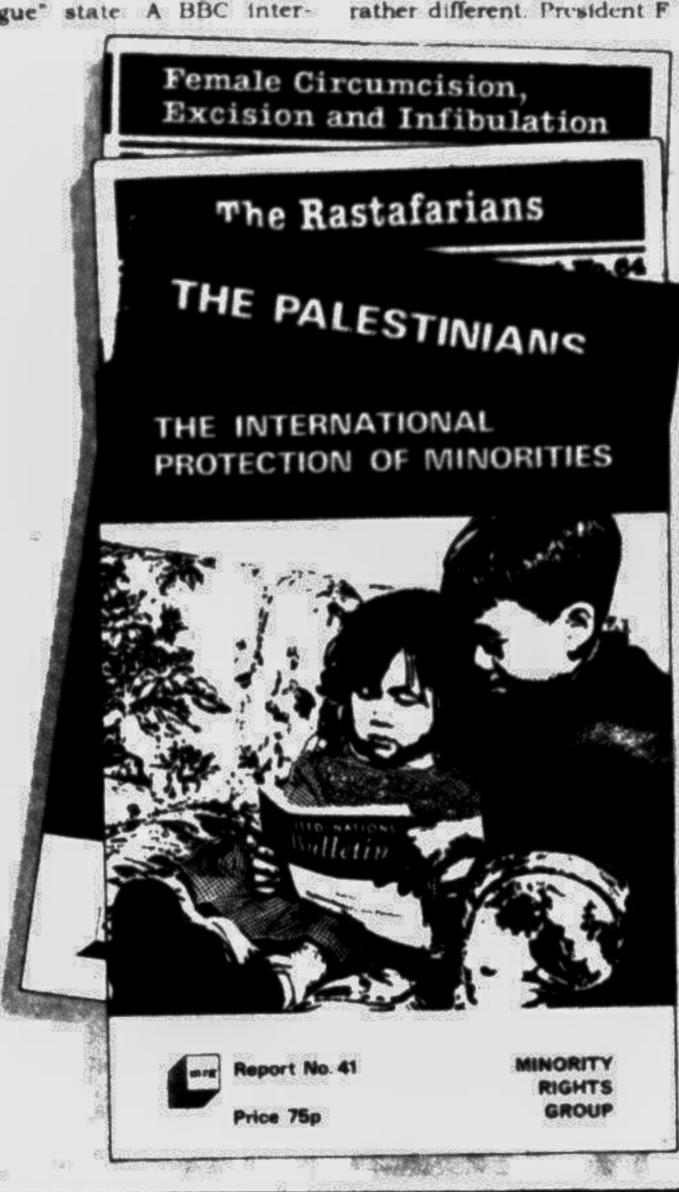
nuclear debate.

capacity.

Pyongyang

Talk of sanctions has been enthusiastically followed up by the Western media, calling North Korea a "renegade" and "rogue" state A BBC interviewer was not amused to hear North Korea's ambassador to the UN retort that the US should instead face sanctions because it still had more than 1,000 nuclear warheads in South Korea.

The coverage of the South African decision has been rather different. President F W



de Klerk's revelation that the atomic weapons programme began in 1974 under then prime minister John Vorster, received a favourable response in the Western press. De Klerk disclosed on March 25 that the aim of the nuclear programme had been to deter the Soviet 'expansionist threat in southern Africa," which had now been removed.

Pretoria's nuclear policy has changed with moves towards real democracy in South Africa. In 1991 it finally signed the

The timing of this announcement is not without significance, given that in a year's time the power is expected to begin to change hands from the white minority to black majority rule. Many would see it as an effort to deny a black power a nuclear capability.

The international commu nity - read the US - would have found it difficult to accept a black African country with such a dangerous capacity Washington was particularly concerned that the African National Congress, which might come to power under majority rule, could be welldisposed towards US adver-, res such as Libva.

is widely believed that Israel collaborated in Pretoria's nuclear programme. The American journalist Seymour Hersh, in his 1991 book, The Sampson Option, discussed nuclear cooperation between Pretoria and Tel Aviv.

The treatment of these is sues, especially in the US, sug gests that non-white people are less responsible and cannot be trusted with nuclear weapons. Critics in the Third World say they do not want to be lectured on nuclear responsibilities by the only

power that has actually used its nuclear weapons in a conflict - against Japan in 1945.

