

# The Daily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka, Wednesday, November 3, 1993

## When will Such Murders Stop?

The historic, the revered, the once 'Oxford of the East', our beloved Dhaka University, is once again the site of gangsterism and brutal murder. In broad daylight, a group of armed youth, searched out their target, chased him with guns blasting, through the crowded corridors of the administrative building of the university, pursued him from one officer-filled room to another, and finally shot him down in close range, hitting two other innocent people in the process. Who are these gangsters? Are they the run of the mill criminals out to rob or hold-up the university cashier?

No, they are members of the ruling BNP's student wing -- the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD). The murdered student, Jinnatul Islam was the drama secretary of the JCD. The group that killed him allegedly belonged to a rival faction, and the dispute leading to the 'execution' was about a tender for some university construction work. Reports so far published speak of a rivalry between the two factions regarding sphere of influence, protection money, extortion booty and the future election of the Dhaka University unit of the student party.

The incident reveals the worst of how degenerate our student politics has become. The bullet that pierced through the throat of the JCD leader, also bore a big hole -- far bigger than the ruling party is apt to realise and, far less, admit -- in the government's claim about containing terrorism in the campuses. Monday's murder reveals, as nothing before, the government failure in providing security of life for our students. The bottomline apparently is that in our universities, the difference between terror and peace, between being mindlessly murdered or staying alive, is not the presence or absence of police but the mere wish, or the temperamental whim of a killer -- who can as well be for hire.

The point to be made is why has our police force and number of intelligence services failed to collectively root out terrorists from the campus? Is the task so difficult that the full authority and power of a national government cannot handle it? Are we to understand that for all the tax we pay and the law enforcing bodies we maintain, the simple right to life, the most fundamental of them all, cannot be guaranteed? The answers lies elsewhere. On numerous occasions veteran police officials confirmed to the press that all this can be solved if only the right signal comes from the power that be. But what signals do we receive? An election victory of JCD, in some obscure student union of a far away college, brings the victors straight into the Prime Minister's Shugandha office. There these so-called students leaders are personally welcomed by the head of our government, and the whole nation has to watch in the so-called 'new' programme. The same scene is repeated in the house of the Leader of the Opposition. Only that we are spared the TV-urgality.

We have warned our political leaders, especially the government, not to attach a disproportionate amount of importance to student politics. Governments' credibility has suffered a serious jolt as a result of this daylight murder. The ruling party's credibility about being serious in eliminating campus violence stands shattered.

Today, one university after another, have fallen victims to terrorists. In Rajshahi, in Chittagong, and now Dhaka, the most barbaric acts of slaughter and killing have taken place. How many of the guilty ones have been arrested so far? Why and how, can these killers roam free and with impunity? The government must realise that it is the biggest loser when law and order fails. For it is the government's credibility that becomes questionable.

There is still time. Government should come down against campus terror with everything they have got. But the approach must be fair and non-partisan. That may have been the cause of the failure of their previous 'drives'.

## Tribute to Fellini

Federico Fellini, cinema's neorealism guru, is no more. His death on Sunday at the considerably ripe age of 73 has robbed the world cinema of one of the towering personalities who have immensely enriched this popular creative art. The master Italian director however did not have film-making as his first love. But once in the business, it was an unwavering life-long consumption for him. His association with Roberto Rossellini, another famed Italian director, in fact marked the turning point in his life. His contribution to Rossellini's Roma Città Aperta (Open City) in 1945 and Paisa (Paisan) in 1946 made such an impression on Italian films in particular and the world films in general that the concept of film suddenly remained no more the same.

From that point Fellini never had to look back, although two more films -- one he codirected and coproduced with another widely-known Italian director Alberto Lattuada and the other he directed independently for the first time -- did not bring in much of a financial reward. With the release of I Vitelloni was Fellini actually awash with acclaim. Not surprisingly, many cinema critics still consider this 1953 film his masterpiece. Like all master creators, this Italian director continually transcended himself through experiments and introduction of new elements. In doing so he had to invent a world largely his own and a language fitting that world.

