# The Baily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

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# **BNP's Complaints**

In a press conference yesterday BNP Chief Begum Zia said it was premature to either accept or reject the poll results because the process was not yet complete. However, as the BNP is totally committed to democracy, she and her party are willing to accept any verdict of the people which places the mantle on the BNP either as a ruling party or as a party in the opposition, she added.

An election spontaneously acclaimed as having been free and fair by probing international monitor groups has unfortunately drawn a flak from the losing side. Leaders of Bangladesh Nationalist Party have accused the Caretaker Government, the EC, and a certain section of administrative and electoral officials of backing a particular political party in committing what it terms a massive, pre-planned, conspiratorial and unprecedented rigging in the polls. They claim to have detected this in 111 constituencies where obviously they have lost and now want fresh polling to be done there.

There is a contradiction in their line of thinking in that they regarded as 'mysterious' the withholding of results in 27 constituencies where the EC has ordered repolling in 116 voting centres on June 19 duly taking into cognizance the unto-

ward incidents taking place there.

The BNP's post-election observations read much more than a repeat of the reactions one remembers the Awami League had made known after the 1991 polls. A party securing a sizeable presence of 104 seats already in the parliament and leading in another 12 out of the 27 constituencies where there would be repolling is evidently poised for the status of by far the strongest opposition in the political history of Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, it can afford to be gracious in the further thought that otherwise they would be only confirming the impression about finding fault with an election when losing and hailing it when winning.

At any rate, we believe, the BNP should now apply to itself everything it had said in 1991 to the Awami League in response to that party's somewhat strident note against the conduct of

polls at that time. .

We note that Begum Zia has ruled out any question of calling upon her supporters to go for any street agitation at this stage. This is good augury. She has brought her litany of charges before the Election Commission regarding the conduct of polls. While welcoming her approach of putting all the complaints before the EC and waiting for its opinion there on, we urge the EC to examine all the charges brought by her with the seriousness these deserve so that the election can be put above any questioning by any quarters.

## From Rajshahi with Reminder -

UNICEF's Progress of Nation (PON) '96 report calls for an immediate shift in our focus from the gloss of electoral exuberance back to the grime and grease inherent in our existence. Released in Rajshahi, it contained enough reasons to regenerate the old concern over the paucity of pure drinking water, a fact that is plaguing the local public health. The parallel revelation of skin disease spreading among the children there makes it a compelling case for a serious cerebration and action on the issue of potable water. The sleepy dog syndrome of the authorities in health sector and the general indifference of the people to dermatological disorders would tend to make light of the sufferings of the children in the subdivisional headquarter of northern Bangladesh. But the prevalence of scabies over there is just the tip of the iceberg; an enormous package of psycho-somatic problems may have already arrived at the door of our health consciousness and just waiting to barge in and leave a trail of devastation in the ranks of future generations.

It has been quite some time since our alarming acquaintance with the potential monstrosity of health hazard due to the presence of arsenic poison in the water of our daily use. Unfortunately, hardly anything has been heard of any effective measure anywhere in the country to combat the problem which could and evidently has got worse with the passage of time. The suffering children of Rajshahi serve as a rueful reminder of the potential time bomb we are all sitting on. Not to be myopically specific, not just water alone, all lifesustaining elements, be it air, be it water, need care and concern for unabated and unblighted supply. Indifference or inability of today's authorities is not exhausting itself in its negative ability of making the adult citizenry's life hell but more importantly it is pushing us towards the dreadful possibility of emerging as a nation best suited for the purpose of research on various forms of physical and mental disorders.

## Hardly a Better World

The number of armed conflicts in the world last year decreased to 30 as compared with 32 in 1994 and 36 in 1989.

We are not, however, globally sleeping a wee bit more peacefully by virtue of this trend which is in itself hardly consistent with the feeling of relief generated at the end of the cold war. Furthermore, a new concern has arisen over a diminishing superpower or multilateral control over adverse developments in many countries.

The great powers and multilateral security organisations face the challenges of mostly internalised conflicts which are also keeping the riven countries on an attrition course.

The surge of internal conflicts in many countries together with the diminishing international influence on the courses of events holds danger to world peace. Even though we are largely free today from inter-state wars, some of which had risked a nuclear holocaust not long ago, there is hardly any cause for complacence with nuclear capabilities remaining intact and intra-state conflicts bearing a potential for spill-overs to draw others into the vortex.

