

UP: Order after Bungling

If political parties are reluctant to accept the norms of democracy — the minority gives way to the majority — then India may end up as most of the Third World nations have

Demise of a Legal Luminary

We deeply mourn the sudden death of Attorney General Aminul Huq. He died yesterday morning on way to the hospital, following a massive heart attack. With his death we have lost a leading personality of our legal system, and a tireless fighter for justice and human rights.

Appointed attorney general immediately after the fall of the autocratic Ershad regime, Mr. Huq made an exemplary contribution in trying to establish rule of law and restoring public faith in the legal system. During his four and a half years of service as the highest legal officer of the country, he prepared and argued two of the most important cases that ever came before our courts. First deal with bringing the corrupt and autocratic Ershad to face legal consequences for his misdeeds during his nine years reign. In prosecuting the former General, it was not the person Ershad that he was bringing to book, but restoring accountability of the government, which according to him was the highest public trust. The significance of his cases against the autocratic regime was to set the right type of precedence, and give out a well needed and timely message to all succeeding governments that however powerful one may appear at any point of time, the law of the land ultimately catches up.

The other important case he tried was the one against Golam Azam. The nationality issue of the Jamaat leader represented for the nation a collective revulsion for what he did during the Liberation War, and the inhuman and anti-national values he stood for during that crucial period of our country's birth. Though the case was won on technical points, the Attorney General, eloquently and brilliantly, represented the sentiment of the people through his arguments and debates.

Throughout his life Mr. Huq represented the cases of progressive political leaders, of trade unionists and of human right activists. Whatever was for public good, found echo in his professional actions, and thus he was found always on the side of those who fought for peoples' rights.

In mourning the death of Aminul Huq, we mourn the demise of a person who left us a rich legacy of using the legal system to strengthen democracy, to establish accountability in governance and uphold the supremacy of the rule of law. We pray for the salvation of the departed soul, and express our deep sympathy for the members of the bereaved family.

In Aid of Flood Victims

Right at this moment we are confronted with a grave flood situation. And, this is just the beginning. So much more is to come.

Let's have well-defined objectives to meet it, both in its swelling and receding phases which have alternating motions in our numerous rivers which ebb and flow in sympathy with each other. Flooding creates its own set of problems while receding waters spawn a different kettle of fish. We allow ourselves to be so overwhelmed by the inundation aspect that the problems accompanying the receding waters hardly ever receive adequate attention. In the first place, we wouldn't be awed by a flood if we had prepared for it. So, a thorough change of attitude is called for.

The tendency of any ruling party in the country has been to underplay the possible gravity of an unfolding situation lest it reflected adversely on the government of the day. This is preposterous. How is a government responsible for a natural calamity? Then as it hits us, the government swings into belated action in full public glare provoking the sensitivities of the Opposition who regard it as the government bid to make unjustified political capital out of the situation.

We want deeds and not words to rend the air now. Our impassioned appeal to both sides, especially to the government as the provider of things, is that they refrain from politicising the relief operations either by the word of mouth or by any partisan action.

Having said that, we suggest the following agenda for meeting the dual challenge of flooding and receding waters. To understand the imperatives of reducing the human sufferings wrought by inundation let's follow a news story from Sirajganj: a spot which looked drip-dry at night found itself under 8 ft of water next morning. The men and women float clinging on to rafts improvised from banana tree stalks. They reach the elevated premises of the government buildings, colleges and schools and find no relief materials. The really unlucky ones stay marooned in a sea of water elsewhere. Rescuing them is a job for trained and well-equipped personnel. So, the Army's disaster management skill is in use in some areas.

The whole government machinery must now roll up its sleeves and work extra to optimise the use of the brain-power it certainly has, let alone the manpower. The priorities are easy to spell out. Relief items, such as, food, medicine and drinkable water have to reach the nooks and crannies of the flood-affected areas not in days but in hours. Specialised modes of transportation need commanding the road links have snapped with major ferry ghats going under water. We must stay in readiness for flying relief sorties with helicopters from friendly countries or UN organisations in the event that there is a 1988-type flood.

Meanwhile, the government has to keep a constant tab on the supply side of the market and the price situation and plug the holes with despatch. The private sector is expected to rise to the occasion and cooperate with the administration.