This is a world of dream, reality and fantasy all juxtaposed and even blended to replace each other with the effect of producing a new meaning in the known reality. His childhood and adolescence have time and again had a nostalgic reconstruction in his films and even he drew profusely from the lives of his acquaintances -- such as actor Aldo Fabrizi -- in the stardom. Clearly, he has broken him in many bits and pieces to explore the inner riches for presenting them to the entertainment world of cinema. Starting with neorealism, after a brief lapse in repetition, he found his right medium of expression in imagery and fantasy. His departure from traditional techniques of filmmaking had its most satisfying results in weaving dream and reality, autobiography and fantasy in a world of symbols.

Not surprisingly, recognition to this film maestro came one after another. With four Oscars under his belt for La Strada (The Road), Le Notti Di Cabiria (The Nights of Cabiria), Otto E Mezzo (8½) and Amarcord (I Remember) and a special Oscar in 1993 for his lifetime achievement, Fellini will be ever remembered by film lovers the world over.

A NY fight or struggle, when collapses, brings in its wake frustration. There is demoralisation and a sense of defeat. The sullen mood, which has engulfed many Sikhs, is understandable because they are back to square one in Punjab: no demand has been met. Their added grievance is also justified because no action has been taken against the guilty of the October 31-November 3, 1984 carnage when, to quote an official report, 2,733 Sikhs were killed in Delhi alone in the wake of prime minister Indira Gandhi's assassination.

The Sikhs are equally justified in finding fault with their leadership, which either compromised with the militancy or caved in before it. But that is part of the story. One other part is the confusion in their own minds. They have been riding two horses at the same time. Till recently they did not challenge even those who were out to wreck the country's integrity because they appeared articulating their demands. They mistook the crisis of identity that the community faces for a battle for survival. And they gave a religious coating to their political grievances.

True, the Congress drove them to the wall. It misrepresented them and did not concede even demands like an equitable share in rivers of Punjab and the integration of Chandigarh and the Punjabi-speaking areas with the state. But that was the failing of a political party or the leader who headed it, not that of a country against which they came to raise the standard of revolt.

A party or a leader can be defeated at the polls and removed. A country is implacable; it belongs to all, transcending parties and leaders. The Congress is responsible for the

# Way to Strengthen Peace in Punjab

One should understand that the Hindus and the Sikhs in Punjab have to live together in amity. The two communities are so interspersed in this region that no formula can be a real substitute for communal harmony.

mistake it has committed, but not the country. Indira was once made synonymous with India but the people asserted themselves to reject her and her authoritarian rule, just as the Sikhs have now asserted themselves to denounce the militancy and their perpetrators.

Why the Akalis, who have represented the Sikhs' voice, triumphed in the past? They won the dispute of the Sisganj Gurdwara in Lahore before partition and the Punjab Suba after partition, although the States Reorganisation Commission had firmly rejected the demand. This was because they had abjured violence. They did not vitiate methods for their end. Their peaceful and non-violent agitations won the people's hearts and admiration.

The governments were forced to give in because of the Sikhs' forbearance and stamina to stay peaceful despite provocation. Once some among them took to the gun, it was an uprising. The people, too, turned against them, particularly when what they demanded would lead to the vivisection of India. As long as the Anandpur Sahib resolution spoke of decentralisation of power, it was a topic of debates. But it lost its sheen when some talked of Khalistan in the same breath.

In fact, the memorandum submitted by the CPI(M) government in West Bengal to the Janata regime in 1977 favoured far more autonomy to the states than the Anandpur Sahib resolution did. But the rub came when some took used to arms

in the name of the resolution and went on to change the demand into autonomous Sikh state. This cast a shadow on other demands as well.

There is no doubt that there were two parallel thoughts among the Akalis, Harchand Singh Longowal following a peaceful line and Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale a militant one. But the moderate, represented by Longowal, gave in to the hawks. Longowal, compromised

find an opportunity to resume support to violence. This is no longer an ethical doctrine but a practical proposition. The militants, however motivated, cannot take on the country and its might.

The Sikhs want to preserve their identity is understandable and any effort to dilute it is palpably wrong. But it does not mean the burning of the Indian constitution, which the nation respects. Nor does it mean the

Hindus and Sikhs are destined to drift apart will be both shortsighted and unwarranted. When the first killing of Hindus in a bus near Amritsar took place, Prakash Singh Badal went to Longowal to request him to suspend the agitation. It was the old Badal, who was a cynosure of both Hindus and Sikhs. But the new one went to the Bhog ceremonies of those who perpetrated cold-blood murders and kept quiet in the face of growing communal divide.

