Dhaka, Friday, August 9, 1996

Let it be Quick and Fruitful

We are heartened by a forward movement in the Indo-Bangladesh relationship hitherto caught in a prolonged cycle of drought and immobility. What has already been a steady improvement in terms of pure atmospherics brought about by a change of government in both countries seems now to be speedily followed up by a steady exchange of visits.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan's on-going visit to New Delhi after his Indian counterpart's trip to Dhaka has sent strong initial signals that things are settling down to a substantive course between India and Bangladesh. Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda on whom Faroog Sobhan called on Wednesday to hand over Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's letter of reply to his earlier message to her has expressed some fine sentiments towards Bangladesh. He said that his government was keen to settle the outstanding issues with Bangladesh in the shortest possible time and with that intent in mind was even prepared to resolve the Ganges water sharing issue permanently at the highest political level, if need be. The highest level meet has been qualified by the phrase "if required" which to us means that the problem is no longer deemed to be as intractable as before that it would defy resolution at, let's say, the ministerial level itself. The chemistry of a right political tenor is that it pervades and percolates. We believe that a reflected political will is there to pulsate through the workings of the foreign and water resources ministers of the two countries, let alone those at the level of the two foreign secretaries.

At the technical level, data analysis and establishment of meeting-points can be quickened by the same percolatory will that is likely to have dynamised others on the circuit.

The Indian Prime Minister has sounded most forthcoming also on the question of trade imbalance against Bangladesh. Our proposal that India give a zero tariff access to a selective list of Bangladeshi exportables received a positive response from him while he also green-signalled our exploring new markets in Guwahati and Shil-

We urge both sides to ensure that the outcome of the dialogue is reached at the earliest and is fruitful.

Crusade against Terrorism

Immediately, after the Awami League government took over, its home minister disclosed his plans to bring back misguided youths -terrorists in particular — to normal life. To put this into practice the government has announced a general amnesty and some incentives for the possessors of illegal arms provided that they deposit those within the time-limit between August 7 and 10. We are happy to see that the administration has taken up the issue with the seriousness it deserves. A national seminar held earlier had focused on the salient features of a crusade against terrorism.

So far things have moved in the right direction. Now we would like to see that the next big step which is that the administration hit with its full might at the terrorists who fail to positively respond to the government's call — is taken unwaveringly. There should be no dearth of information about the terrorists with the police and the intelligence branches to ferret out the defiant possessors of illegal arms. What will count most is a political decision arrived at in co-operation with the opposition political parties. Now the government needs to earn the opposition's - particularly the BNP's —confidence in its crusade against terrorism.

If the government shows the way by taking on the ruling party's armed cadres first, the opposition will have no alternative but to extend its cooperation in the matter. That will be one way of doing it; but the more effective way to go about it would be to secure a prior bipartisan consensus on the crusade for its total success.

Sheltering the terrorist elements may yield short-term gains but ultimately, its impact on society is bound to be devastating. If society at large suffers, political parties will be no longer immune from the damning onslaught. So, after the expiry of the August 10 deadline for the deposit of illegal arms, we want to see a determined combing operation to apprehend the last of the terrorists of the country.

Illegal Land Occupation

Illegal occupation of Dhaka City Corporation's lands remains an endemic problem. Sources at the DCC have cited a number of reasons for this. Of these two are particularly intriguing and interesting. One is the backing of a "vested quarter" within the DCC for such acts of occupation and the other concerns the losing of the original map at the time of DCC's shifting of office to the new building.

Will Mayor Mohammad Hanif like to go public and elaborate on the two points his office sources have supplied us with? If there are vested quarters within the DCC with a stake in the non-recovery of the land from illegal possession chances are that they were involved in the removal of the land ownership map itself. It is incredible that such an important document could go missing from the DCC archive. We would very much like to be enlightened as to how the map was lost. There should be a full investigation into it and the report made public.

We understand the difficulty in recovering land where legal complexities and lacunae are involved. But there is an allegation that no serious attempt has been made so far for the purpose. Illegal occupation of DCC land is intertwined with a chain of abetment and musclemanry. You solve this and a number of other problems besetting civic life will be automatically gone.