Analysis of the history of World War Two shows that dropping the atomic bomb, at a time when littler had fallen and Japan was on the verge of defeat, was a political rather than a military act. The weapon dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, named Little Boy, incinerated all things in its path, hitting a 500-metre radius area.

Another bomb, Fat Man, was dropped three days later on Nagasaki. The two cities were annihilated in an instant, killing an estimated 150,000 people. Many nuclear victims are still suffering from radiation-related illness.

After that the superpowers used the nuclear issue to dominate the world. The US-led nuclear race bankrupted the Soviet Union, leading to its break-up. The nuclear capability was also used to threaten adversaries and favour allies.

Eisenhower brandished the bomb over Korea, Kennedy went to the brink about Cuba, and Nixon tried nuclear blackmail against Vietnam. More recently, the Pentagon experimented with fuel-airexplosives, the so-called "poor man's atom bomb" during the 1991 Gulf War.

When China joined the nu clear club in 1964, the nuclear powers - US, USSR, Britain and France - were shocked and outraged. Mao Zedong said the superpowers were conducting "nuclear blackmail," and their non-proliferation treaty was "merely an attempt to safeguard their monopoly of terror.

Since it came into existence in 1968, the NPT has been violated by the nuclear powers. Its critics charge that the big powers have not

stopped nuclear testing. banned under the NPT. In ad dition, the treaty ensures that the nuclear facilities of a member country will not be attacked. But nuclear facilities in Iraq, a signatory of the NPT, were bombed by Israel in 1981 and again during the Gulf War by the US.

The West's double standards on nuclear issues are easy to detect. While Israel's nuclear programme does not merit much discussion in the Western media, any Arab or Islamic country with nuclear ambition is seen as dangerous and as presenting a threat to

world peace. Israel's ostensible reason for maintaining a nuclear capability is to deter hostile Arab neighbours. But as the Gulf War showed, its inventory of more than 100 nuclear warheads did not deter Iraq from firing Scud missiles into Israeli territory.

Critics also point out that while India's nuclear programme is not subjected to the same strict scrutiny, Pakistan's atomic activities are seen as contributing to a so-called "Islamic bomb," which, the theory goes, could end up in the hands of anti-Western countries. The US has cut its aid to Islamabad and threatened to declare it a terrorist state unless it halts its nuclear programme.

India, which exploded what it disingenuously termed a peaceful nuclear device in 1974, insists that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only. But critics say it is immoral for a poor country to spend billions on nuclear research when the majority of its population continues to live in appalling poverty. Moreover, they point out that, despite its high cost, nuclear energy accounts for merely two per cent

of the country's energy needs. To many observers in the developing world, the Western reaction to North Korea's an nouncement smacks at the least of hypocrisy, at the worst as a form of racism. - CEMINI

DAYA KISHAN THUSSU IS Associate Editor of Gemini News Service.

The Use and Misuse of the World Body

by Mohammad Amjad Hossain

plied on Scrb aggressors.

I feel tempted to quote what the former Prime Minister of Great Britain, Margaret Thatcher has said. She said that "the failure of the European Community, NATO or the UN to halt human suffering in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is a slur on civilisation". I also take the liberty to reproduce the letter written by Rafiq A. Tschannen from Bangkok which appeared in the Newsweek of 15th March 1993: "Should one fear Islam? No, what one should fear is injustice. Peace in the world can only be achieved with justice. Peace will never be achieved if there is one standard for Iraq and another for Serbs; one standard for the Palestinians and another for Israelis; one standard for Christian nations and another for Muslim nations; one standard for the remaining superpower and another standard for the rest of the world." This is exactly what is happening in the Security Council. As we have seen developments around the world: The world body is brought into the picture when practically the situation has reached a point of no return. The Iran-Iraq war in 1980, the Falkland crisis between Argentina and Britain in 1982 and conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 are such

cases in point. From all relevant evidences it is clear that members, particularly five permanent members, who are privileged to cast veto power, are responsible for failure of the world body to contain threat to peace. According to some articles of the Security Council, any action or any recommendation would not be implemented unless a qualified majority of the membership of the Security Council, particularly five permanent members, have agreed to do so. The

previous timing of the movie

Jamuna levy refund

silent about the refund of

Sir, Why the authorities are

mandate from the General Assembly or the Security Council cannot act but the Secretary General, using Article 99 of the charter, can

