Dhaka, Saturday, October 23, 1993

Good Luck to Bhutto

Benazir Bhutto's bouncing back to power within three years of her manipulated ouster by former President Golam Ishaq Khan, speaks volumes of this young fire-brand woman leader from Pakistan. Her tenacity, perseverance and impressive leadership qualities have brought her out with flying colour from the crisis to which the machinations of the Ishaq-Nawaz Sharif clique had put her. She has also exhibited an uncanny ability of turning seeming disasters into political gains. Her immoral, unethical and opportunistic move of joining the crafty Golam Ishaq in illegally ousting Nawaz Sharif gave her a very bad image. When the Pakistan Supreme Court restored Sharif to power, many political observers thought Benazir had suffered a mortal blow. She turned the event around by joining hands with Nawaz Sharif to work out a deal for the departure of Golam Ishaq from Pakistan's political scene, and holding an election under a caretaker government.

We in Bangladesh feel a great sense of relief that Pakistan was able to came out from this recent crisis with its democratic institutions emerging not only unscathe, but, hopefully, greatly strengthened. We are also impressed by the neutral and 'honest-broker's' role that the army played. It is a vindication of the emerging global trend of political and representative governments holding sway over army's unbridled ambition.

A significant difference in Benazir's return to power, compared to her first stint, is of course her carrying the crucial province of Punjab with her. Her control over Punjab and Sindh, and probably Beluchistan, with the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) going to Sharif, will give her enough power to provide a stable government to Pakistan. That really is the key requirement of the moment. Whether or not the events of the coming years prove so, or otherwise, will depend, to a large extent, on the personal equation of the two leaders -Bhutto and Sharif.

In a sense both should realise that they need each other's cooperation. For both have been toppled once by the other, by joining hands with a third force. If Sharif in 1990, and Bhutto in 1993, refused to partake in conspiracies against one another, then Pakistan's democratic experiment would have been stronger, election process more regular, and government more stable.

It is our fervent hope that Bhutto, in her arrogance of victory, and Sharif in his bitterness of defeat, do not fall back to politics as usual, jeopardizing the future of the country. Bhutto must be aware of the fragility of her majority and as such create a genuine atmosphere of cooperation with the opposition. Sharif, on his part, should accept the fact that by however small a margin, he came second, and as second he must allow Bhutto to have a go at the government. Sharif has made two very significant gains — his stature as a national leader is higher than it ever was, and his political party, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) has, for the first time, emerged as a significant national party. With these two pluses, his turn at the helm is bound to come.

We hope both leaders rise to the occasion and put the country and democracy above their personal feuds. Given the record of personal clash of these two leaders, this is, perhaps, demanding a lot. But this is what the country needs at the moment. Let them not forget that the people of Pakistan are quite fed up with their personal feud, which is amply demonstrated by the low turn-out in the election. Do not forget, hidden within the open result, there is an implicit warning.

Two Winners or No Winner

Garri Kasparov has already clinched the breakaway 'Times' world chess championship. And in Jakarta Anatoly Karpov is in an impregnable position to beat Dutch grandmaster Jan Timman and win the official FIDE world chess championship. Together the results add up to an irrecoverable loss to world chess - with no winners anywhere. In fact, had Kasparov and Short — the most unlikely duo to embark jointly on anything - not run madly after lucre, they would by now have been the only world chess champion and runners-up instead of just one of a pair.

The supreme act of discomfitting FIDE — the international chess federation instituting and conducting the world championship for more than four decades — was only to be expected from the Azeri-born genius. The collapse of the Soviet Union helped him do that blandly and bluntly without having any troubled thoughts about it. He had been led to equate the FIDE with Soviet tyranny both of which shamelessly went for ensuring the crown for Karpov, something Kasparov wouldn't ever forgive in his life.

What had Nigel Short, the intellectual of the chess world, against the FIDE? It couldn't be that Manchester was so disagreeable to him or the prospect of a leaner purse than expected had maddened him. The respectability and the fat purse given to their act of walking over FIDE could only be possible by a Times under Rupert Murdoch, no more the mascot of British aristocracy.