The BIRDEM Situation — a Test for the Management

by An Analyst

We do not want to see such a fine institution like BIRDEM suffer — be it victimisation by political parties or bad management practises or illogical demands by its employees. We would like to see BIRDEM as a fulfilment of its founder's dream.

healthcare which in turn is a source of pride for Bangladesh. This was possible due to the ics and also for the people at untiring and sincere efforts by large c) Health Institute a first its visionary founder the late class international standard Dr M Ibrahim as well as the teaching/research hospital with revised curriculum and management team/teams that picked up the reigns after the full time core teachers. (6 demise of Dr Ibrahim in Sept acres land has already been alloted by the govt); d) Rehab Dr Ibrahim, a towering percentre and vocational training sonality, ran the organisation

IRDEM has taken pre-

cedence as an interna-

tionally recognised

institution, a technological

leader, in the field of

as his own child, nurturing its

budding departments, shelter-

ing its employees, praising

their achievement, hiding

their shortcomings, never he-

sitating to beg for funds from

the government when re-

quired. His word was law at

BIRDEM, no one questioned

him. How could anyone? He. so

to say, single handedly built

the BIRDEM from scratch,

gave it vision, direction, pro-

vided it all his waking hour.

time money and energy for it

an introduced it to the world.

The result of which is, BIR-

DEM can boast today to be one

of the most advanced centre

for Diabetic Care in the world.

It receives the highest number

of diabetics (2000) daily in its

No Hospital beds

No of Employees

and others

Fixed Assets

Turnover/Govt grant

Free Service for diabetics

No of Branches opened

underway are a NDN - a

network of laboratories to

reach to the village level pro-

viding quality services for all:

b) Heart Centre — construction

work has already started for a

state of the art, modern heart

HEN one returns to the country, even

one naively expects a change

in the scene, not the same

headlines suggesting corru-

ption or political intrigues. I

am not alone in feeling this

way. There are lots of people

returning home from abroad or

staying put here, dropping

pebbles into the well and

waiting in vain for an an-

permeated with corruption?

Why no norms of behaviour

have got delineated? And why

party politics are homogenised

ages? People are looking for

the press reported that the

Supreme Court had adjourned

further hearing on the Jain di-

aries-Hawala case till Septem-

ber 2. No. I did not expect the

case to be concluded by the

time I returned. Still, I be-

lieved the pace would be

quicker and the dates of ad-

journment closer. The

Supreme Court is going on a

snail's pace. The special court

is still slower. I realise such

cases cannot be disposed of

quickly. But what is the point

of verdicts when people are

fogged out? They want some

heads to roll now; they defi-

nitely do not want the same

tarnished faces at the wheel of

. Some time I fear the sev-

eral scrams and hawalas may

turn out to be another scandal

like the Bofors gun kickbacks.

After nearly a decade, the

names of recipients are still

shrouded in the uncertainty

created by the CBI's inten-

tional defay and the Swiss

courts' connivance. If the reg-

istering of cases against about

12 persons can take five years

despite the Supreme Court's

intervention, how long would

it be before some 150 people

politics.

I landed at Delhi the day

around a limited range of im-

replies. They are exasperated.

Why the public life has got

swering splash.

the country, even

after a short period,

centre specially for the diabet-

Expansion plans already

for diabetics. The present management team with Dr Fasih Uddin Mahtab as CEO (Secretary-General) and Prof AK Azad (Joint Secretary-General), have set the pace for development, and their achievements, by no measure mean, would have done Dr Ibrahim proud. There is a national council inclusive of government representation, consisting of 26 persons who regulate the affairs of the association, through monthly meetings, for a term of two years Council members are elected by the general members of the association.