A Tribute to Ashapura

Ashapura Devi, considered by many as the *prima dona* of Bangla fiction, is no more. A powerful writer, she was self-taught and possessed a highly enlightened mind. In her pursuit of both education and creativity she comes close to Rabindranath Tagore. Because all her life if she did anything it was writing — the labour of her love. She started her literary career at the age of 13, and by the time she breathed her last, left behind no fewer than 200 novels — some of them fit to be ranked as Bangla classics.

Of the other two of her contemporary greats among women writers: Motreyee Devi and Mahashyeta Devi, none could reach the breadth and range of life in its mellifluous forms that she did. Specially her identification with women's causes and compassion for the lower section of people place her in a class of her own. Hardly ever did she write anything cheap. It is therefore not surprising that Ashapura was the first woman recipient of the highly regarded 'Gyanpith' award in 1976. She has always charted newer courses through her writings. Although 'pratham chattrishruti' fetched her the coveted award, she is best remembered for her controversial book, 'Pati-Patni'. One abiding theme of her writings was women's place in society. She received numerous awards for her literary achievements.

Ashapura Devi's is a life — spanning over 86 years (from 1909-95) — that should serve as a notable example of human enterprise and creativity. Particularly women can take inspiration from her life that had begun so humbly and then gradually transformed her into a literary figure of renown through sheer dedication, will and courage on her part. Definitely she was far ahead of her times. It is only because of this advanced mind of hers that she could get into the complex social matters and yet come out with brilliant observations in a simple way. In fact her communicative skills were amazing. She was remarkably successful in imparting a lesson without being a moral preacher. In her absence Bangla literature will feel the void.

INDIA is in the midst of pre-election hiccup. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati is only a symptom, not the disease. The disease is the political power. Any method, any alignment, however opportunistic, is good enough for a political party as long as it enhances its chances to make it to Parliament.

Power in our country is prior to the adoption of policy. Parties first plan which caste or religious combination will bring them success. What that combination will do comes later. An issue or ideology is posterior to position, not before. That is the reason why everything under the sky is included in the election manifesto. It is meant to attract voters, not to guarantee anything specific.

The alliance of upper caste Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with the lower caste Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in UP has not come about for social justice. Nor has it changed the realities on the ground. The Jats in Haryana and the *bania* in UP were as distant as before when the Dalits distributed sweets to celebrate the installation of the first Dalit woman as chief minister in India's largest state, two and a half times of Italy.

The alliance was meant to remove Mulayam Singh Yadav from chief ministership and his Samajwadi party from power because both were hitting at the base of the BJP and the BSP. There is nothing more to it, whatever may be the *obiter dicta* on the dilution of caste, creed or class. Unfortunately, Mulayam Singh Yadav played into their hands. When he blessed an attack on some BSP MLAs at the government guest house one day before Mayawati was appointed chief minister, it was

probably meant to scare them or kidnap them. Whatever it was, it gave Mulayam Singh Yadav a bad name. He will have to live down the folly of that attack for a long time to come.

UP, with 85 seats in the 546-member Lok Sabha, is the country's largest laboratory for any experiment. First, the BJP staged a volte face by putting into the government the Dalits, with whom its rank and file refuse to sup or sit because of centuries' old prejudice. Subsequently, former chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, himself from the backward class, sabotaged the entire legislative process by manoeuvring the *sine die* adjournment of the state assembly through the Speaker, his partyman.

However foxy the BJP move to break the alliance between the BSP and the Samajwadi Party may be, the game was played according to the rules. State Governor Motilal Vohra, at the prodding of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, who is always fishing in troubled waters for a stray catch, should have given Mulayam Singh Yadav a chance, to prove his strength on the floor of the house. This would have been legally correct and morally right.

But Vohra and New Delhi bungled twice. Once when they did not give Mulayam Singh Yadav the opportunity to prove his strength and the second time when a new Speaker was

elector after the outgoing had adjourned the assembly *sine die*. The old Speaker had not vacated the seat as the constitution demands.

The governor could have prorogued the house and then issued an ordinance to summon the assembly to elect the Speaker. In Punjab, Speaker Joginder Singh Mann in 1968 adjourned the assembly *sine die* when the Lachman Singh ministry had lost the majority. The then governor issued an ordinance to

along with the parliamentary election in 1996.

This only accentuates the run-up to parliament. If political parties are reluctant to accept the norms of democracy — the minority gives way to the majority — then India may end up as most of the Third World nations have. So far, it has been a shining example of norms and constitutional obligations in a parliamentary system.

