

Supply Exemptions

Prices of consumer items are soaring as never before. This is ascribed to supply dislocations caused not so much by production shortfalls as by transportation difficulties.

The opposition parties appear to have acknowledged the fact and are making more and more relaxations to their non-cooperation movement.

The exemption move, however, can fizzle out or lead to tragic incidents if the political parties concerned fail to clearly communicate the message and the purpose behind the move to their cadres down the ranks.

The vehicles having food items to transport have been instructed to prominently display on banners what they are carrying.

Where it is Coming to

The late night bomb-throwing into the houses of three DU teachers followed closely on the heels of threats to life abusively issued to over telephone a number of intellectuals in the city.

The whole idea seems to be to administer shocks upon selected detractors with the object of silencing political dissent in general or short of that containing it.

If the tendency to put people on the hit list and send squads after opponents to satisfy political vendetta does not stop here and now, there will be no end to murderous arrangement in a politically volatile situation like ours.

Politics has penetrated so much into our lives that in its erratic form it has become a veritable threat to the security of individuals.

There is nothing wrong with politics as such, nor even a modicum of politicisation or animated rivalry. What, however, will prove suicidal for democracy is throwing its basic norms to the four winds without any compunction whatsoever.

To the Editor...

Of angiography facilities

Sir, Please refer to BM Birla's advertisement of March 08, 1996 in The Daily Star.

Performing an angiogram is now a fairly common procedure in any heart centre or a general hospital having a cardiac unit.

Readers must know that a cath lab with digital subtraction angiography along with an eight channel EP unit has been installed at the Army Hospital last year.

Interestingly, in Bangladesh coronary angiograms and open heart surgery were done at ICVD long before Birla came to the scene. It started in late

seventies or early eighties. Unfortunately this centre could not eventually sustain/develop due to the myopic views of some of our doctors and the management.

Again Birla's "Swing Lab" needs to be defined. Extractions Atherectomy, Rotablations are fairly new techniques and Birla's score here is unknown.

Finally, the purpose of this letter is not to undermine Birla's capability but to let cardiac patients know the availability for alternative centres at home and abroad so that patients may have a choice instead of blindly following advertisements and news items.

HQ Chowdhury 20, Dootabash Road, Boridhara, Dhaka-1212.

The Cynic and the Optimist: Who is Right?

Begum Zia's decision to deploy the armed forces to suppress the Opposition's non-cooperation movement makes sense only if she is trying to hold on to power for as long as possible.

THE joke going around in Dhaka these days is that there is indeed a light at the end of the tunnel, but it is the highlight of an oncoming train.

In fact, the demand for the cancellation of this rather disgraceful event is so widespread that even the supporters of BNP find it hard to ignore.

In talking to the political pundits I find them divided into two camps - the cynics and the optimists. The cynics are those who expected that since Begum Zia held the one party election against her will only in order to uphold the constitution, she will surely dissolve the parliament and resign once the caretaker bill is passed.

The cynics, on the other hand, never believed that either Begum Zia or her hard-line ministers had any plans to quit so soon after ensconcing themselves snugly in their ministerial seats of power.

The ministers are talking about not resigning any time soon if the Opposition does not come to terms with them. How can the opposition come to terms with them? Obviously, by accepting the so-called parliament's legitimacy.

The cynics, on the other hand, never believed that either Begum Zia or her hard-line ministers had any plans to quit so soon after ensconcing themselves snugly in their ministerial seats of power.

Politics has penetrated so much into our lives that in its erratic form it has become a veritable threat to the security of individuals.

There is nothing wrong with politics as such, nor even a modicum of politicisation or animated rivalry. What, however, will prove suicidal for democracy is throwing its basic norms to the four winds without any compunction whatsoever.

There is nothing wrong with politics as such, nor even a modicum of politicisation or animated rivalry. What, however, will prove suicidal for democracy is throwing its basic norms to the four winds without any compunction whatsoever.

The telephone is dead, why?

Sir, May I draw the kind attention of the appropriate authority of the Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board for restoration and operation of my telephone (No. 412180) which is lying dead from 29 January, 1996?

Complaints were made to the Supervisor and Supervisor Incharge, Bashaboo camp office. In addition to these complaints, I have made a lot of complaints in the camp office personally but to no effect.

In view of the above, may I now draw the kind attention of the highest authorities of the T&T Board to please look into the matter. Md Joyal Abedin Bhuiyan 289/1, East Goran, Medina Mosque Road, Dhaka-1212.

ON THE RECORD

by Shah A M S Kibria



definitely. This is what the cynics have suspected and this is what we see happening. The nation has fallen into a trap laid so cunningly by the BNP strategists.

