

A Greater Challenge

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been explicit from the very beginning that she wanted a government of consensus and that her first job in office would be to eliminate terrorism.

Elimination of terrorism continues as the first item on the card. But the Prime Minister has a greater challenge at hand now — one which, if mishandled, can damage all her other programmes.

Khaleda Zia, on assumption of office in 1991, was met with a similar situation — the challenge of the Doodsonday tidal bore attack in the southern districts.

If necessary, all helicopters must be requisitioned for relief and all water vessels in government service must be put to flood relief task.

The Prime Minister herself must stand by the people in distress, talk and sympathise with the victims and urge them to take heart and ensure their government help.

Sad Commentary

This year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination seems to have been begotten by trouble upon misdeed. Followed by the first two exam days marked by a demoralising spree of large scale expulsions.

Not only more than thousand examinees from different centres across the country were expelled for adopting unfair means, but also incidents, like road blockage, manhandling the government officials, setting fire and stabbing a college principal carved considerable niche in yesterday's dailies.

Thirty-five government officials proving rather ham-handed in their role as flying monitors were injured. Heaven knows how the authorities will decide the fate of the twenty eight answer sheets that went missing in the martial mess.

For sheer depression the story that beat all others in the race was the stabbing incident of a college principal in Meherpur. Here again expulsion of a student triggered off the trouble.

Worse news was in store from a couple of centres in Khulna. Fire was set to a part of the Phultala Women's College building following the expulsion of a student leader of sort of the Jatiyatadai Chhatra Dal (JCD).

The problem lies there. Students and youths are the greatest source of our strength as well as weakness too. Because the juggernaut of our politics has a history of using the students as its wheels.

Redolent of Saurav

When he was getting dismissed pretty cheaply and regularly people, particularly pessimists and the preachers of the philosophy that Bengalees do not make quality sportsmen or women were indulging in negative complacency.

The second hundred in his second successive test earned him a place in the elite club of five batsmen in the world. His predecessors in this feat are Bill Ponsford, Doug Walters, and Greg Blewett from Australia.

Saurav's rare feat could not, however, be better timed. With India trailing one nil in the three match Test series and desperately searching for the equaliser in the last match of the series.

It is, perhaps, neither fair nor pragmatic to comment on the deeds of any government that is only 11 days old. But the words that came out, within those 11 days, from the speeches of the PM and her cabinet colleagues warrant some scrutiny to put the cup and the lip together.

The nation witnessed important pronouncements from the side of the present government in the recent past which, no doubt, would inject some rays of hopes among its citizens.

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Let the Morning Show the Day

If the words of the PM are closely and quickly followed by her deeds, a better governance and, as such, a better future, should not be out of reach.

sent government of Sheikh Hasina can turn the words contained in (a), (b) and (c) into real actions, she would be able to set a landmark in institutionalising democracy by achieving to the autonomy of the electronic news media.

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and of other parties. The success from such a war is not far to seek. The head of the government needs only to be neutral, committed and less wishful to continue with the power.

On the economic front, the government needs to move cautiously and judiciously. There seems a lot of misgivings on the commitments of some of them. For example,

farmers get the input at Tk 189? Absolutely not. In fact, they had to pay Tk 400-600 for a bag. The subsidy so offered, was visibly pickpocketed by those rent seeking mandarins who 'thrive' on controlled prices.

There would be many to argue that the government should not lower import duties further for the sake of (i) revenue generation and (ii) import substituting industries.

Beneath the Surface

by Abdul Bayes



what is meant by agricultural subsidy? After all, agriculture includes crop sector, fisheries, livestock etc. One needs to be clear as to which part of the sector would get subsidy and why they should get such a subsidy.

culture, a timely delivery of this vital input and a timely delivery of agricultural credit at the right moment should emerge as the most important policy initiatives.

Cases of Communal Incitement: EC Must Act

by Muhammad Quamrul Islam

It is the primary responsibility of the politicians and government functionaries to ensure security of person and property of each citizen of the Republic

FOLLOWING the polling on 12th June and also on 19th and 22nd June in some constituencies, for the seventh Parliament of the country, a number of reports have appeared in the press on persecution of minority community, more specifically Hindus, to hinder their free exercise of franchise.

From then on, reports have been pouring one after another, till date regarding atrocious crimes committed, under so-called political slogans, actually by anti-social elements, on the minority community for their assumed support to 'boat'.