The civil wars present no-win situations. And even the negotiated settlement of the conflict in Bosnia-Harzegovina dubbed otherwise as 'spectacular' has run into difficulties as neither side seems satisfied with the status quo. An international mediation's efficacy lies in the strength of the mandate behind it.

# An Election Replete with Lessons

Now that the provisions for caretaker government is enshrined in the constitution, future ministers should see that they remain much more accountable to the public in a regime of free and fair election. Reward the best and punish the worst is the outcome of a free and fair election.

E would like to con-Vgratulate the Chief of the caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman and his Advisers, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Mr Abu Hena and his entourage for gifting Bangladesh with an epoch making free, fair and neutral election. The world at large appreciated our route to democracy in 1991 when for the first time in our national history, a free, fair and neutral election under a caretaker government took place to elect 300 parliamentarians. Unfortunately, however, the polls of February 1996 demolished Bangladesh's image outside and pinned some despair on the horizon of a free and fair election in Bangladesh. Thanks are due to those who fought relentlessly and sacrificed their lives and property to revive people's right to freely choose their own representatives. After the dent in image following the immediate past election. Bangladesh and Bangalees seem to be back again on a glorious journey towards a democratic future. All those who participated in the election '96 — winners or losers had a definite contribution to-

wards this end · Admittedly, holding of a free, fair and neutral election this time appeared much harder when compared with 1991. As many be recalled, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was made President and since a presidential form of government was in practice, the then president inherited all the powers and the privileges bestowed upon the incumbent by the constitution of Bangladesh. The government headed by Justice Habibur Rahman, however, was placed in an

uncomfortable and uneasy position where serious administrative problems cropped up, because the 13th amendment was also made, allegedly, to empower the president to axe the caretaker government, if needed. Few seeming attempts virtually began to rock the boat but the honesty, integrity and sense of patriotism on the part of the whole cabinet saved the spoil. One should, therefore, be more appreciative of the role that the current government had to play to foil "palace politics" along with its mandated duties to conduct an impartial

#### **Few Facts**

election.

The 12th June election and its aftermath brought to the fore a number of features which are worthy of mention. Few of those are as follows. The participation rate in the election was 73 per cent. This is much higher than that in the 1991 general election and, perhaps, stands close the those countries averages who lie above us in terms of development indicators. The hike in the share within a span of just five years, only point to the rising awareness about the freedom to choose one's own representatives. It also, possibly, indicates that given a free and fair environment, a free and fair election is the only outcome. Of course, the core role in this respect was played by the news and press media - the pillars of sustaining a democratic culture. Second,

the increased participation of

women in the election drew attention of the domestic and foreign observers. Even in rural areas, where women are said to be relatively more illiterate and less empowered, they were is queues to cast their votes. Third, the fundamentalists performed miserably bad in this election. Not only in terms of number of seats in the parliament but also in terms of the share in total votes cast, this group lost sufficient grounds. Has this higher participation rate of

women anything to do with it?

BNP stalwarts who failed to retain their caps. While in power, those stars allegedly stole attention for many of their unpopular activities. An election process that disdains about 80 per cent of the former policy makers wearing ministerial caps again should be viewed as reflection of people's choice and aspirations. Now that the provisions for caretaker government is enshrined in the constitution, future ministers should see that they are not termed as monsters by the public in a

# Beneath the Surface by Abdul Bayes

Only researchers can say something on this issue. But suffice it to say here, perhaps, that a transparent democratic process, the existence of the rule of law would go a long way to challenge fundamentalists in this country. Fourth, the recently concluded election dashed a number of ex-ministers to the ground. Messrs Majidul Haq (Magura). SM Mustafizur Rahman (Bagerhat). Salam Talukder (Jamalpur and Tangail), A Matin Chowdhury (Rupgani). Mosharraf Hossain (Daudkandi), Keramat Ali

(Patuakhali). Mir Shawkat Ali

(Dhaka). Tarikul Islam (Je-

ssore), A A Noman (Chi-

ttagong) are some of those

regime of free and fair election. Reward the best and punish the worst is the outcome of a free and fair elec-

Complacency Ruled Out But as a nation, we should not stay complacent with the performance of the current process itself. A number of thorny- issues seem to gripe the process. For example, presence of money and muscle power still tends to dictate the election terms in many parts of the country. The EC made praiseworthy moves to this effect in the recent past but more needs to be done. The EC as a constitutional unit

should be given more powers and facilities to tackle these issues. Any government in power should always bear in mind that they are the products of a free and fair election conducted by the EC and, therefore, necessary arrangements should immediately be aloot to streamline and strengthen it. Again, in few areas the minorities in Bangladesh are allegedly scared away from easting their votes. We expect that the EC should take up this matter seriously and arrest such happenings in the future.