Am I being too partisan and harsh on the BNP? Well, let us look at some of the latest steps taken by the BNP and try to see if these are unfair conclusions.

In response to the almost universal demand from the nation, the President indicated that he would try to find a negotiated settlement if both sides requested him to do so.

After much delay and hesitation, Begum Zia also agreed to give the green signal to the President and accordingly he initiated the process of consultation. The whole nation was eagerly waiting for a breakthrough from the Presidential initiative.

Through a constitutional head of state, there was a natural expectation that in a moment of grave national crisis, the President had enough residual power to step in to save the Republic.

The President's initiative would have delayed the process of legitimization of the illegal parliament and the formation of the cabinet. Quite clearly, BNP's priority was to grab power quickly.

The next step by the BNP was to intensify the activities of its armed cadres in an effort to neutralize and defeat the Opposition's non-cooperation

movement. While this has not made any dent in the non-cooperation movement, it has certainly added to the frequency of armed clashes and the number of casualties.

However, Begum Zia's decision to deploy the armed forces to suppress the Opposition's non-cooperation movement makes sense only if she is trying, contrary to the impression given earlier, to hold on to power for as long as possible.

Is Anyone Listening?

Democracy is no doubt, a very precious object. It guarantees us certain basic or as the Americans would put it "inalienable" rights.

See without the economy working there will no longer be any food, clothes or medicine in the stores. Why Gulshan Market may even run out of Quality Street Chocolates.

What ever we tend to believe, economics is or should be the guiding principle of the nation right now and not democracy. However we burn cars to show protest, we close our ports and factories to say that it is in the long run beneficial to the country.

Time for Hard Reckoning Approaches Fast

THE opposition demands, as it rest how comprise a) cancellation of the 15 February election, b) disbandment of the 6th parliament, c) resignation of the Prime Minister, d) formation of a neutral, non-partisan, caretaker government to conduct elections and e) holding of election in May next.

The ruling party, in its turn, has agreed to all the last three demands, namely, that the Prime Minister will resign, elections will be conducted by neutral, non-partisan, caretaker government and that the election will be held in May next.

What the government could not accept was to cancel the 15 February election and to disband the 6th parliament. The government's refusal to explore any action in these directions is not of its own volition but due to its inability to do so, as it is not sanctioned by law and convention.

However, Begum Zia's decision to deploy the armed forces to suppress the Opposition's non-cooperation movement makes sense only if she is trying, contrary to the impression given earlier, to hold on to power for as long as possible.

Through a constitutional head of state, there was a natural expectation that in a moment of grave national crisis, the President had enough residual power to step in to save the Republic.

The President's initiative would have delayed the process of legitimization of the illegal parliament and the formation of the cabinet.

After much delay and hesitation, Begum Zia also agreed to give the green signal to the President and accordingly he initiated the process of consultation.

Through a constitutional head of state, there was a natural expectation that in a moment of grave national crisis, the President had enough residual power to step in to save the Republic.

The President's initiative would have delayed the process of legitimization of the illegal parliament and the formation of the cabinet.

After much delay and hesitation, Begum Zia also agreed to give the green signal to the President and accordingly he initiated the process of consultation.

Through a constitutional head of state, there was a natural expectation that in a moment of grave national crisis, the President had enough residual power to step in to save the Republic.

The President's initiative would have delayed the process of legitimization of the illegal parliament and the formation of the cabinet.

Dhaka Day by Day

The Joys of Giving

by Fayza Haq

In Dhaka we may not have Mother's Day or Father's Day but there are occasions enough to make the shopkeepers in New Elephant Road, New Market, Eastern Plaza and other shopping centres to stack their shops with goods like toys, clothes, after-shaves and perfumes.

by M M Rezaul Karim

On the question of making a reference to the Supreme Court of Bangladesh constitution is explicit in allowing making of a reference on a point of law and not of fact, unlike coverage of both points existing in the Indian constitution under Article 143.

However, in matters of national crisis, one may argue and justifiably so, and in the absence of an appropriate provision in the constitution to deal with an unforeseen situation, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, being the prime interpreter, guardian and arbiter of the constitution, may consider exercising its

discretion to accept a case of this nature for consideration on the basis of the doctrine of necessity and of such other grounds.

However, the Supreme Court is most unlikely to entertain such a hypothetical case on grounds of being "speculative" as was cited in similar cases around the world, also suggested in these columns recently, unless perhaps the principal political parties categorically wish to make such a reference in supreme national interest.

The government party contends emphatically that an appropriate amendment to the constitution would indisputably provide the legal umbrella for constituting a caretaker government and that is what they are doing at the very first opportunity during the current session.

