Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka, Sunday, September 22, 1996

### **Arsenic Threat**

The revelation that arsenic-coated electric poles imported for rural electrification have deposited about three crore pounds of the highly harmful chemical compound into the soil across Bangladesh should cause the people sleepless nights. The inhabitants in the suspected areas have reasons to get scared. We do not know if the authorities — either at the national or local level have ever tried to carry out a prompt test of both water and soil to determine the level of arsenic contamination in the suspected areas and inform people of the results. Now here is a case of national blunder of the worst kind. How else does one explain the poisoning of a country's soil and underground water with imported arsenic?

Over two decades 25 lakh poles have been imported and nobody gave a thought to the environmental and health hazards of the 12 pounds of arsenic compounds — the quantity needed, according to specification, to coat or treat a 10 feet wooden pole - might cause to its surrounding areas. It is simply mind-boggling to think of such a hara-kiri. In West Bengal also arsenic contamination has posed a problem but there the contamination issues from natural resources and at a greater depth, whereas we have invited the peril through admin-

istrative decisions.

Now that the contamination has actually taken place, an extensive experiment should be taken up to obviate the process of contamination getting into human bodies or human food chain. A highlevel expert committee has to be instituted to do the job efficiently and thoroughly. Even if it calls for inclusion of foreign experts or assistance from international bodies, we must move fast to invite them to help find an answer to our problem of arsenic contamination. An act of indiscretion has already exacted a heavy price, it will demand even a heavier price if the problem is not attended without delay. So whatever the cost of a measure or measures to decontaminate the soil and water of the affected areas, the government must opt for such a move to avoid a widespread and also longterm damage to our environmental resources, and human health.

#### Listen to NRBs

It has been quite some time since Non Resident Bangladeshi (NRB) first got included in our development jargon as a resource replete with promises. The realisation, however, was followed by the usual wane in enthusiasm and initiative to transform a happy discovery into a dripping roast.

Now that a forum under the banner Non Resident Bangladeshi Investors' Limited has been formed and its leaders have gone public with its demand for the creation of an ideal atmosphere for ploughing their hard-earned foreign currency in country's economic ground, the government would do well to act effectually in this respect.

Among the seven points placed in a press conference on Friday last, the one that heavily relies on the willingness and sincerity of the government is the formation of an industrial park a la the private Export Processing Zone (EPZ).

It is really sad to know that lack of information and conducive business climate have, quite undesirably, encouraged some of the Non Resident Bangladeshis to invest in faraway countries like Argentina and Bolivia whereas their motherland has all this while been groaning in acute economic crisis. It is a shame that our policy makers and political leaders have until now failed to muster what it takes to ensure a channel to support one of man's natural inclination — the love for the motherland and the desire, no matter how dilute and dormant to invest in it and be part of its progress and prosperity. These Non Resident Bangladeshis, no matter how small compared to other countries, have been there on the wings with wealth and knowledge to enrich Bangladesh and we the residents proper have succeeded in keeping them at the bay by relentlessly airing discouraging messages.

The seven-point demand of the NRB Investors' Forum contains this vital ingredient for an investment and participation friendly atmosphere consensus between the government and the opposition. This is not a mere demand of a group but this lies at the core of all our sincere slogan for development. It is what patriotism is all about in an independent sovereign country. Instead of making war camps within the country just to uphold our petty political interpretation and vain egoism, those who are in the power and those outside should invest their energy in creating an ideal atmosphere for investment particularly by the NR-B's. Our economic relevance, any day holds more appeal to them than the truly foreign investors.

#### **Blighted Bhuttos**

It looks like natural death is not the destiny of the Bhuttos. After Zulfigar Ali Bhutto's pathetic end in the gallows followed by that of his younger son Shahnawaz in exile and mysterious circumstances, the killing of Murtuza, one of the two remaining scions including Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto came in the most unfortunate manner Friday. An undesirable and inglorious enactment of the poignant Urdu phrase 'ye to ek na

ekdin hona hi tha'. Indeed, the way Murtuza Bhutto, well past his days of exile in Syria as a leader of a terrorist group — formed with a view to bother late President and his father's executioner Ziaul Huq - was pitching himself in to establish as a political opponent of his sister Benazir, a violent consequence

seemed to be just in the offing. In fact, barely a day before his killing in the fiery skirmish with police in Karachi, Murtuza hinted trouble should the law enforcers make any

attempt to nab him without any authentic charge. Friday's bloodshed, will add to the repertoire of ammunitions of Benazir Bhutto's political opponents. Having started the process of marginalising the opponents by using the persecutive machinery of the state. Benazir is now a study in the last stage of high-handedness - isolation. It is an irony of fate that the highly educated, extremely elegant and charming politician who once assumed the power with a vow to launch crusade against corruption, is herself now beset with allegations of

rampant corruption. However, the death of Mortuza is unlikely to leave any far reaching impact on the political future of Benazir in the sense, notwithstanding the sometimes sentimental, sometimes violent campaign to establish himself as the natural inheritor of their father's political organisation Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Mortuza remained an outsider in that country's politics.