#### Bravo Magura!

Let us not forget that the

caretaker government and the kind of EC that we see now have their origin in Magura a small, underdeveloped and erstwhile unnoticed area in Bangladesh. Allegation of massive vote rigging in a bi-election brought the whole opposition in the parliament on its feet to demand a caretaker government bill. The subsequent events are known to everybody. Besides massive vote rigging at that time in Magura. another episode also brought Magura to the limelight. The minister from Magura — Mr Majidul Haq was charged with mounting corruption in the parliament. A parliamentary committee was also formed, perhaps, to investigate into the matter. Anyhow, the then minister and his constituency Magura stole news paper headings for a longwhile. The 1996 election results of Magura 1 and 2

show that BNP has lost in both these seats. Thanks to the Magura people for not rejecting the hypotheses that the bi-election was pervasively Life Boat, Rain Coat

The political deseters faced heavy disaster in the just concluded general election. Some of the deserters considered Awami League as "life boat" and some embraced BNP as their rain coat" just before the election. Mentionable figures like Shamsul Huda Chowdhury Justice Nurul Islam (JP to AL) could not pass the test. Nor could Messrs Abul Hasnat, Major (Retd) Monjur Kader and Maj Gen (Retd) Mahmudul Hasan (JP to BNP) win. Joining a particular political party to win and then lose is both more sad and shameful than losing in the election without changing the platform.

Epilogue

Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, reportedly, bashed the caretaker government for its alleged "partisan" role in the election. He alleged that massive rigging took place during the 12 June election. His observations seem to be just the opposite of what the domestic and foreign news media, monitors and observers appear to suggest. His post-election observations of the 15 February polls also had the same flavour Conscientious citizens tend to believe that the setback of BNP was caused due to (a) growing terrorism. (b) pervasive politicization of administration. (c) the fertilizer crisis. (d) the 15 February farcical election. Of course a part of the reasons are adduced to the miserable performance of Dr Chowdhury in the TV programme: Sabinaye Jante Chai

# Dodgy Tactics in Kashmir

Elections, except the one in 1977, have been a farce and the Kashmiris have been treated like dumb driven cattle. They have never enjoyed their democratic right to rule themselves. Nor have they experienced liberty and the interplay of ideas that free ballots bring in their wake.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

CROSS the mountains, in the valley, there is a city ▲ **A** of house tops. It enjoys the pure air and the sunlight. and turns its face upward to the sky. Srinagar, as it is called, has seen in the past seven years bright dawns proving false over the blighted landscape.

The crude use of violence by the security forces on the one hand and the militants on the other has converted Kashmir into a blood-stained tragedy. It has meant the death of thousands, the destruction of temples and shrines (mazar) and the exit of lakhs of Hindus. the Kashmiri Pandits, who are the warp and woof of ancient culture. The atrocities - and the indignities - perpetrated on ordinary people tell a long story. Still it is far from end-

In the last few months, a new organisation of militants. the Akhwan Muslimeen, has come up, cold, unfeeling and ruthless. It is supposed to be a breakaway group of such militants as have raised the standard of azadi. This is possible. But its victims are not members of the security forces, as was in the past. The victims are human rights activists, independent journalists and

critics of New Delhi. . And it is no more a secret that they, called the Sarkari militants, operate with immunity because no action is taken against the crimes they commit. Their places of stay are protected by the security forces and most of them bivouac near the barracks.

Whether they are paid or not is not so relevant as the fact that they extort and loot at will. As an anti-militancy operation. similar groups were constituted in Punjab and they played havoc with the state.

Against this background it is not surprising that an attempt has been made on the lives of Abdul Gani Lone and Syed Ali Shah Geelani more than once. They are senior leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference and they make no secret of their opposition to New Delhi.