That the government is to blame goes without saying. It has dragged its feet on the demands which may have been articulated by the Sikhs but are in the interest of all Punjabis. The people have been able to get rid of militants by cooperating with the authorities in spotting them out and fighting them. But they have not been able to get the police off their backs. Their zeal as well as corruption remains unabated; nor is there any let up in their methods of repression and extortion.

In defeat there is defiance and in victory, magnanimity. This Churchillian approach can heal the wounds and get the Sikhs out of depression. But Prime Minister Narasimha Rao goes on changing his stance on Punjab. Once he said that the package on the state was about to be unwrapped; then he said it was only a matter of days and now he does not even talk about it.

Whatever the package, at least the latest report on the

1984 riots should be implemented. That will prepare the ground. Justice J D Jain and DK Agarwal have reconstructed how a massive cover up in which the police and the prosecuting agencies, evidently abetted by the Home Ministry, have frustrated all action 'to bring the guilty to the book.'

"Still worse," they say, "they found no evidence of superior police officers having provided leadership and guidance to the investigating staff." It appeared that the investigating officers usually of the rank of assistant sub-inspectors/sub-inspectors, were free to handle the cases with them in whatever manner they liked.

In several cases, the investigations had abruptly stopped for no good reason; in some cases, the accused persons even though named in the FIR and their involvement confirmed by several witnesses had been left out without any convincing grounds; and in many cases various mandatory provisions of law pertaining to recovery of stolen property, etc., were violated. Yet not a little finger appeared to have been raised by any supervisory officer.

Since the probe committee has named some leading lights of the Congress party, it has been hurriedly wound up. The fate of similar committees in the past have been no better. This year the government has even banned normal protest which eminent Indian citizens wanted to stage by walking from India Gate to the Boat Club in the capital. They have been even denied a meeting with the President of India, a normal courtesy, to submit a memorandum, which sought to draw the attention 'to the failure of authorities.' This is no way to win back the Sikhs or, for that matter, Punjab.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

when in one of the Akali resolutions he deleted words like 'Hindu-Sikh unity' at the insistence of Bhindranwale. But the difference in their opinion and approach was clear from the remarks the two would make about each other; Longowal characterised the living quarters of Bhindranwale as 'Chambal Di Ghat' (the ravines of Chambal where dacoits take refuge), and Bhindranwale would refer to Longowal's lodgings as 'Gandhi Niwas'.

Today the violence has lost. Punjab is peaceful. But if some people continue to have faith in violence, the peace remains threatened and the post-normality process does not begin. The Akalis must change their approach, particularly those who are lying low till they can

killing of Hindus, which was considered a way to drive them away from Punjab and to attract the Sikhs, suffering from the retaliation, from outside. The Hindus and Sikhs, inter-related and inter-dependent, did not quarrel even at the height of tension. But a perceptible distance was felt during the last decade or so. It was against the grain of Punjab, its ethos and its compulsions. But there it was.

One should understand that the Hindus and the Sikhs in Punjab have to live together in amity. The two communities are so interspersed in this region that no formula can be a real substitute for communal harmony. To base a decision regarding the future of this area on the assumption that the

# ANC Trains 200,000 to Help Fight the Elections

by Arthur Gavshon

The massive task of organising the African National Congress to fight the first one-one-vote election in South Africa in eight months' time is underway. Some 200,000 people are being trained to find and educate the millions of non-whites who have never had the vote before. Gemini News Service reports on how the ANC is developing its strategy for the campaign.

THE strategy worked out by Nelson Mandela's African National Congress to fight the April 27 1994 election of a Constituent Assembly in South Africa aims, with chosen allies, at winning a two-thirds majority.

A confidential internal document detailing organising plans and political objectives says such a majority is needed to achieve "a non-racial, non-sexist democracy in ... a peaceful, prosperous South Africa" where all its people can look forward to a better life.

For the mammoth tasks of educating the country's black millions and building an effective campaigning infrastructure the document estimates a budget of more than 137 million rands.

Fund-raising has begun nationally and internationally. So, too, have preparations for locating, reaching, registering and explaining to South Africa's 18 million eligible black voters the complexities of secret balloting.

The document, with detailed and diagram supplements, was produced in a series of ANC-organised workshops. A key personality orchestrating the multi-faceted operation has been Popo Molefe.