The biggest challenge was when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was defeated at the polls in 1977 in the wake of the authoritarian rule during the emergency. She had relaxed the emergency for the polls, not withdrawn it. Still, there was no question of her not accepting the defeat, although her son, Sanjay Gandhi, had different plans.

Since the next parliament looks like an amalgam of various all-India and regional parties as well as independents, the coalitions which come to power, will have to abide by the dictum of majority. Once they are in a minority, they must quit on their own, without invoking technical grounds to stay on. They are going to be short-lived coalitions, one government falling after another. Ideally, the strength should be tried on the floor of the house. But the parties must play cricket.

The VP Singh government fell in 1990 when it failed to prove its ma-

majority. But when Chandrasekhar resigned from prime ministership, no opportunity was given to any other party to form the government. Former president R. Venkataraman felt that he would not allow money or other pressures to operate and he dissolved the house. He was not under pressure because leading political parties were keen on going back to the electorate for seeking their verdict.

The situation may be different after the new polls. The President may be called upon too often to decide on too many claims. He will be forced to use his discretion. Without any disrespect to the present occupant of the position, he remains a veteran Congress leader. All his decisions will not be accepted without murmur. This may bring disrepute to the office of the president.

Therefore, some ground rules should be agreed upon before the next elections. Political parties should voluntarily or at the instance of the election commission meet to discuss the various hypothetical situations. The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations lays down guidelines for a governor, but not for the president. Such an eventuality never arose. This time it may.

That certain combinations are already coming into being is a healthy development. The National Front and the Janata Dal are two identifiable forces. As the JD resolved at its Bangalore conclave, it will try to rope in other regional parties like the Telugu Desam of Andhra Pradesh and the AIADMK of Tamil Nadu. Regrettably, the alliance sought is not on policies but personalities — a tragic side of Indian politics.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

resumption of the assembly to elect a new Speaker. The ordinance was upheld by the Supreme Court.

Political considerations seem to have weighed with the Centre to hurry up the process. Congress is hoping to pick up the Dalit vote in the parliamentary election; some equation with the BSP is necessary. Even when there is illegality about a process, the Narasimha Rao government weighs it on the scales of political gains. It is significant that the Congress party in New Delhi, defended Vohra's decision.

Still, Mulayam Singh Yadav should not have acted in a manner that could

endangered the entire process. He cannot counter the governor's wrong by his act which was palpably wrong. What Vohra denied him earlier was offered later when the house sat for the vote of confidence in Mayawati. Deflecting the motion on technical ground was admitting lack of requisite strength.

Once 175 members of the BJP and 59 of the BSP gave the affidavits to Vohra in support of Mayawati, she had a clear majority in the house of

Nuclear Reactor for Bangladesh: Chernobyl Catastrophe Haunts our Memory

by Md Asadullah Khan

People around the globe are very much wary about setting up nuclear reactors after the fateful Chernobyl catastrophe in April 26, 1986. Almost nine years have passed since the Chernobyl melt-down, but the havoc and grim catastrophe wreaked by the disaster are still unfolding.

THE decision to revive the Rooppur nuclear project, after a long spell of 34 years poses some very intriguing questions in the public mind now. It needs hardly to be emphasised that the country is running short of power and power generation by nuclear reactor in a country lacking fossil fuel is definitely a viable proposition. But whether power generation by nuclear reactor is a boon or a bane has to be studied most dispassionately in the light of the nuclear catastrophes that have struck some places in the world with horrifying consequences.

Almost in all countries of the world people are having second thought in opting for a nuclear reactor, mainly for power generation programme. In Italy, a country lacking fossil fuel, voters in 1987 decided to go without nuclear energy. Nearly everywhere in the world nuclear construction is winding down. No utility company in the US plans any new nuclear power plant. True it is that nuclear reactors have been generating electricity for almost 40 years and about 400 of them are now in operation worldwide, two major accidents — Three-mile island in the US in 1979 and Chernobyl in Soviet Union in 1986 — have put the industry under a radioactive cloud.