The recent attack on them - a bomb exploded at Lone's residence and unidentified gunmen, fired at Geelani's house — was on the same day. suggesting a plan. And as it has happened in the past, the culprits are not traceable. Even if the allegation that the Sarkari militants are at the back is rejected, the administration's non-chalant attitude raises

Had such incidents taken place in a country which knows no rule of law, it would have been understandable. But India still has police, which normally pursues crimes, and has a government machinery which, however lackadaisical, protects people without inquiring about their views. It is still not a law of jungle. Then why are there different standards for the people in Kash-

Lone and Geelani may not be to the liking of the govern-

ment. Their views may also be diametrically opposed to the majority in India. But that does not make them lesser citizens. They have equal rights. Why should their assailants not be hauled up. There is an inexplainable laxity in their case or, for that matter, persons like them. The murder of Gulam Rasul, a journalist, who

was killed at Palampur near

Srinagar, some time ago re-

back one would find that the

estrangement of Kashmiris be-

gan when they realised that

there were two sets of law or

standard, one for them and

one for the rest of India. Even

from the days of Sheikh Ab-

dulla the state has been ruled

from New Delhi not Srinagar.

When he protested, he was

imprisoned and stayed in jail

for nearly 12 years. Prejudices

and preferences of rulers at

New Delhi have mattered the

most, not the wishes of people.

In fact, if one were to look

mains untraced.

New Delhi has been deciding who will be the state Chie Minister, his cabinet col leagues and even senior offi cials. The autonomy under article 370 has been eroded law by law.

Elections, except the one in 1977, have been a farce and the Kashmiris have been treated like dumb driven cattle. They have never enjoyed their democratic right to rule themselves. Nor have they ex-

perienced liberty and the in-

terplay of ideas that free bal-

The recent Lok Sabha elec-

tions have been no better. The

Indian media has itself ques-

tioned its fairness. The voters

were forced to go to polling

booths, as officials have admit-

ted in private. All that the

Rashtriya Rifles, an army outfit,

wanted to see was the mark on

people's finger, indicating that

they had voted. The Sarkari

militants were given free entry

into polling stations 'in na-

tional interest. No wonder.

Congress won 4 out of 6 seats.

One fails to understand the

lots bring in their wake.

India, much less abroad. If any proof was needed about the suppression of people's rights. the Lok Sabha poll has provided one. Fear stalked the valley. Still the election commission has patted itself on the The disconcerting part is

purpose of this futile exercise.

It has not impressed people in

that the exercise has encouraged the government to go ahead with the state election. No doubts, it can be held, as the Lok Sabha one was. But what does New Delhi want to prove? It cannot win the chit of normalcy in this manner. Ultimately, people have to be won over. And this is not the way. It has distanced them more from New Delhi than be-

First thing's first. Governor Rao should be recalled and a process of reconciliation should begin. His rule is too authoritarian, too inhuman. A responsive approach and the administration sans force may rebuild bridges for serious talks with the Kashmiri lead ers. They are more realistic now than three, four years ago.

The euphoria of intifada and Jihad has waned in the valley. People are disillusioned not only with the state of militaricy of different origin but also with the position they have been reduced to in the game of power politics between India

and Pakistan. They are sick and tired of the whole thing They want peace, a normal life

They may begin to have a different opinion of New Delhi if they can still be convinced that justice is the corner-stone of Indian polity. At present they are questioning every institution, above all the rule of law. It is more than a coincidence that whether it is a cold-blood murder of a human rights activist or an attempt on the lives of Kashmiri leaders. no suspects, much less culprits, are arrested. None is grilled at the question centre like of which are dotting the state for other purposes. The Indian media has also preferred to turn a blind eye. It appears as if none cares.

The impression which has gone deep into the psyche of Kashmiris is that they are dispensable. New Delhi, they believe, wants territory, not them. The Deve Gowda government's undertaking on more autonomy may not evoke response it should if the Kashmiris come to believe that their leaders are sought to be eliminated physically, not po-

litically.

When even the few human rights activists in the valley seek refuge in Delhi or elsewhere because of the fear of Sarkari militants, it is apparent that the law has got mixed with the lawlessness. The priority of the new government should be to re-establish the dignity of law so that people, whatever their views, are not bumped off by the elements, which are at present above law.