The Star has lately pub-

lished some powerful com-

nation, which are relevant and

topical. These signals were

for two reasons: they are the

most influential at the national

level; and for their failure to

come up to the expectations of

the influential group of citizens

whose views count. The two

angles exposed in these com-

mentaries were the regenera-

tive and degenerative cycles of

history, and the growing insu-

lation of the political machines

(machines have no feeling)

from the pulse of the nation.

The possible dying out of the

Awami League has now become

an academic issue for research.

politicians, who were denied a

playing field for decades, are

now engaged in activities

dictable, namely, insulating

themselves from public opin-

ion, with policies and styles

which do not help towards

combined national effort. In

fact, the extreme view is that

their loud contributions are

more negative than positive.

With their influence and sta-

tus, they hold sway over the

average voters, the vast major-

ity of whom are illiterate, and

at the same time too poor to

control the politicians or have

situation, but deadly for the

country. While miniature heav-

ens are being created, the po-

litical image can go to hell.

The deterrent used, and imi-

tated lower down, is 'greater

physical disruptive move-

ments' to put a spanner in the

wheel. The ingrained priorities

will take a long time to change:

first the party, then the indi-

vidual, and lastly, the country

(if at all, regardless of the lip

in power, and the other in op-

position, are playing directly

opposite games: one is making

issues of the non-issues, while

the other is treating issues as

non-issues, and trying to

sweep the same under the

carpet, especially the issues

which are too hot to handle

politically and need hard, un-

pleasant and decisive actions.

pending is not facing the issue.

We hear that a large number of

national policies are still being

drafted after a generous period

Keeping an urgent issue

The two main parties, one

service).

It is an ideal and effortless

any sway over them.

which are obvious and pre-

The hibernating national

OPINION

Security Council, any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. The Secretary General should bring such matter to the Security Council to take preemptive action before the

situation reaches a point of no return.

The world body was set up to maintain peace and security. The people will gradually loose confidence in the world body if it failed as an instrument of last resort in a crisis.

bring to the attention of the

State of the Nation

A Mawaz

of two years. The question is, mentaries on the state of the how many of the guidelines have been issued? A slow working government sap the mainly directed towards the political leaders of the country, confidence of the people.

something without presenting clear blueprint is neither here nor there. Support what and how (?) (for example, anticampus violence movement. anti-toll collection, deterrent regulations against smuggling, mugging, killer driving, misuse of power and influence by party workers, solving Dhaka's rickshaw problem, the session jams in the colleges and the universities, widespread corrupt practices in all sectors, etc., etc.).

no better. Public speeches are limited in band-width and

For many, a revolution is a direction, not a destination. As 'Urging' the people to do

The party in power is faring

level. The process is repetitive, as the messages to the illiterate masses have to be communicated through the ears. This is one-way communication. On the other hand, the interviews are obviously at higher levels, with ample band-width. Since interviews are interactive, these are more relevant and topical; and the process is a two-way communication, a prerequisite in a democratic atmosphere. The intelligentsia is starved of news of face-to-face conversations, in contrast to the thun dering speeches - swarming like the mosquitoes. This void has to be filled in, to close the communication gap at the higher levels. In fact, the gap appears to be increasing day by day, in spite of claims of transparent administration. Many vital questions are not answered or clarified at the right or highest level, causing doubts and misgivings. The system of meeting the press at regular or irregular intervals is frowned upon or discouraged, for reasons inexplicable. In this age of information, when we are bombarded by news. views and information from all sides, taciturnity seems out of