In the popular imagination, reactors are so many ticking nuclear time bombs; even if they do not explode, they go on piling up waste that will ultimately cause a depopulated globe to glow on in the dark. As a result, an energy source once hailed as a fuel for the future is in wide disrepute. Confirming our concern is the Chernobyl reactor catastrophe. Few environmental nightmares strike a more frightening chord than this one. Besides the radioactive mess left by the 1986 meltdown, nine years later 19 similarly nuclear time bombs are still ticking away threatening the world of a badly designed and carelessly run nuclear power programme that none

of the independent republics of former Soviet Union can afford to shut down. These hazardous killers provide light, heat and power to parts of Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania where their immediate shutdown would create unacceptable economic disruption and even civil unrest. All these emphasize the fact that the handling of Chernobyl has been thoroughly a careless job. Although the officials after finishing the huge concrete and steel shell that entombs the intensely radioactive mass of the shattered No 4 reactor in late 1986 declared the site safe for 30 years, it took no time to crumble down releasing heavy isotopes of plutonium and uranium, contaminating a large area around it.

Nuclear energy proposition in a densely populated area like Bangladesh triggers greater alarming prospects. In the event of a sudden and accidental melt-down as it happened in the case of Chernobyl, we have hardly any space to evacuate people and property to safer other than the Bay of Bengal or Sunderban forest. Even a vast country like USSR found it extremely difficult to evacuate its people after Chernobyl disaster. Soon after the Chernobyl melt-down, Soviet officials ordered the permanent evacuation of villages within 30 Km (19 miles) of the power plant but heavy nuclear fallout covered a much broader area. Reports have it that in some parts of Narodichi, a Ukrainian agricultural

district whose boundaries lie some 60 Km (37 miles) from the reactor, levels of radioactivity are still nine times as high as the acceptable limits.

Hospital sources contend that there has been a dramatic rise in cases of thyroid disease, anemia and cancer in and around Chernobyl area. Much of the disturbing news about the Chernobyl comes from the Health officials who predict that about 10,000 deaths will result from fall-out induced cancers.

People around the globe are very much wary about setting up nuclear reactors after the fateful Chernobyl catastrophe in April 26, 1986. Almost nine years have passed since the Chernobyl melt-down, but the havoc and grim catastrophe wreaked by the disaster are still unfolding. Ukraine and nearby Belorussia remain contaminated with high levels of radioactivity. The poisoning of the land has created dire health problem and economic devastation. The fall out effect spread to Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Poland and Hungary. Poles were given iodine tablets to speed the elimination of radioactive iodine throughout Europe. In the Ukraine and Belorussia pregnant women were advised abortions.

True it is that mankind cannot renounce nuclear power but at the same time our option for nuclear power must be geared with technical means that can guarantee its absolute safety and rule out the possibility of

another Chernobyl. The best means as Sakharov, the celebrated nuclear physicist of Russia indicates in his memoirs is international legislation requiring that all new nuclear reactors be sited deep enough underground so that even a worst case accident would not discharge radioactive substances into the atmosphere.

Reactors, if built above ground, Sakharov points out 'should be protected by reliable containment structures. The first priority should be to safeguard atomic plants that supply power and heat to large cities, reactors with graphite moderators like the one that malfunctioned at Chernobyl, and fast neutron breeder reactors.

According to Sakharov, Chernobyl was an example of tragic interaction of equipment failure and human error. Nevertheless the aversion people rightly feel for military application must not spill over to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Mankind cannot do without nuclear power and that calls for devising a way to find the solution to the safety

problem that will rule out another Chernobyl resulting from human error, failure to follow instructions, design defects or technical malfunctions.

Talking about the global scenario of nuclear power, we see that in France more than 76 per cent of electric power is nuclear-generated, in Belgium 62 per cent, Sweden 50 per cent, Germany, Switzerland, Spain and Finland come in around one-third, Japan a little less, Britain, the US and Canada, under 20 per cent.

In Bangladesh our desire for setting up nuclear reactor for power must be backed by considerations of cost effectiveness of the project that proposes to generate 250 MW of power. As the world price indicates, cost of setting up a mid-sized nuclear reactor may shoot up to \$800 million undercutting the competitiveness of nuclear plants compared with the cost of generating power by coal or oil.

However, as recent events in the Gulf show, energy prices can rise precipitously. Moreover, supplies of fossil fuel are finite, while energy needs

are open ended as developing countries develop and the rest of the world hopes to do the same. Sun, wind and tide can't fill the gap and the most potent choice for nuclear power is that it does not add to global warming.

However in Bangladesh, we will definitely opt for nuclear power when all other sources for power generation have been exhausted taking in to consideration the fact that it is totally safe, economically competitive and that the problem of disposing of nuclear waste is entirely manageable.