### Traffic congestion in and around Wari

Sir, With regard to the perennial traffic congestion we, the residents of Wari, and those living further south of our city, are living in a choked condition, and I avail of this opportunity to bring to the notice of the concerned authorities only some of our agonising

One: The road through the children's park on the west of Bangabhaban connecting Toyenbee Circular Road with Rajuk Avenue, when opened to vehicular traffic about four years ago, was meant exclusively for non-commercial motorised vehicles. During the numerous 'hartal' days last year, City Corporation garbageremoving vehicles, petrol tankers, buses, auto-rickshaw and auto-tempos took upon themselves the liberty of using the road. During the non-cooperation movement of certain political parties earlier this year, pedalled rickshaws and rickshaw-vans joined the fray. and on occasions the commotion was so nerve-wrecking that the link between the new and the old parts of the city through that park did not even permit eased pedestrian movement. The jam thus caused for at least twelve to fourteen hours a day is so stifling that is often takes an hour or more to get out from one end to the other end of the track, which is hardly two hundred yards in length. The northern gate of the road also

Two: For the past three weeks 'Karatoa' named passenger buses, supposed to be plying non-stop between Dhaka and Narayanganj leaves from Jaikali Mandir Road-Dhaka-Chittagong National Highway Crossing, opposite to Super hotel. The bus-stand extends from Toyenbee Circular Road to the National Highway and causes terrific obstruction in

requires to be widened.

the area. Three: Dhaka-Mawa busstand was officially shifted by

police authorities more than two years ago from Hare Street-Folder Street crossing to the south of the so-called Berlin Wall' constructed during the regime of Mr Hussain Muhammad · Ershad on the south of Rajuk Avenue. But in open defiance of police restrictions and in the nose of the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (East), Dhaka-Mawa buses continue to be parked. constricting Folder Street to a mere lane. Against the eastern wall of Baldah Garden, barely twenty-five yards from the western gate of the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, a sizeable portion of the road is also blatantly used by private persons for storing and disposal of sand and bricks. An autorickshaw stand has also sprouted up there, I do not know, whether with or without police clearance.

Four: The entire National Highway from the Hatkhola Road-Wari Christian cemetery crossing to the Nawabpur Road-Bangabandhu Avenue intersection has been converted into a bus-stand of various routes, local as well as out-station. This unauthorised busstand should be removed immediately for smooth flowing of traffic and also for clearing the polluted atmosphere of the neighbourhood.

Five: The entire Toyenbee Circular Road on the south of Bangabhaban from the Ittefaq crossing to the southernmost point of Bangabandhu Avenue should be totally cleared of buses so that we have an easy access to and from the new part of the city.

Six: The whole area of Folder Street has been converted into workshops for repairing motorised vehicles, refrigerators and air-conditioners. This should be cleared with instantaneous effect.

In order to ascertain whether any of my complaints is a deviation from the actual state of affairs, I request the Adviser-in-Charge of the relevant Ministry in the present

caretaker administration, the elected Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation and the concerned top police officials of the Dhaka Metropolitan area to move incognito along the regions mentioned by me during the daytime, or even during evening hours, of any working day. My request, on behalf of residents of this south-eastern part of our city, to the relevant officials, is to see that we have unhindered access to and from the city centre, and beyond.

Before concluding, I would like to express an apprehension of a foreboding factor. The space on which Hardeo Glass Factory was located is at present being transformed into a shopping complex of the type of the now-famous Banga Bazaar to be known as Raidhani Super Market. traffic around the proposed market is not regulated with foresighted planning now. our situation would be suffocating and far more muffling.

Many roads in the city require to be made exclusive for one-way traffic and, to alleviate our throttling sufferings, the concerned authorities may consider some of the thoroughfares in and around Wari to be converted accordingly.