The BNP was agreeable to make a reference to the Supreme Court and even proposed to draft its text jointly with the opposition party before the election, but the opposition broke off the negotiation abruptly only a few minutes before they were to meet on the 16th January last, without even suggesting an alternative time for another meeting.

Now that the new parliament, which has not been declared illegal and void by any court of law, is currently seized with the consideration of the caretaker government bill, the proposal of making a reference to the Supreme Court becomes both irrelevant and redundant.

Under these circumstances, one should ask oneself a soul-searching question. Now that the election is to be held in months time in May next as demanded by the opposition, that too under a neutral, non-partisan caretaker government as demanded by the opposition, and that the Prime Minister is to resign well before the election also as demanded by the opposition, is there any plausible reason to justify continuing the non-cooperation or even a semi-violent civil disobedience movement with compounded consequential misery, distress and loss to the general mass of people and to the nation as a whole?

What the 12 crore people really care at present is not whether the 15th February election and the 6th parliament are unjust or event unlawful, as long as they are assured that the Prime Minister is going to resign within a few weeks and that the election to form a parliament of everybody's choice and participation under a neutral, non-partisan caretaker government is going to be held in a couple of months time.

Some indications have also been received most recently suggesting that the rigours of non-cooperation will be somewhat eased gradually. This is a welcome development and, if the action is taken, would merit appreciation.

Another friend of mine from Wari was going round the bend looking for gifts. She had been out shopping for a week despite the recent trouble in town.

Tarana, a young woman at Crescent Road, spends an enormous portion of her salary in buying stuffed teddy bears, speeding battery-run toy cars, walkie-talkie dolls, chocolates, ice-cream, and pastel coloured frilled girls' dresses with can-cans. Every time she comes home loaded with goodies for her six nephews and nieces she is scolded by her mother: "You should save your salary for studying abroad. You have no father to fend for you. You should be careful."

Whenever Nasreen comes to Dhaka from Madras or Karachi, her bags are packed with clothes, hand-bags, toys and what have you for her friends and family. Her friends naturally call her on the phone when she arrives, and she then has the fun of her life of distributing beautiful knickknacks from overseas among her close friends.

Well-to-do Dhakites spread their largesse not only among their friends and family but to anybody who is unusually nice to them. Nargis, the other day, calls up from D.O.H.S and says to me, "I have a beautiful blue pin striped shirt for the telephone operator in your office who has always been getting me the line to you for the past two years. I know I've never met him but I think he deserves it."

one should ask oneself a soul-searching question. Now that the election is to be held in months time in May next as demanded by the opposition, that too under a neutral, non-partisan caretaker government as demanded by the opposition, and that the Prime Minister is to resign well before the election also as demanded by the opposition, is there any plausible reason to justify continuing the non-cooperation or even a semi-violent civil disobedience movement with compounded consequential misery, distress and loss to the general mass of people and to the nation as a whole?

What the 12 crore people really care at present is not whether the 15th February election and the 6th parliament are unjust or event unlawful, as long as they are assured that the Prime Minister is going to resign within a few weeks and that the election to form a parliament of everybody's choice and participation under a neutral, non-partisan caretaker government is going to be held in a couple of months time.

Some indications have also been received most recently suggesting that the rigours of non-cooperation will be somewhat eased gradually. This is a welcome development and, if the action is taken, would merit appreciation.

Another friend of mine from Wari was going round the bend looking for gifts. She had been out shopping for a week despite the recent trouble in town.

Tarana, a young woman at Crescent Road, spends an enormous portion of her salary in buying stuffed teddy bears, speeding battery-run toy cars, walkie-talkie dolls, chocolates, ice-cream, and pastel coloured frilled girls' dresses with can-cans. Every time she comes home loaded with goodies for her six nephews and nieces she is scolded by her mother: "You should save your salary for studying abroad. You have no father to fend for you. You should be careful."

Whenever Nasreen comes to Dhaka from Madras or Karachi, her bags are packed with clothes, hand-bags, toys and what have you for her friends and family. Her friends naturally call her on the phone when she arrives, and she then has the fun of her life of distributing beautiful knickknacks from overseas among her close friends.

Well-to-do Dhakites spread their largesse not only among their friends and family but to anybody who is unusually nice to them. Nargis, the other day, calls up from D.O.H.S and says to me, "I have a beautiful blue pin striped shirt for the telephone operator in your office who has always been getting me the line to you for the past two years. I know I've never met him but I think he deserves it."

Similarly, Rowshan buys trinkets like bead necklaces and aluminum bangles from shops near New Market to placate her bias at home, and this is not just during the two Eids. They too must have their joys and pleasures," she explains her generosity.

Receiving presents isn't joy, happiness to most but giving also entails a sense of satisfaction and completion. No wonder there are shops in the city that specialise in selling wrapping papers and gift cards.