The strategy mapped out that could be adjusted in the country's volatile circumstances has been approved by the ANC national executive.

The ANC papers show that: Up to 200,000 ANC activists and volunteers are being trained for deployment in the far reaches of the country to find and educate eligible black voters. About nine million of these are described as illiterate. They speak a variety of languages.

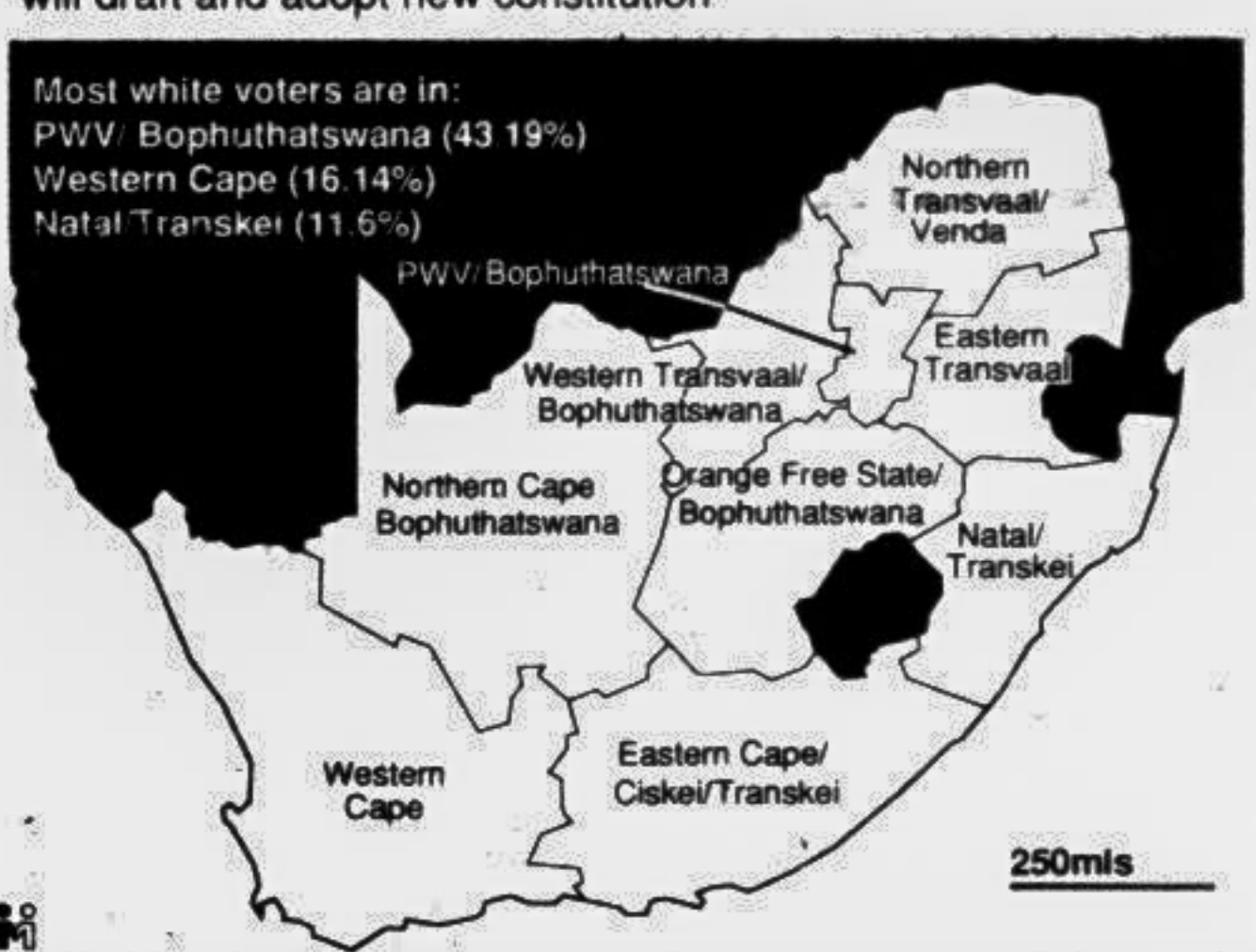
A network of 100 zonal offices with regional and local branches is being built and needs to be furnished and equipped with phones, faxes and computers. They are to be supervised by a national management team, with 2,700 trained administrators. These administrators will direct fieldwork, organise research, arrange rallies, marches, music, even food for the campaigners.