The parent organisation. DAB (Diabetic Association of Bangladesh), established in 1956, is a non-profit organisation in other words no indi-

1995-96

Tk 750 lacs

Tk 5102 lacs

Tk 475.40 lacs/ Tk 1731.71 lack/

Tk 246.90 lacs Tk 975 lacs (approx)

vidual or individuals can pock-

ets its profits, all profits in-

curred will be ploughed back

into the organisation. Trade

union activities viz. CBA etc.

cannot be carried out in such

an organisation as per law of

the land, as such, strikes are

illegal. Just as they are illegal

BIRDEM past and present

Tk 214 lacs

Tk 1874 lacs

1989-90

in the army and other essential services of the government. (see article by Barrister Refigul Huq, published on August 7 in The Daily Star)

In the history of BIRDEM there has been three strikes (All after Dr Ibrahim's death). The first in 1991, involved staff and officers when they agitated for service rules. The second, in 1994, to reinstate a terminated employee. The last one was recently over managements decision to implement contract services for all future entrants to DAB.

The latest strike : Employees were on strike for 4 days. From 21 July to 24 July. The OPD was virtually closed, Lab could not function, patients left the hospital, doctors could not attend to wards, doctors/officers were obstructed from carrying out their duties. Threats, abusive language, slogans deriding the management were resorted to. Meanwhile. the Ministry of Social Welfare which had granted registration to the Employees Welfare Association of DAB has sent a letter cancelling sine die, the present office bearers commit tee, due to their resorting to

illegal strike. It took promise from the secretary of the Prime Minister's office to end the strike. temporarily. Till that time a committee formed by him (without consultation with the NC), comes up with recommendations. It is not known to-date whether such a committee has been formed formally, whether they are working and what are its terms of reference. The tricky questions are : are the contending parties to the issue bound to accept the recommendations of the said committee if it goes against their respective

stands? In the even of refusal from either side, will it not be an awkward situation for the government? Did the NC accept the formation of the committee and its members? Or was it thrust down on them? How does Dr Abul Kalam an ex-employee of BIR-DEM during Dr Ibrahim's time figure into the committee. Who proposed his name if it came from the employees why was not the NC also requested to name names? Is this an enquiry committee or a fact finding committee or purely a recommendatory one? Who will define its status? And when? Perhaps a more mature move would have been to make both the parties sit for negotiation with a government nominated

team to act as umpire.

Some criticism:

a) It may be termed as a failure of the management that the employees resorted to strike causing loss of money and face for BIRDEM; b) What was the reason for the inactivity of the NC during the strike period. Why it took them 4 days to meet for an emergency meeting? c) Being a private enterprise. BIRDEM should take its own decisions regarding its policies, why did it have to run to the government for guidance and protection? d) Management was aware of employees discontent about the contract service, what measures did they take about it? el Why did BIRDEM authority fail to take disciplinary action against ring leaders of the striking employees immediately after their call for strike? Was it indecision, lack of confidence, fear? f] The NC consists mostly of eminent per sonalities but retired from public life, Perhaps younger blood is required to keep pace

with modern developments both in the field of healthcare and management.

Conclusion and suggestions The following thoughts are put forward which may help as policy guidelines for future adoptions at BIRDEM.

 Implementation of proper system for flow of both upward and downward communications. This will help remove misunderstandings at all levels.

2. Proper delegation of authority down to the lowest level possible. Prèsent system tends to be naturally autocratic. Delegation will give managers more confidence in the system and also make them more accountable.

3. To conduct a study whether there is the right man in the right place or not. instances abound where the right man is not in the right job. This should be corrected

quickly 4. Removal of dual subordi-

nation. One man one boss. At many levels a person has to satisfy two or three bosses. This causes loss of efficiency and work suffers. Again the chain of command is not maintained superiors are neglected and juniors are patronised. This erodes the discipline of an organisation.

5. Recruitment inprojects should not be carried out by a few subjectively. All recruitment must be carried out in equal opportunity basis.

Already there are whiffs about nepotism in the air with regards to such appointments. immediate corrective measures are called for.

6. Management by consen sus. This style of management is proving to be the most suc-

cessful all over the world. Had the management circulated their views about implementation of the new contract system and voluntarily called for opinion of staff and employees and then arrived at a consensus, perhaps all this wastage would not have occurred.