The poorest show in the tragedy came unfortunately from FIDE itself. It pitted a burnt out Karpov **against a not-so-classy Timman** — both beaten by Short very convincingly — for its world championship in a way compelling world opinion not to accept its winner as truly such. A very foolish act it was - almost suicidal. And the backing out of Oman from sponsorship and FIDE's putting the championship literally on auction wrecked what was left of the FIDE's prestige and hold on the game.

Are Karpov and Kasparov happy world champions? May be they are. But the world would continue unhappily without its true hero — although it is universally agreed that Kasparov is one of the all-time greats of the game.

Rice: World Market and Our **Export Potential**

Review and Outlook. 1992-93, published by FAO earlier this year mentioned that both Bangladesh and Indonesia were expected to export rice - a substantial achievement as both countries had, until recently, been. importers. It is a momentous development for our rice economy. Rice is our staple food. For most Bengalis a meal without rice is no meal at all. Therefore, all of us, not only traders and bureaucrats should know about the international rice market and our export potentials, not only in the immediate future but also on a long-term basis.

A very small, almost marginal portion of the world paddy production enters the international rice market. From 1990-1992, annual average world exports of 13.2 million tons of milled rice accounted for only 3 per cent of global paddy output, two-third of which assumed to be milled rice equivalent. Not only it is small, the proportion is also declining since it used to be 4 per cent during late 1980s. Total exports of milled rice increased from 12.3 million tons in 1987-1989 (annual average) to 13.2 million tons in 1992. The average trade volume has varied between 12 and 13 mil-

lion tons per annum. The trends are indicative of the fact that the international rice market tends to be rather static - the market is not growing. In order to enter that market, we have to secure, to our advantage, the lost shares of other exporting countries. Therefore, strong competition should be expected. The world's largest exporter is Thailand at 4.8 million tons in 1992, followed by USA at 2.1 million tons. On the other hand, Vietnam, during the last four years, has carved out a market share of around two million tons — a 15 per cent share of the world market to-

Rice is a highly differentiated export commodity. Export proceeds realised from high quality rice could be three times that of low quality grades in the world market. In 1992, India received 370 million dollars by exporting 700,000 tons of rice; while Vietnam against 1.9 million tons got only 260 million dollars. The quality Basmati rice from India fetched a price which was 325 per cent higher than the prices received by Vietnam from its 25 to 30 per cent broken low

ing a declining trend, particularly the grades at the lower end of the scale. According to the FAO Commodity Review and Outlook, 1992-93", with this decline in export prices. global export earnings from rice in 1992 were estimated to have grown only slightly despite a 9 per cent increase in shipments."

in Bangladesh, the retail consumer prices of rice, varying between Tk6/kg for low to Tk10/kg for finer grades are comparable with world market trends. Also, public interventions are no longer distorting the free market price - com-. petitively determined. So prima facie, there is a case for export of rice from the country unless export itself should boost domestic prices, thereby self defeating the purpose; and, no market share could be carved out from the static size of the international rice mar-

Production Trends A case for exporting rice

can also be established from the trends in production as well as projections for the future. During the last 10 years. outputs of rice have enjoyed the average rate of growth of 3.2 per cent per annum and the trend is likely to continue into the future. Therefore, by

standard rate of 15.5 ounces daily per capita, near around two million tons could be spared for exports. It is a large quantity and cannot be exported unless and until we improve our paddy processing facilities which in itself would yield more rice plus by-products from the same quantity of paddy. If for example, half the paddy produced in the year 2000 is processed in modern rice mills yielding 70 instead of 67 per cent rice, then we could export another half a million tons. In addition, valuable edible oil and poultry feed could be derived as by-products of paddy processing. In value terms, an estimated price of 300 dollars per ton would fetch export earnings of 600 to 750 million dollars, net of any leakage like the present day garment industry and therefore rice would emerge as the single largest export earner; and rightly so, since we practice virtual monocul-

ture of rice and rice only. It is also not true that more rice would mean less of wheat and in the ultimate analysis, zero wheat consumption. In fact, substitution by more expensive rice would mean food insecurity for the poor. Rice is an expensive grain. If there is plenty of rice and therefore the turn of the century, we can less of cheaper wheat or other