The wounds inflicted by Chernobyl can't be healed so easily. The Soviet Union has taken an inordinately long time to come to grips with Chernobyl. About 100,000 people were evacuated from an 18-mile radius around the plant. Officials now admit to an appalling underestimation of the danger of radiation over a broader region. It is officially learnt that as many as 3 million people are living on irradiated lands. Farmers have reported an increased incidence of freak animals and deformed plants. After a lapse of nine years, it is now revealed that about 300 people died in the accident instantly rather than 31 previously claimed. Estimates prepared by international experts put that about \$415 billion would be needed for the clean up operation, a staggering figure that an impoverished country like Bangladesh, contemplating to go for nuclear power can hardly afford, in the event of a melt-down.

Building Public Confidence in Electoral Process

by Feroz M Hassan

ELECTIONS are important in democratic governance. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, applicable to all member states of the United Nations, "everyone has the right to take part in the governance of his [or her] country, directly or through freely chosen representatives... the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent voting procedures".

The right to free and fair elections is, in part, rooted in the right to self determination found in the United Nations Charter (Art. 1, para 2), International Covenant on civil and political Rights (ICCPR) and ICESCR (Art. 1) and even in the African Charter on Human Rights (Art. 20).

In order, for the elections to be fair it is important to examine whether the population could freely exercise their rights, adequately informed to do so, and have confidence that the electoral process will accurately reflect their choice.

The examination of whether elections are genuine includes not only whether the election administration is acting impartially and effectively, but whether political contestants have the opportunity to campaign freely for popular support. The examination must also include determining whether the government resources are properly utilised in the electoral process, and whether the law enforcing authorities like police and the public prosecutors are acting to maintain order and are protecting those seeking to exercise their civil and political rights. It is also important to assess whether the judiciary is conducting itself impartially and effectively.

On the other hand it is also necessary to see whether the news media are free to act as conveyors of accurate information and to act as watchdogs over government as well as whether they are providing access to political contestants and giving objective coverage of those contestants and events of national importance.

A consistent lesson in international electoral experience is that elections are not simply a technical process. Elections are part of a political process that, to be successful, requires public confidence. Sound electoral laws and procedures are of course necessary but are not enough to build public confidence in an election. It is very important that the

public including the political contestants, must believe that the electoral process will be effectively and impartially implemented. Appropriate steps must be taken to ensure that the electoral process is not only administratively correct, but free from the perception of partisanship. It is therefore, necessary for the government and its electoral administration (Election Commission) to take measures beyond the minimum legal requirements to create an expectation that fairness will prevail.

Building public confidence in electoral process must include:

- setting up an effective and impartial election apparatus that is open and also transparent;
- involving the political contestants in all basic elements of the election process;
- opening the election process to the observation of citizens and civic organisations;
- convincing the electorate of the importance of the elections, that their personal safety and ballot secrecy will be secured as well as showing them voting mechanics.

"Transparency" of the electoral process is very important in building public confidence. Election authorities should encourage and involve political contestants to view all aspects of electoral preparations, from the drafting of election laws and selection of electoral administrators all the way through the tabulation of results and resolution of electoral complaints. By involving the political contestants in the electoral process they can be made more responsible and accountable for their behavior, as well as political contest will be trustful of the action of the Election Commission.

Participation of citizens groups in the election process is central to public confidence. The public confidence can further be enhanced, by opening up and making the electoral process transparent to public by allowing citizens to monitor all aspects of the elections. Election monitoring by impartial domestic NGOs and nonpartisan citizens groups adds significantly to public confidence to election process. Nonpartisan domestic election monitoring besides guaranteeing the integrity of an election process also provides an excellent example of citizens participation in governmental accountability.

Article 7 of the 1990 Copenhagen Document of the OSCE, calls on participating organisations to accept international and domestic election

observers. It also affirms the proposition that election observers play an important role in democratic elections. It is also recognised in the recent United Nations publications, "Human Rights and Elections", "as helpful in securing public confidence in the electoral process."

The authorities meaning the Election Commission as in many countries, can also invite or allow international community to witness the election process, usually through impartial international election observers. Impartial international election observers can also play a constructive role in enhancing public confidence in the electoral process.

Another important element when implemented has helped build public confidence in the elections in recent years, because this provide, an important foundation for independently verifying the accuracy of the official election results. This is called Independent Vote Tabulation (IVT) by non-partisan election monitoring groups. IVTs may be done on the basis of comprehensive tabulation of results or on the basis of random statistical sampling. This exercise when carried out not only can help build confidence in the election process, but also deter frauds in the vote counting process.