A transport system is being organised, with all manner of vehicles from a minimum of 200 cars to bicycles able to reach remote constituents in areas with impassable or nonexistent roads.

A security structure is being created to ensure the safety of organisers, canvassers, public speakers and voters themselves, especially during election week. The ANC paper as-

## South Africa: 9 voting regions

First one-person-one-vote elections will take place in South Africa on April 27 1994. They will be for 400-member constituent assembly under a new government of national unity. Assembly will draft and adopt new constitution.



Voters: 18 million non-whites, 4 million whites

serts the police cannot provide adequate security because they have often displayed either an inability or an unwillingness to intervene in violent situations.

Introducing the main elements of ANC strategic needs, the document contrasts the relative capabilities of the ANC and the ruling National Party with its grip on the levers of state power.

It says: "The National Party is extremely experienced in election work, controls the major media and is already preparing for an election."

"It is well organised and is starting on its drive to appeal to

black voters. The ANC is not effectively organised, particularly for an election. It has been undermined by the violence, it has limited funds and has not even started the race yet..."

The ANC pin-points other problems:

- It will have to carry the burden of voter education "simply because it will not be in the white National Party government's interest to have the vast majority of black people fully educated to both register and vote effectively because the majority of black voters are unlikely to vote for it."

- Even with changes in the control of the electronic media their operations "will still generally be managed by people oriented toward supporting the white government." Accordingly, the ANC will need to spend huge sums on media advertising "to counter government propaganda and influence."

- The ANC's black constituency is poor and cannot contribute to campaign funding. In contrast, the National Party can count on the backing of affluent whites.

- Violence has limited ANC freedom to set up branches and to campaign in many areas of South Africa. To overcome this organisational backlog the ANC will need big amounts of money.

Among the multiplicity of challenges the ANC has to meet and beat, the document stresses that it is all-important to recognise the structure and composition of the electorate. It says: "...the electorate are not just individuals but are best understood as groups of people that are influenced by their participation in a political organi-

sation, a community, cultural, religious, sporting professional organisations; they are better understood on the basis of the sector, region, class, ethnic group or language group they belong to."

The document sets out to illustrate this by listing some of the country's existing political parties and other organised formations. A complex picture emerged and shows:

- There are at least 24 political parties, ranging from the ANC to a group which goes under the title Nic-Tic.

- Among organised formations are the civics, hostel dwellers' associations and homeless people's organisations.

- Among labour unions, including the largest, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), are 2.2 million members.

- Around 20 million people of all ages belong to 34 main church and religious groups.

- Thousands of sporting organisations exist.

- Other groups to be targeted include burial societies, the Gay and Lesbian Movement, 10,000 non-governmental organisations engaged in welfare work, urban and rural education, women and youth association, business societies, chambers of commerce and students and teacher's associations.

The breakdown of the electorate into widely disparate groupings goes further. It shows that there are slightly more women than men in the overall 22 million strong electorate; and also that nearly six million voters live in rural areas.

In line with general ANC policy, the document says the aim must be to broaden "the democratic movement and maximise the unity" of anti-apartheid forces. But a caveat lays down that "the need to win at all costs should not require us to win at any price and therefore (there is) the need to preserve our principles."

Faced then with the challenge of moulding with a combination of forces ready to work with the ANC on a shared political platform the study defined various options examined.

One was that the ANC should fight the election on its own. This was rejected as too narrow.

A second option was that the ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) should stand together. This too was turned down because the ANC would find itself "defending the alliance with the SACP."

The third choice -- the ANC and Communist Party bonding with the Patriotic Front forces (PF) was deemed to broad because some PF elements lacked credibility.

The next option of an ANC-CP alliance in bilateral pacts with chosen partners was also rejected because it would leave independent third parties free to destabilise the ANC and produce complicated compromises.

The fifth and final option favoured by the ANC leadership was spelt out thus: "The ANC plus (CP) Alliance plus selected other forces or individuals based on the ANC lead campaign."

Exchange rate 1\$= 3.34 rands

ARTHUR GAVSHON is a diplomatic correspondent who has worked in Africa, Europe and the US. He freelances for the 'Weekly Mail', Johannesburg.