WINDOW ON ASIA

Shahed Latif

reasonably expect an output of 39.16 million tons of paddy which, after deducting 10 per cent for seed, feed and wastage, should yield 23.62 million tons of food grain rice at the prevailing extraction rate of two-third of dry paddy. This would imply an availability of 15.72 ounces of rice daily per capita for the estimated population of 145 million by the year 2000. The wheat output of about one million tons at present as well as imported wheat would all be in addition to the over-supply of rice since the national standard is availability of 15.5 ounces daily per capita of grains — rice plus wheat.

Clearly, there is a case for export of rice otherwise stocks would keep on piling up and farm-gate prices will collapse so that incentives for in-

creased outputs would no

longer be there. The total

availability of foodgrains in the

vear 2000 can be safely esti-

mated to be 23.62 million tons

of rice and wheat - all domes-

tically produced. This would

mean that after allowing for

domestic consumption at the

uality grad	les.	n Caranaca (a Dinastra)	Contract to the Paris P
Rice Export Market - 1992			
Country	Quantity Exported in million tons	Value of Exports in million dollars	Unit Value \$ton
India	0.70	370	529
Pakistan	1.40	382	273
Thailand	4.80	1,159	252
Vietnam	1.90	260	163
LISA	2 10	676	330

Thailand's export of standard 5 per cent broken secured an average value of 250 dollars per ton; while the American long grains, 100% (no broken) fetched the price of 330 dollars per ton. It may however be noted that not only price differentiations are substantial, such prices are followcoarse grains, then nutritionally the situation might be more vulnerable for the poor and the deprived. There is a case for export of rice and import of cheaper grains, if need be, in order to augment the diet of the poor.

Fortunately, our problem no longer is food insecurity and we have also seen that it is not a problem of inadequate availability of food but deprivation of the purchasing power and hence loss of command over acquisition of food. In the international market, one ton of better grade rice would fetch as much as three tons of maize in price term. Consequently, if we can build up an export base of a million ton of rice. import three million tons of maize and develop a large poultry industry, then at least half a million poultry growers can be created out of the huge landless families in rural Bangladesh. Export of frozen chicken, like in Thailand, can then be a new industry. Above all, the income and employment impact will be tremen-

World Market

If we propose to export rice, we must know about the world market. The outlook for 1993 was for downward pressure on prices. A contraction in the volume of world trade was also expected. Supplies were expected to increase with higher production more than outweighing the slight decline in carry-over stocks from 1992. Import demand,

domestic production; (ii) higher levels of purchase in the later part of 1992 covering a large part of the demand for the current year; and, (iii) lack of foreign exchange to purchase rice from the international market place. Export availabilities in 1993 were estimated to be ample. The international rice prices in 1993 were likely to decline particularly in the early part of the year. Many potential buyers were likely to wait for a clearer indication of supplies from early 1993 crops before placing major contracts. Moreover, competition among exporters would remain keen for the reduced volume of trade, hence exerting further downward pressure on prices. The short-run outlook does not look bright. But our initial

three factors: (i) increased

expectation of selling fragrant rice varieties and other high quality grades should not be a big problem in view of the fragmented markets for a highly differentiated product as well as the small size of our initial export. However within the next few years we must build up a modern paddy processing and by-product utilisation industry so that domestic supplies of the desirable grades of rice and in adequate quantities can be ensured. The actual marketing operations might have to adopt unorthodox arrangements, particularly if we intend to rapidly enlarge the exportable quantities of rice. As for example, a sizable market for rice can be cornered in Central Asia provided we accept payments in terms of raw cotton or crude petroleum which are their exportable commodities. Since we import both cotton and petroleum, we should agree and quickly build up a sheltered market for rice.