In addition to being impartial, the Election Commission must be able to take independent and effective actions to protect the integrity of the election process. It is essential that the election laws must guarantee equal treatment and practical procedural process in order to ensure a credible election. Such precautions really help ensure the satisfaction of voters and political contestants in situations where they perceive, rightly or wrongly, that they have been unfairly treated.

It is equally important to recognise that a voter and civic bodies are critical to genuine elections. The principle is that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government" and that "will" can genuinely be expressed if the voters are adequately informed of the political choices and contestants through civic-voter education. The civic-voter education must cover the basics of why it is important to vote and that vote will be secret, secure and respected. The voters must also be adequately informed even about basics like, where, when and how to register and vote.

The writer is president of Manabik Shahajya Sangstha and convener of the Study and Research Group (SRG)

Save Dhaka

Sir, Thanks a lot for The Daily Star-BUET Roundtable — "Save Dhaka". The Daily Star has also presented and also presenting various problems of Dhaka and giving some planning to solve those problems through the columns 'Save Dhaka'. Here is my special thanks to the moderator of the Roundtable as well as Editor of The Daily Star, Mahfuz Anam, for his clear intention to make the people aware of these problems.

The Roundtable has helped a lot to combine the ideas of the professional groups and experts for saving Dhaka. Several recommendations were proposed by them. They proposed to bring WASA, DESA, Titas, T & T, Rajuk and Traffic and Transport authority under a single umbrella organisation to be headed by the Mayor or some newly-created body. They also proposed to bring the poor first under special consideration before urban planning. I think, these are the key points to be implemented. Would the government make it a policy to implement the proposed recommendations? Would they ensure a health development of Dhaka?

The problems of Dhaka and those of other cities are almost the same. If the government becomes successful in saving Dhaka, it would be only a matter of time to save whole of Bangladesh from such problems. Would the government take some necessary steps in this respect now?

Emdadur Rahman Ramon
Chittagong University

Our history and political leaders

Sir, With the passage of time and inordinate delay in solving any problem, the hardships and sufferings of our people are increasing by leaps and bounds, day by day. We are beset with manifold socio-economic and political problems but our political leaders both in the government and in the opposition do not appear to lead us towards a solution of any problem. Why?

But our leaders and we must have to all solve our problems local, national and international, promptly and timely without wasting time. None also would resolve them for us. We have suffered for centuries for

Smuggled goods

Sir, We gather from newspapers that smuggled goods are being seized by the concerned authorities every now and then. But smuggling is not stopped. The smuggled goods include, VCR, Air Conditioner, apparels, gold bars and narcotics etc. It is needless to say that these are not essential items like rice, salt, edible oil etc. The middle class families, fixed income group and common people do not purchase electronic goods and like make gold ornaments each and every month, not to speak of heroin whose value is estimated at Taka one crore per kg and not desirable to be in the reach of any body in the country.

O H Kabir
Dhaka

Smuggled goods

During my professional discharge of duty at Zia International Airport I have seen shoes valued at about Tk 5 thousand per pair and shirt valued at Tk 2 thousand per piece. These are also brought by the passengers coming from abroad. Now my question is who are the fortunate consumers of these luxury goods? What is the percentage of consumers for whom these luxury goods and narcotics are needed to be smuggled in to the country? Whether the whole quantity of luxury goods and narcotics enter into our country through smuggling, under baggage rules or other apparently legal ways. If these exceed the demand of the consumers then there is no doubt that these goods are again smuggled out of the country. It will not be out of place to point out here that the consumers and smugglers of these goods are the earners of black money. To reduce black money (it is perhaps not possible by any government to totally stop generation of black money nowadays, so at least

reduce) the government should take necessary steps to detect the consumers of these smuggled goods and punish them in the interest of the country and all.

A M Kais Chowdhury
Narayanganj

Party funding

Sir, I highly appreciate your attempt on dissecting the sources of political party's funding particularly before the forthcoming election. It would no doubt be a very useful assignment on finding out the secret clues regarding the political party's funding, Jamaat and left parties are known to collect a portion of their fund through monthly subscription from all grades of their members. The others usually do not follow that process. However, the main factor is how the political parties are getting the huge amount of money for their everyday activities. Normally all parties maintain strict secrecy regarding the source of their funds and bank accounts. This has definitely created of misty atmosphere.

ZA Haidar,
Mohammadpur, Dhaka