7. Training, specially in behaviour, conduct, etc should be made ongoing for personnel dealing with public.

8. The NC needs to be strengthened by way of making it more effective. Peter Drucker the management don says. The non-profit board can get more done if it is energetic, committed, and strong than if it is used as a rubber stamp. The rubber stamp will in the end not stamp at all

when you most need it. 9. Management who inspire instead of issuing directives. listens, instead of giving long speeches, thinks up welfare schemes before their employees think them up are more likely to succeed and survive in

the 21 century. Finally, the times have changed, autocracy has given way to democracy all over the world. Spare the canek and spoil the child no longer applies probably because the child is already spoilt. Just see how our parents death with us and how we are forced to deal with our children. Blame it on whomsoever or whatever you like, but these are hard facts one must recognise and come to terms with.

We do not want to see such a fine institution like BIRDEM suffer be it victimisation by political parties, or bad manage ment practises or illogical demands by its employees. We would like to see BIRDEM as a fulfillment of its founder's dream : A model and an example for all the world over to

The writer is well versed about BIRDEM's workings, and close to remain anonymous to facilitate greater debate on the

Politicians Should Never be Let off

It is up to Congress what it wants to do with Rao, who is 'involved' in several ceases. If there were a secret voting in the Congress Working Committee, Rao would lose. Very few defy him openly. He appears to have on them the dossiers he had collected when he was prime minister

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

mentioned in the diaries are punished?

Scandals in India have no end. A new one breaks out every third day. While the shock over the cattlefeed scam in Bihar has not lessened, a devastating report on the murderous attack on former UP chief minister Mayawati has outraged public opinion, Both are a sad reflection on the administration, and those who guide did it. It is as if for politicians in India, the dividing line between right and wrong, moral and immoral, has ceased to exist.

It would be a sad day for secularism if anger against these involved was sought to be assuaged on the ground that the punishment would help communal forces. Such arguments show superficiality of our moral stand ards.

We have stopped of being aware of what is right and have the desire to act according to what is right and, hence, there is no realisation of what is wrong. And even when someone tries to break with the hypocrisy of silence, he is taken to task.

have not been able to make out why Home Minister Inderiit Gupta was committing, a faux pas when he said that the law would take its course and "The United Front government would punish Rao if he is found guilty, ".Gupta told what was right. But he was pressured to say "sorry." This does not, in any way, lesson the gravity of the case.

It is up to Congress what it wants to do with Rao, who is 'involved' in several ceases. If there were a secret voting in the Congress Working Committee, Rao would lose. Very

few defy him openly. He appears to have on them the dossiers he had collected when he was prime minister The intellectual dishonesty of the present Congress leaders, their self-serving struggle for personal advantage, unmediated by a responsibility to the

truth, is deeply dispiriting. The party should, however, remember that it was routed in 1977 when Mrs Indra Gandhi did not resign in 1975 following her indictment in an election offence. Congress turned her out. But the party went back to her when it

found no alternative. It was the

Janata government's non-per-

formance (1977-79) which

tice the bad name it is getting.

Take the case of Lakhubhai

Pathak, an NRI, who has filed a

cheating case against godman

Chandraswami. naming former

prime minister Narasimha Rao

as the accused. The summons

by a lower court against Rao

did not enhance the Congress

reputation. In such develop-

ments, leaders tender their

resignation and wait till their

name is cleared. Rao would

have become taller if he had

done so. I wish BJP chief LK

Advant had resigned from the

party's presidentship when his

name figured in the Hawala di-

ary. But they are concerned

Still, Congress has to no-

brought her back to power.

with power, not what is right. A CBI source tells me that the agency had obtained from Pathak the information about Rao's involvement in the 8 1 lakh amount more than a decade ago. But the case was hushed up at that time because Rao was foreign minis-

Pathak is no saint, particularly when he nourished the complaint for more than a decade before making it public. But at least he ultimately found courage to do so. I do not want to comment on the merits of the case which is

pending before the court. But

there is no doubting that Rao's

enough to have a pro-Congress

governor, Romesh Bhandari,

transferred from Goa to Luc-

know. His appointment is a

perfect metaphor for the tu-

mult and contradictions that

surround the UP government

Rao's belief is that Congress

would do better in the UP

election if Bhandari were to

head the administration. (In

the absence of an elected gov-

ernment, the governor is all in

all). Rao knows how Bhandari,

as Tripura governor, tried to

implicate in a pay-off scandal

the then three Union minis-

ters - Ghulam Nabi Azad, Bal-

ram Jakhar and B. Shanka-

ranand. The matter came up at

a cabinet meeting. Azad was

Still Rao is powerful

stature has shrunk further.