The long-run outlook for rice should be bright because new buyers, Japan in particular, are likely to enter the market. Also, demand for rice should increase once the former centrally planned economies are properly rehabilitated. On the supply side. cost of production of rice in Thailand is increasing because of increasing labour costs. Compared to the urban manu-facturing jobs, rice cultivation will be increasingly unattractive. This had happened in Malaysia earlier and about to take place in Thailand. China is expected to maintain near selfsufficiency in rice production. Nevertheless, import of quantities are marginal to the Chinese domestic output but constitutes large additions to the international market of rice. On the other hand, possibilities of large exportable surplus of rice in China are remote in view of fairly largescale agricultural diversification that has already taken

place. The monsoon agriculture combined with low floodplains leave no option except cultivation of rice for Bangladesh. Our surplus rice stocks would continue to be piled up and shortly we should be running out of storage places. Under the circumstances, export of Bangladeshi rice is a must. It is the right decision. Hopefully, actions will not be lacking.

IN MEMORIAM

Final Autumn

- Chandra Shekhar Das

OLD winter had cast its eye upon the moving ruins of this magnificent mansion long ago. The chill was in the air but it was still sometime before winter came. Because it was autumn. But it was time to go for the only 'sir' I knew in The Daily Star. It was S. M. Ali's final autumn.

Death with rather too frequent exposures has of late exhausted itself of novelty to me. I wish I could utter before Edna Millay

I am not resigned at the shutting away of loving hearts in the ground

So it is and so it will be for so tt has been, time out of mind.

An immutable phenomenon as it is, death sometime brings with it tragic gusts redolent of cathartic significance. In a very indifferent world where it takes a poet's eyes and ears to notice the fall of an Icarus, the death of S. M. Ali, was a resounding tinkle of an imperishable, irrevocable tragedy, of a family; of a house; of an institution.

On October 17, this instantaneous icon of glad grace and aristocratic authority caught a flight to eternity from a Bangkok hospital. In life he resembled a father without children to his colleagues than an Editor with an unhealthy penchant for blue pencilling and rank pulling. In death, I believe he will have shone as the Pole Star in the now benighted sky as the saviour, redeemer dedicated to the cause of integrity. good sense and orthodoxy.

With a dip into the stream of consciousness, I can asseverate, I was one of the least-met colleagues of this colossus of a journalist. To be honest, I never had the chance of being formally introduced to him. It was



partly because of my own buttoned-up nature, in part due to his professed want of interest and studied ignorance about the flux in the world of sports. He was candid enough to admit that games were not up his

Exasperated, filled at times with an incommunicable anger l often indulged in urent utterances like 'reincarnation of Phillipe-Auguste Villiers De L'isle-Adam' in his absence. So it was a pleasant surprise when, not long after I joined as the cub reporter with it being wet behind the ears than now, he stopped to conquer me once for all. It was in his inimitably rich voice coupled with a winsome something-between-guffaw-and-smile that he conveyed his perception of a south Indian ring in my name. Elementary but the overblown tragedy of whoness' as far as I was concerned was over and I knew the vigilant editor held me in dry

It was at the onset of this

autumn that I announced by

decision of parting ways with

the paper for personal reasons.

To my surprise, delight and ut-

ter inconvenience I was in-

formed of the shock, dolour in the reaction and subsequent enquiry in S. M. Ali's voice. I never had the chance of checking out the last words of this chronically ill, struggling but spirited person about me: "Tell me if there is anything I can do to." But it is one belief I would like to take to my pyre. For time being the blood-shot eyes of Tapan and Hashem Bhai - the two among my colleagues who really held Mr Ali in gremio would serve as the objective correlative for the tragedy of communication reverberating in verbal impulsion a la Molly Bloom's positive reaffirmation, in Joyce's 'Ulysses': 'Yes Yes' 'I am back, I am back. This quiet tragedy can be so succinctly summed up in S. M. Ali's own words: 'suspended animation'. In the best tradition of the frigid stasis of art Sir's suspended animation will never flow again in the form of ink in his very own 'My World'. Neither will I be able to release the animated echoes in me. Because all you are capable of now is a fragment of what you felt, of what you knew, and only a formula, a phrase remains — but

My Beloved Editor

the best is lost.

