

Good Luck to Bhutto

Benazir Bhutto's bouncing back to power within three years of her manipulated ouster by former President Gohar Khan, speaks volumes of this young fire-brand woman leader from Pakistan.

We in Bangladesh feel a great sense of relief that Pakistan was able to come out from this recent crisis with its democratic institutions emerging not only unscathed, but, hopefully, greatly strengthened.

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.

In a sense both should realise that they need each other's cooperation. For both have been topped once by the other, by joining hands with a third force.

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.

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.

Two Winners or No Winner

Garri Kasparov has already clinched the break-away 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.

The supreme act of discomfiting 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.

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 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.

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

THE latest Commodity 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.

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.

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.

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.

Table with 4 columns: Country, Quantity Exported in million tons, Value of Exports in million dollars, Unit Value \$/ton. Rows include India, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, USA.

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.

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 — competitively determined.

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.

WINDOW ON ASIA Shaded 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.

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 increasing outputs would no longer be there.

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.

however, would fall because of three factors: (i) increased 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.

The short-run outlook does not look bright. But our initial 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.

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.

coarse 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.

Mr 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.

Lost Children of the Empire

Derek Round writes from Wellington

THE New Zealand government 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 slaves in their foster homes.

Mr McTigue says some children 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 many are involved and where they are,' Mr McTigue says.

New Zealand has asked British officials to assist the migrants in their search for relatives. The New Zealand scheme, which began in 1949, was focused on fostering children to

abuse and harsh treatment are now surfacing. Most of the children lost touch with families left behind in Britain.

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.

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.

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

avoid Britain's tough adoption 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.

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 to.'

Lack of documentation is 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 citizenship.

A British social worker, Margaret Himpheys, 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.'

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.

Mujibul Haque Mirpur, Dhaka.

Water supply

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

IN MEMORIAM

Final Autumn

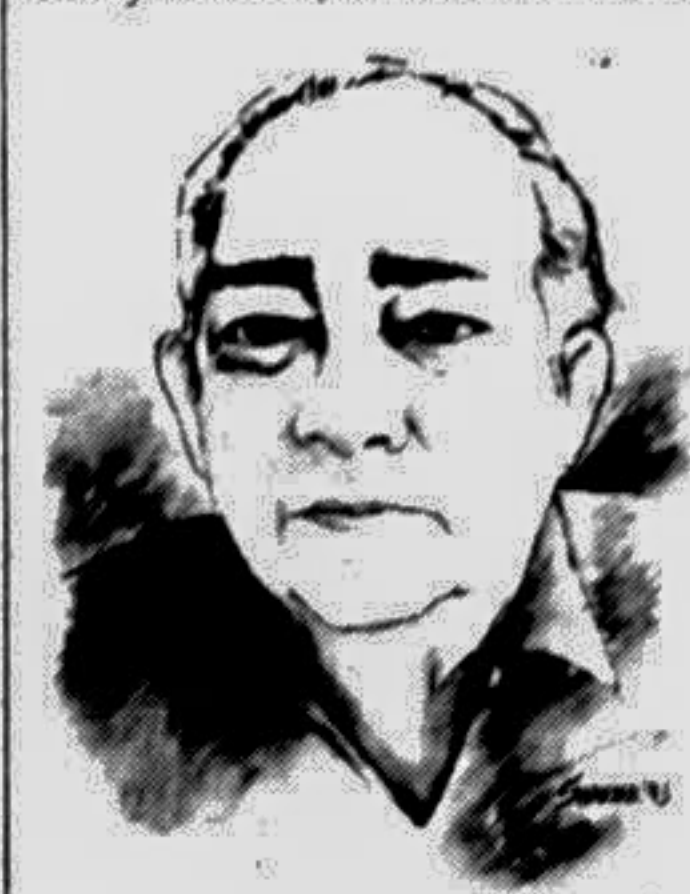
— Chandra Shekhar Das

C 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

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-remembered of this colossus of a journalist. To be honest, I never had the chance of being formally introduced to him. It was



My Beloved Editor

— Kazi M Sakawatullah

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

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 street.

Exasperated, filled at times with an incommunicable anger I often indulged in urent utterances like 'reincarnation of Philippe-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 light.

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 utter inconvenience I was informed of the shock, colour 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 the best is lost.

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 discipline.

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 him.

Journalists of such calibre 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.

I 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 beloved Editor, S M Ali rest in eternal peace.

— Depthneus Asia

Mirpur Section 14 was going without water for days on end. People are made helpless with nowhere to go for redress.

Had this letter been written by high powered citizens, they don't have to, they possibly phone or just order) presto! 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 Nasrullah Mohamadpur, Dhaka