## To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

## Jamuna Bridge or Brahmaputra barrage?

Sir, Just at a time when we are going to start the construction work of the much needed and much awaited Jamuna Bridge some vested quarters are spreading rumours and creating chaos and confusion in the minds of the people to the effect that due to erosion of the river Jamuna the original 4.8 km length of Jamuna Bridge is needed to be expanded by another 500 metres; the estimated cost of the bridge of US\$690 million is likely to be escalated to US\$800 million; the bridge would not be economically feasible and so on; and instead of the Jamuna Bridge if a Brahmaputra Barrage is constructed at a cost of US\$800 million it would be more beneficial and advantageous.

To our great astonishment why are we hearing all these now and why the Jamuna

Bridge Authority is keeping mum?

We strongly feel that Jamuna Bridge Project is more an economic matter than a political issue. We would therefore request our scientists, engineers, geologists, hydrologists, economists and above all our government to kindly clarify the matter once for all without further loss of time.

O H Kabir  
Dhaka-1203

## BTV news

Sir, The good news about BTV is that its news room is being computerised, under the ABU Technical Assistance programme. The sad news is that BTV is not making much use of another ABU service, namely, the AsiaVision or AVN daily television news exchange service shared by the ABU member broadcasting organisations in the Asia-Pacific region.

## In case of another Indo-Pak war

Sir, I read the news item "shortage of military spares .... Indian army is in a vulnerable position" published on 28.09.93 in your paper with keen interest and I felt very scared. Now it is more or less known that Pakistan has three atom bombs

and can produce another 4/5 whereas India has 23 atom bombs and can produce another 20/22. With the change in international scenario and specially improvement in Indo-Chinese relations, India has already shifted a major concentration of army from Chinese border to Pak-border or kept ready to encounter Pakistan, whenever needed. Just after resignation, President Ishaque Khan openly admitted that Indian Army was seven times stronger than Pakistan Army and only due to Pakistan's attaining atomic bomb capability, India had refrained from attacking Pakistan atleast on two occasions. It is also said that in case of a 4th round war between India and Pakistan, Pakistan may use atomic bomb on the very first day as Pakistan now feels that it can hardly stand 15 days against Indian Army. These are seemingly well known to India and it will also retaliate or may start using atom bomb on the very first day. The result of the fourth round, if at all it happens so, can be easily imagined. The news of shortage of military spares, tanks, fighting vehicles etc. etc. in the Indian Army apparently confirms the option of the Indian Army to use atomic bomb on the very first day. It seems their necessity of con-

ventional weapons has been largely reduced, as India is not at all desperate to get spare parts etc.

Indirectly we are also bound to be affected. We only hope good sense prevail among the leadership of Pakistan and India.

Md Nurul Islam  
New Eskaton Road, Dhaka

## S M Ali

Sir, Perhaps it was because I was so shocked to hear the news of Mr. S. M. Ali's death that I had even forgotten to mention Founder Editor, The Daily Star, after his name in my quickly written letter of condolence which I despatched immediately after his demise.

So The Daily Star was his golden dream and he had indeed done it in reality. 'Star' is now a much-read, well-circulated newspaper of this country. S.M. Ali had applied his talents to make The Daily Star a type of modern newspaper for perpetuating objective journalism.

Being a reader of The Daily Star and an admirer of its Late Founder Editor S.M. Ali, I would honestly wish this paper's uninterrupted and meaningful publication.

I wish a long life for The Daily Star and pray for its con-

tinued prosperity and success. Though belated, I extend my heartfelt sympathy to all in the Star family on the sad demise of their friendly Editor, S.M. Ali.

M.Zahidul Haque  
Assistant Professor,  
Bangladesh Agricultural Institute,  
Dhaka-1207.

II  
Sir, Despite my best efforts I regret my inability to be physically present to pay my profound tributes to the memory of Mr S M Ali. I used to draw my inspirations from his editorials, columns like My World and At Home and Abroad. Especially the one pertaining to the Ekushey Padak proved his magnanimous and uncompromising character. Undoubtedly, a titan par excellence in the field of journalism. May Allah Pak guide The Daily Star to earn many more laurels so as to eternally remain as a monument in memory of this great soul.

My condolences to all ranks in The Daily Star. May Allah Pak grant all the bereaved members of his family with strength to bear this irreparable loss and may his soul rest in eternal peace.

Salahuddin Jamal  
East Firozshah, Chittagong