- Kazi M Sakhawatullah

INCE student life during over fifty years of my association with journalism and journalists I was fortunate to come in contact with many journalists of repute and Editors of eminence. Notable among them were Mawlana Moniruzzaman Islamabadi, Nastruddin, Habibullah Bahar, Abul Mansoor Ahmed, A K Shamsuddin, Abdus Salam Zahur Hossain Choudhury, Tofazzal Hossain Manik Mia, Altaf Hossain and last of all S

M Ali. I held them all in high esteem but also loved only a few and S M Ali was one of the few. He was the only Editor, in recent years, whom I adored, trusted and loved for objective journalism, integrity, boldness, impartial outlook and disci-

I was drawn to him when he agreed to publish two of my writings on population control policy (15.2.92) and Union Parishad (25.7.92), which earlier were not considered worth publishing by other newspapers. This reflected Editor Ali's people's welfare oriented outlook and boldness. He was concerned with what was written and not the person who had written. I write mostly in Bengali language on socio-cultural-economic issue, aiming at Bengali knowing mass readerships. Yet I used to consult him on the subject matter. In spite of being an eminent journalist in English language, he was so broad-minded not to decline to spare a few minutes for the cause of the subject. This magnanimity impressed me and I became devoted to

with humane disposition are rare. I know and believe there are journalists of integrity who wish to write what they believe, but are not free, so have to write what they do not believe. So is the case with editors also. However, there is difference between employed editor and founder (owner) Editor. Mr Ali could exhibit all his qualities, including the political impartiality and courage to speak out the truth in his own newspaper, The Daily Star. In political arena, remaining free from partisanship and prejudice, he spoke the truth to the government and the opposition both without fear and favour. After Manik Mian I have seen no other editor with such impartial attitude and courage.

Journalists of such calibre

lost my beloved and ideal editor and see none else around to fill the vacuum. My loss is personal. But the nation has lost a brave, honest and dedicated journalist committed to his professional integrity and the welfare of his countrymen. There is great need now for such a conscience keeper like him for the nation. I hope and pray that his disciples, now in charge of The Daily Star, who are trained by him and imbued with his ideals, will keep up the exemplary high standard of the daily. May the soul of the beloved Editor, S M Ali rest in eternal peace.

Lost Children of the Empire

Derek Round writes from Wellington

ment has launched a probe into claims that many British 'orphans' shipped here after World War II were not orphans at all and were treated as child slaved in their foster homes.

HE New Zealand govern-

The story of the 'lost children of the Empire' has brought calls to media from tearful middleaged New Zealand who say they suffered years of physical, sexual and mental abuse, often at the hands of religious and charitable organisations which were supposed to be caring for them.

'It is deeply disturbing and something that must be investigated,' says Immigration Minister Maurice McTigue.

About 1,500 British children are reported to have been sent to New Zealand during and after

World War II. Of these, about 400 came through the Child Migrant Scheme under which parents signed away guardianship of their children and sent them to New Zealand foster parents. The scheme operated from 1949 to

1952. Thousands of other children were sent to Australia and Canada where similar claims of abuse and harsh treatment are avoid Britain's tough adoption now surfacing. Most of the children lost touch with families left behind in Mr McTigue says some chil-

dren sent as orphans had parents living in Britain who were separated during the wartime blitz and could not be reunited. 'I don't know how many migrants are in this sad position,' he says.

There were some genuine orphans but he did not know how many. We have established from records who those child migrants described as orphans are and how may are involved and where they are,' Mr McTigue says. Every effort must be made to help locate their living relatives and see whether they can make

New Zealand has asked British officials to assist the migrants in their search for rela-

The New Zealand scheme, which began in 1949, was focused on fostering children to

laws. The scheme was open to children aged 5-17 and allowed parents or guardians to send children to friends and relatives in New Zealand or to foster homes selected by New Zealand's Child Welfare Service.

An official document at the time said most to the children were from parents 'unable to secure a future for themselves or their children' because of some tragedy of war.