Previously a proposal was tabled to double the number of polling centres to facilitate easy access of the voters concerned.

country permanently? No, rather an ominous silence is prevailing which, in no way, will contribute to the consolidation of democracy.

politicians and so-called fundamentalists and communalists. History testifies that Muslims and Hindus fought shoulder to shoulder to liberate the country from Pakistani occupation forces in 1971 and established the independent People's Republic of Bangladesh.

placed some revealing statistics before me in this regard. According to him, members of minority community have voted for Awami League and other parties too.

My friend cited and it is also known to all that many BNP candidates, including Saifur Rahman and Sadek Hossain Khoka, have won from Hindu inhabited areas.

He further cited that even a few Jatiya Party candidates and one from Jamaat won the

current account convertibility tility should be furthered by relaxing some other binding constraints. The argument that a floating exchange rate would swell the market with high demand and thus empty the foreign exchange reserve basket is not theoretically tenable either.

The few tips noted above are to draw the attention of the policy makers. The government needs to be careful in tinkering with them. If the economy performed worse over the last 25 years, it is because of pervasive government controls on the economy and bad governance.

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.

Whither honesty?

Sir, I have come under the impression that honest people are in the process of becoming extinct from this country.

These were human traits previously found only in a few persons. Now these traits are rampant among most of us.

Geneva camp

Sir, Geneva camp, home to thousands of stranded Biharis, is a name synonymous with desperation, discontent and ennu.

The condition of these camps are deplorable. There is no proper drainage system, overflowing sewage and scarcity of water make life miserable.

campers are the youths. They are disenchanted. The malcontent are for doing what under normal conditions they would keep away from.

Driven by poverty and desperation they take to the streets. Forced to resort to illegal means to stave off hunger.

Mujib Coat

Sir, As reported by your staff reporter and published by you on June 29, tailoring shops in Dhaka are receiving many orders for stitching Mujib Coats.

such coats, even by those persons, who were till recently wearing 'safari' suits or other dresses.

What does this sudden love for Mujib Coat reveal? It simply tells us the grim story. All those who have developed sudden fancy for this dress think that it will facilitate them to identify themselves with the ruling party.

Commercial utilisation of valuable mineral 'black-gold' of Cox's Bazar

Sir, I have been writing on valuable minerals, 'black-gold' of Cox's Bazar, in various national dailies and weeklies of our country and also urging upon our authorities concerned for the commercial utilisation of the minerals.

Every day they eagerly look for some signs of hope and fervently pray for their repatriation to Pakistan where they can pick up their lost pieces and rebuild their lives.

Head gear of bearers

Sir, I am surprised and disappointed to see Dhaka Club bearers with 'Turki-tups'

I am neither a scientist nor a geologist but by dint of my own eagerness, curiosity and initiative, I have accomplished field work single-handedly, carried out survey and research works with my own indigenous method and technology.

Reflections on Rural Income

Sir, I have read the above article written by Dr Bayes published in The Daily Star on 29 June, 1996.

I have noted two aspects in the article: 1. Household income of Tk 56,480 in 1995 vs Tk 45,155 in 1988 on the basis of per capita income of \$182 and \$224 in 1988 and 1995 respectively.

For your information, I made a crude survey at my village of Char Bheduria union of Bhola district and found the per capita income to be of the order of \$42 only.

(Turkish caps). Perhaps are aware that Turki-tup was widely used during the reign of Turkish Khalafat.

Dr A K M Habibullah, H-30, Road-4 Block-F, Section-1 Mirpur, Dhaka.

President and Ombudsman

Sir, The tenure of the present President Abdur Rahman Biswas expires in September this year.

We as citizens of the country want to see the government function above narrow party interests, and implant democratic values in all spheres of national life.

With their proven track records, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, president of the first caretaker government and Justice Mohammed Habibur Rahman, chief adviser of the second caretaker government, are undoubtedly such persons.

election with the support of Hindu voters. Right to vote according to one's own choice cannot be snatched by force.

We find reasonings in the above report, which deserve immediate attention of the Election Commission and Home Ministry. Authorities cannot forget that 12 per cent of our present total population comprise of minority communities — Hindus, Buddhists and Christians.

The writer is an Advocate at the Supreme Court

would like to know the sources of this contrasting situation to remove my ignorance.

Finally, I want to say the rate of growth of income from agriculture and non-agricultural sources is very unsatisfactory in this modern age of free market.

Dr A K M Habibullah, H-30, Road-4 Block-F, Section-1 Mirpur, Dhaka.

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