was supposed to have accepted Rs 50 lakh in London. Jakhar and Shankaranand, allegedly paid Rs. 30 lakh each, were so agitated that they wanted to know why a person like Bhandari was appointed as governor in the first instance. All the three, supported by

most vociferous because he

other cabinet ministers, demanded immediate action against Bhandari. Wearing his usual expression of injured innocence; Rao kept quiet. But when pressed, his laconic reply, again typical of him, was: 'Give me three, four days. " We did not hear of Bhandari till his new appointment, many months later than three, four

And what does one make out when reports are that V P. Singh may refuse to testify against Rao in the ST Kitts case. Rao was then the minister for external affairs and had ordered his officers to authenticate the forged signature of Ajeya Singh, V P . Singh's son, to have bogus account opened in his name. When VP Singh was the prime minister (1990)

the name of Rao from arrough the persons who were to be arraigned by the CBI before the court. What VP Singh did was perhaps politically expedient. But it did not in any way lesson Rao's legal or moral responsibility. The law is concerned not with VP Singh's wishes but with the crime of forgery. One redeeming develop-

he had reportedly struck off

ment in the country is the resolution of UP's Indian Administrative Service Association to single out corrupt officers in its state cadre. I trust every other state is following suit. The central IAS association should also adopt a similar resolution.

The bureaucrats, indeed, can pull the nation out of the quagmire of corruption and nepotism it has got stuck because of motivated decisions by dishonest politicians. The officers should set an example by refusing to carry out such decisions. The media will help them once the disclosures are

Politicians must be exposed so that the fear of their misdeeds becoming public may keep them on toes. But once they are found out, they should not be let off. For, democracy knows of no other way, not even in the west.

Thatari Bazar

Sir, Thatari Bazar off Nawabpur Road is one of the oldest, biggest and busiest markets in the metropolitan city of Dhaka. Hundreds' of people visit the Bazar three times a day in the morning, afternoon and evening for their regular shopping of daily necessities, including rice, pulse, flour, meat, fish, vegetable, spices, oil, salt, sugar, soap, hardware, milk powder, fruits and what not.

However, the bazar lacks modern facilities and amenities. The vast area of the market is made most congested unhygienic, dirty, filthy and polluted. Approach roads, lanes and by-lanes remain muddy and slippery and even flooded during rain.

Hundreds of hawkers and vendors occupy the public thoroughfares, while random parking of rickshaws creates obstruction in the movement of pedestrians. Trucks and other motor vehicles also often block the road. The shop keepers encroach upon a considerable part of public thoroughfare for displaying and storing their merchandise.

It is alleged that cows and goats are regularly illegally vices in weighing.

slaughtered in the market. It is also alleged, rotten beef, mutton, fish are sold and many shopkeepers adopt unfair de-The entire market area is littered with tons of refuse,

and the atmosphere of the

market is filled with unbearable bad odour. Most of the time DCC truck comes to Thatari Bazar to collect huge piles of garbage during peak hours which make the people sick as the noxious and offensive smell spread all over.

thority's business to look into the sad state of affairs of the Would the DCC and DMP

It appears that it is no au-

kindly pay their minimum needful attention to the great Thatari Bazar of Dhaka?

OH.Kabir 6. Hare Street. Wari, Dhaka 1203

Shahed Ali's death

Sir, Shahed Ali, a former deputy speaker of East Pakistan provincial assembly was beaten to death by the honourable members of assembly in September, 1958, during the then United Front Government leading to promulgation of Martial Law by president Iskander Mirza. We have forgotten Shahed Ali but I am tempted to know from senior citizens of the country how he was killed in the floor of the sacred assembly and whether anybody was purfished subsequently for this brutal act. Since the present state minister for information and broadcasting is a historian and the present government often maintain to write correct history. I am tempted to know

some facts in this context through your esteemed daily.