Quazi Ariffur Rahman 7/1. Hare Street Wari, Dhaka-1203

### BTV's affinity?

Sir, For the last few months, with deep concern, we have been observing that Bangladesh Television (BTV) has been unnecessarily telecasting activities of an NGO's Country Director for unknown reasons. This involvement of the BTV is considered by us, who are aware of the organization, as irresponsible, for it's rather helping to camouflage the activities of the Country Director of an internationally controversial organization. The

Hunger Project (THP). Mr Kazi Fazlur Rahman, wrote in his article published

in the Daily Sangbad dated March 26, 1995 captioned "In the name of removing poverty" quoting from the book "The Lords of Poverty" by Mr Graham Hancock that in the year 1985. The Hunger Project raised USS 79,81,005 while only US\$2,10,775 was sent to the poor countries. The rest of the money was believably spent for the officials of THP.

Through this letter, I draw the attention of the appropriate authority to take necessary measures so that the most costly and effective national electronic mass media do not serve any individual's interest. Let BTV be accountable to the people for every second of transmission.

Md Mahbubul Alam 47, Satmasjid Road Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1209.

### Bangladesh hockey

Sir, The results of Bangladesh in the recently concluded Third Junior Asian Hockey Championships has evoked a great deal of hope and enthusiasm in the hearts of sports fans in the country. After creditable wins against India and Singapore. Bangladesh bowed out of the tournament following defeats against Malaysia and Japan in matches reported to have involved controversial umpiring.

I would, however, like to express a note of skepticism. This is not the first time our "boys" have done well in agegroup tournaments at both home and abroad in different sports. One recalls the 'brilliance" of the BKSP football team in the Dana and Gothia Cups in Europe. Yet disappointingly none of these results have translated into success at the senior level. Per haps the reason for this is that our sports authorities view success at the junior level as an end in itself while other countries see it only as a stepping stone to gather experience for more important battles at the senior level. The

tournament at Singapore was an under-19 one. Yet the Bangladesh team included seven players who were students of Dhaka University. Given the system loss and session jam in our education system it has become rare to have students enter university below the age of 19. Perhaps the age of our players in Singapore was attributable to machinations at the Passport Office rather than their actual date of birth (unless they happen to be academic as well as hockey prodigies)!

I would also like to express my concern over the lack of discipline of some of our play ers in the match against Japan where three were sent off. They should remember that they are ambassadors of the country and should not let their unhappiness over an umpiring decision tarnish our image abroad.

Nevertheless I will be disappointed if the authorities do not press on and adopt constructive schemes to pursue greater success in hockey which, I believe, has more cotential for us than football or cricket at the international

Mustafizur Rahman Khan 37/A Indira Rd, Dhaka-1215.

### "Rotary Int'l awards Hasina....."

Sir. My attention has been drawn to a news item captioned as 'Rotary Int'l awards Hasina with Paul Harris Fellow published in the second page of your issue dated 11 June 1996. The news as published in your esteemed daily does not reflect the correct status of Paul Harris Fellowship Award. The Manual of Procedure of Rotary International defines a Paul Harris Fellow as an "Individual who contributes or in whose honor or memory is contributed US \$1000 00 to the Rotary Foundation". Rotary International does not, on its own, bestow Paul Harris Fellowship to any one. Rotary

International recognises donations to the Rotary Foundation by naming the person a Paul Harris Fellow, in whose honour or memory a Rotary Club of a Rotarian donates US \$1000/to the Rotary Foundation. In the instant case, I understand, Rotary Club of Dhaka Cosmopolitan denated US \$1000/- to the Rotary Foundation to get Sheikh Hasina recognised as a

Paul Harris Fellow.

Incidentally I would mention that Begum Khaleda Zia was recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow five years ago by the Rotary Foundation. There are a few hundred thousand Paul Harris Fellows in the world including more than five hundred in Bangladesh.

Iftekharul Alam Past District Governor, Rotary International, Gulshan, Dhaka

#### Gilman's communique

Sir, I have gone through the letter No. II published in your esteemed daily on 9.6.96 under the caption 'Gilman's communique'. In this connection I like to say that the writer did not read the letter of Mr Gilman properly and attentively. Because Mr Gilman, a member of the US House of Representatives did not request the President of Bangladesh to make army officers trial open, free and fair. Mr Gilman urged the President to make him certain whether the rights of the accused army officers are respected or not and whether their trial would be open, free and fair or not? This is an interference in our government activities in respect of defence of an independent and sovereign country and cannot be considered as a request. I think the writer will be able to realise what Gilman wanted to say in his letter to Bangladesh President.

Salauddin Chowdhury West Masdhair, Narayanganj.