The politicians see themselves, not as navigating the boat of society, but as surviving the storms that arise from time to time; according to Edward de Bono, the discoverer of lateral thinking. He has many other pointers which seem to apply in the developing countries. Some examples

for the negative mind, Bono says that negativity is the sole activity open to a mediocre mind. A mind that is itself un able to create, can only display its talents through criticism of others. Criticizing something makes us feel superior. Having something to oppose gives direction and meaning to life and to action and to thinking. Revolutions, to succeed, need hatred as focus, but hatred cannot develop a nation. Criticism alone is a poor

route to design improvement - yet it is one of the tools we habitually use. Too much brilliant effort is wasted on negativity - a mind set in a negalive direction performs brilliantly. Set positively, the mind can perform as brilliantly. That good logic makes for good thinking is complete nonsense, according to Bono, because it is not the only tool available. Coming to administration,

since car mechanics cannot be car designers, similarly the administrators have to be system architects, besides supervising the maintenance work of the nation. Bono believes that it is already possible to design "people-proof" jobs that will not depend on the ability of the incumbent holding the job. Looks like a perfect solution in inefficient corruptionprone developing societies, where temptation prevails over the sense of duty.

Bono has some more tips for the politicians: a politician may have great skill for getting elected and fighting elections, but no skill for government. In most countries today the most able people probably do not go into politics because although they may possess the required governing skills they do not posses the robustness necessary for political survival. As for idealised schemes, Bono cities the "wonder-woman effect", in that such attractive schemes (for example, canal digging) would work only if the people involved in them are skilled, perceptive, dedicated, compassionate and exceptional.

To end this harangue, we face a complex question: how do we make the political leaders behave in a transparent manner which is clear even to the illiterate masses, not to speak of being clear to the intelligentsia?

to enforce it while UN peace keeping force (without US participation) in Bosnia is watching massacres of Bosnian Muslims and Croats by Serbs. The Security Council, how ever, voted on 19 February 1993 allowing UN troops to fight back only if they are attacked. But the fact is that they are quipped with light arms. It is ridiculous to fight with light arms. By now hundreds of

was in fact adopted with

promptness by the Security

Council followed by another

recent resolution No 799

adopted on 18 December

1992 with remarkable swift-

ness following deportation of

415 Palestinians from the oc-

cupied Arab territories by the

Government of Israel on 17

December 1992. This resolu-

tion has not yet been imple-

mented. Meanwhile, Arab

League criticized the role of

the United Nations for adopt-

ing double standard citing an

example of bombing Iraq for

violating UN resolutions while

Israel remains unpunished.

The decision of the Security

Council declaring 'no fly zone

in Bosnia-Herzegovina remains

on white paper. On 26 March

the Council voted unanimously

Bosnian Muslims and Croats have died by mortar attack, machine gun bullets, bombing and starvation. While enough blood has flown in Bosnia and Miljacka rivers along the Adriatic Sea, Serbs are buying time on the pretext of peace negotiation to grab as much territories as possible by driving out Muslims from their enclaves. Attacks on Muslim villages in Bosnia have continued unabated since the UN declared 'no fly zone' in October 1992. Finally it was voted on 31st March to use force if the Serbs violate the resolution. It took five months by the members to take a stand. A number of resolutions were passed by the

Security Council but hardly any

resolution was strongly ap

Secretary General, without

of the week.

Zafar Shaheen

Elephant Road, Dhaka

in the bolton. 'Movie of the week'

Sir, Movie of the week in BTV is shown at 3-45 pm on Friday. This timing is very inconvenient - Friday afternoon is the only free afternoon for the working people to take rest. Female members of the family also become exhausted after household work, Children are normally busy with their studies. On the other hand, Friday is a suitable day for outing. It is a convenient day for marriage cere-

mony, milad mahfil etc. Earlier, 'movie of the week' was shown on Thursday after news in Bangla. Shifting this programme by BTV from Thursday evening to Friday afternoon has caused many

changes. Series drama and weekly drama have become very close with a gap of one day only. If special drama for special occasions is added in between, it may be felt monotonous. The weekly drama should be shown on Friday in the evening as it used to be before. A gap of two days from series drama will offer a better taste to enjoy the weekly drama in a relaxed mood. It may be mentioned here

that in many countries of the Gulf, movie of the week is shown at the weekend i.e. on Thursday at 8-30 pm and continues till midnight with a break for news in English. Considering the above facts,

Jamuna Levy? Some one

somewhere should speak to clarify the position. Are they not accountable to the people for taking tons of public money? Let them clear their position if they are not trying to hoodwink the payers of Jamuna Levy. What will be its ultimate fate nobody knows.

Abu M Faiz Dhaka-1207 I suggest BTV to return to the