In come cases the children came from families where parents could not provide 'the bare necessities of life.' In other cases parents had deserted or sepa-

Once the children were on the ships, sailing from ports like Liverpool, there was no turning back. The New Zealand government would not pay for the children to return. And their parents or guardians had been asked to sign a declaration saying they would not try to get them back.

One of the child migrants

Mrs Sandra Stewart, now 54, came to New Zealand in 1950. She was separated from her sister at the age of 12. She says she was sent to a New Zealand family where she was treated like Cinderella and expected to cook, wash and labour.

She complained about the treatment to child welfare officers but they didn't want to know.' Mrs Stewart, now married, says she still does not feel she belongs anywhere, despite trips to London to track down her family.

She says: 'I didn't ask to come here. I can't say I had a good family life in England, but I did have family.'

Malcolm Axcell, who was sent here with the first shipment of children in 1949, said his life as a child in New Zealand was one of hard work and abuse. He had decided to speak out now because he wanted to make sure the story of the 'lost children' was publicised.

But Trish Leeman says she

was better off in New Zealand despite being badly treated. She was suffering from rickets disease when she was taken from her mother and sent to New Zealand as an eight-year-old.

'I would probably have been crippled if I had not come here. she says.

But Mrs Leeman adds: 'The worst stress for me was being terribly homesick. I kept thinking one day my mother would send for me. After about five years I realised she wasn't going

Lack of documentation i causing problems for the now adult children who do not automatically get citizenship. Members of Parliament have called on the government to take immediate action to help the migrants track their British roots and obtain New Zealand citizen-

A British social worker Margaret Himphreys, has formed the Child Migrants Trust to trace relatives of the children and push for compensation.

The Immigration Minister, Mr McTigue, says: The whole thing is a very, very sorry business.

Mirpur Section 14 was going

without water for days on end

People are made helpless with

nowhere to go for redress.

Depthnews Asia

Concessions to educational institutes

Sir, That there are a few educational institutions concerned exclusively with minting money is an unavoidable allegation. Institutes which wish to continue functioning have to provide a modicum of genuine services with at least a few committed teachers, to keep from closing down. So for the sake of profit any private institute has to maintain a certain standard of performance, earning and maintaining a reputa-

tion for wholesome service. Government educational institutes have their concerned ministry to govern them. Their standing in the educational field

depends on the dynamism of the institute head, the sincerity of the senior teachers and the enthusiasm of junior teachers. But it is the private institutes which, numerically, affect the quality and quantity of students being produced every year with the capability of fueling our national economy at the required pace of development. And there is one vital ingre-

dient — as a foreign consultant emphasized at the beginning of this year in an important conference - needed to transform private educational institutes into the key factor of rapid economic growth: exemption from unnecessary taxes and charging them for the use of electricity, water and so on at commercial

Unless educational institutes

receive the special treatment required, there can be no acceleration towards development. Population is never a bar, but it can be an excuse! China, Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan.... also have greater population either in terms of total number or density. If we want an educated work force, we must be willing to do whatever is necessary to build and develop that infrastructure.

Mujibul Haque Mtrpur, Dhaka

Water supply

Sir, The Daily Star comes out daily with news, views and comments for the benefit of readers. Your letter column is

extended with a refreshing idea like "Opinion". Letters written specially to attract attention of those who matter hardly cause a stir in that quarter leave aside a courteous nod or acting on 'the information so published.

I refer to the one head lined "Water-supply" published in your esteemed daily on 19.9.93. I pity Mr Sharif who came out with his and others' (in his area) miserable plight. Almost daily we are forced to listen to BTV's news telling us what great development activities are undertaken by us! Yet we see the simple (is it?) act of supplying water to citizens of the capital is not finding its importance.

In another report in The Daily Star, we came to know

Had this letter been written by high powered citizens, (they don't have to, they possibly phone or just order) prestol there would be a flurry all around to rectify the "unintended" mistake. Poor Mr Sharif, did he get the remedy by now? I doubt it, he probably does not belong to the "league of gentlemen" or he wouldn't have written that letter.

A democratic system answerable to voters should not remain deaf to pleas for water.

Md Nastrullah Mohammadpur, Dhaka