It is time to collect correct facts of the past in the context of rewriting history for our future generation and we should not forget Shahed Ali as it reminds me when the 7th Jatiya Sangsad met on 14th July '96 while the behaviour of many a JS member as shown through BTV, was rather painful and uncourteous.

Ahmedul Alam 14 Esketon Garden Dhaka

"Tax Administration" Sir, I had an opportunity to

read an article titled "Control Mechanisms of Income Tax Administration" written by Mr Dr Dhiman Chowdhury published in your paper on the 28th July, 96. Mr Chowdhury has rightly pointed out the defects of the tax administration. So, we request the National Board of Revenue and the Finance Minister to bring necessary amendments in the ensuring Finance Act for a good and dynamic tax administration for more revenue collec-

Monohar Ali 317/1-A Khilgaon Dhaka

To the mayor of CCC

Sir, In the regime of the last government. Chittagong City Corporation's major Alhaj ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury staged many agitation programmes to press demands for

the city's development — at first 28 points then adding many more. He constantly complained that the previous government was not cooperating with him because he was elected from the then opposition political party. He had asked the people to become united and protest this injus-

In spite of his complains we saw that quite a number of steps had been taken to improve Chittagong city. During the non-cooperation movement Chittagong had suffered a great blow. Many government and public property had been badly damaged, one of them is the newly-built Bangladesh Biman office, which is still in its ravaged and pitiful condi-

We had hoped that when the new government came into power the CCC mayor will take immediate steps to restore what are there to be done. But we are very disappointed to notice no such endeavour on his part. We fervently hope Alhaj ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury will remain sincere in his efforts to press his manifold demands as before and will not hesitate to stage agitation programmes as he did in the past if the present government remains deaf in his pleas which he will put forward for the welfare for the people of Chittagong.

Nur Jahan 1390 East Nastrahad Chittagong

Buchwald's



Upsizing at the NRA

HERE is a great deal of dissension in the Republican Party over the party plank concerning abortion. But there doesn't seem to be any-disagreement over the party's pro-gun policy. The Republicans and the national Rifle Association are as one.

"Why?" I asked Fiberman, the great GOP conciliator. "Because, if the Republicans lose the election, they want to

make sure that they have enough weapons to shoot themselves," he told me. "Can't they shoot themselves with shotguns and leave the semi-automatics to the bad guys?"

"No, because Republicans don't want the government telling them what kind of weapons they can use to commit suicide. That's what the skirmishing over the Brady bill is all about. You have to wait five days before you can buy a gun. It's just too long if you're feeling blue.

"Some awful people want to disarm this country and make it impossible to purchase the weapon of your choice. Their position would be a disaster for the NRA. Do you know how many jobs would be lost if the NRA went out of business?"

"How many?" "Not counting the spokes-persons, there are hundreds who distribute political contributions to members of Congress, thousands who lobby daily on the Hill, and heaven knows how many computers, which write letters to the edi-

tor concerning their constitutional right to bear arms, I said, "The recent surveys show that more children are killed by guns than any other sport. Does that make the Republicans think twice about having a pro-gun plank in the party platform?

"It might, but that doesn't mean we'll ever change our opinion. If we have to choose between Brady and Davy Crockett, we'll take Crockett any day. Besides, assault weapons don't kill children, children kill children."

"So, you're not expecting a fight in San Diego over the right to bear arms plank?" "If any delegate starts something, we'll mow him down." I told Fiberman how proud I was of him for handling the

situation so well. He said that there were some tough issues and some easy ones to be resolved at the Convention. Gun ownership was an easy one. "It's as American as apple pie," he said. "If you're in favour

of semi-automatic weapons, you're in favour of motherhood. "Bob Dole has no problem with anybody owning a gun, and, if we can get that message out to the duck hunters, he has the election sewed up. "Will the Republicans offer amnesty to the anti-gun peo-

"We'll probably think about it and then reject it. If the gun control freaks keep bugging us they'll be sorry."
What will you do if they still fight you after the election?" Fiberman held up his fingers and smiled, "BANG",

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