## Providing Transit to India: Some Aspects to be Considered by Sajjad Zahir

I understand that providing transit facility involves allowing cargo of another country to pass through our territory without being subject to the customs rules that otherwise apply to goods either imported or exported. In abstract, it is like importing goods for the purpose of re-exporting, with no duties in place on either of the transactions.

ATELY, the issue of providing transit to Indian cargo through Bangladesh territory has been in the agenda. Like most other issues that relate to Bangladesh's dealings with India, there seems to be much controversy surrounding the issue. At one point, it is treated to be too secretive, while others may politically sensitise it to oppose such deals. This write-up is an attempt to put together the kind of concerns that ought to be addressed in negotiating a deal, if such a deal is sought at the political level

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transit facility involves allowing cargo of another country to pass through our territory without being subject to the customs rules that otherwise apply to goods either imported or exported. In abstract, it is like importing goods for the purpose of re-exporting, with no duties in place on either of the transactions. In some sense, there is a similarity between providing transit and the back to-back LC arrangement that are in practice in the case of garment industry. Before one jumps into showing the differences, let me explain where the similarities lie. In the case of readymade garments, we all know that the goods imported are not the same as those exported. We also know that such imports flow in to make use of our cheap labour; thus, there is value addition. In case of the transit, the physical quantities and (possibly) qualities of the goods remain unchanged during the time of transiting through the Bangladesh territory.

I have no dispute with such view. And yet, one may argue that there is value addition due to some services provided

within the country providing the transit facility. Those who know economists, possibly also know that they treat the same physical quantity of goods in different times and at different places to be different. Thus, goods entering into Bangladesh from, say, the western border are not considered the same as those going out through her eastern border. The latter certainly fetches a higher price (be financial price or social/economic). That addition in value is the basis for demanding transit facility; and realising it involves provision

important being the transport. Hoping that there is a consensus on the above characterisation of transit, I lay out some alternatives (not necessarily exhaustive) that the country providing the transit may have. assume that the means of transport most likely to be availed will be vehicles running on roads and railways.

of some specific services, most

In the case of identifying parties responsible for transportation, there may be two alternatives. It could be either the agents in country availing the transit, or, agents in the country providing the transit. In the former case, it is only the road and railway network that are used. Thus, contribution of local inputs in value addition (due to spatial transfer) is minimal. In the latter case, more local inputs are involved since the transport vehicles as well as the associated labour will be pro-

vided by the country allowing

the transit. There is a second dimension to this distinction of alternatives. The transport networks, especially the roads, are public goods since such services may be simultaneously availed by many. On the contrary, transport services in the form of transportation by, say, trucks, are not public goods. Thus, there are difficulties in pricing the former; while prices of the latter may get determined in the market. The implications of these are discussed

There is a second element to a transit deal; identification of agents who may potentially be parties in actual transits. One alternative is to allow only the two governments and their appointed public agencies to participate in the whole process of transferring goods. At the other extreme, one may visualise a contract that allows participation of private sectors in both the countries as well. On economic ground, the latter is likely to facilitate flow of goods more than the former. Moreover, participation by the private sectors is likely to make the process and the nature of various transactions more transparent to the public [civil society

There is no hiding that the transit service is being treated here as a commodity (service). and therefore, it has a price. Even though the contract of this kind is negotiated at the political level, both the negotiating parties would have to have some notion of price prior to

making a deal. Any price that reduces the current cost of transporting goods from one side of the border to another will benefit the country seeking transit facility. For the country, providing such facility, it is therefore important to know what the current costs are like. Much more important is to assess the costs involved in providing the transit facility.

If it be the first alternative

(that is, not locally engaging in the act of transportation), costs would include customs/security inspections in both ends, cost due to monitoring alien vehicles (possibly manned) along the route, and costs arising out of use of the public goods (roads/railway tracks). The provider would have to set a price that covers for all these costs and make some profit. As noted before, pricing the public good is a difficult task, especially when it is done by individuals in power. Prices of such services in this country are generally realised through licence and registration fees of vehicles, import duties, fuel taxes and occasional tolls on bridges Thus, the second alternative with private sector participation may reduce one element of the pricing. This is because, at the political level, prices would be negotiated within a narrow

If I may explain the pricing problem with symbols, let C1 be the current cost borne, say, per unit of goods, by the country. say. India) for transporting their goods from one side of the

border to another. C2 be administrative costs to be borne by the same country if transit facilities are availed, C3 be the cost associated with transportation within India (on both sides) in the presence of transit, C4 be the administrative costs to be borne by the provider of transit. say, Bangladesh, and C5 be the expected price of transport services to be provided within Bangladesh. It is obvious that (C2+C3+C4+C5) has to be less than C1, for any contract to be

mutually beneficial. It is true that the total cost of transportation (C3+C5) will be greater than the cost associated with the first alternative whereby the Indian vehicles would be allowed to pass through Bangladesh territory without additional unloading and loading at two points. This would also mean that net gains from transit facility would be higher (irrespective the distribution of such gain between the two parties) under the first alternative compared to the second. However, from the perspective of the transit provider. there are two concerns to be taken into account.

The first alternative forces the negotiator in the providing country to seek more information to price the public goods. More importantly, it deprives the providing country from potential value addition through transport services. The two, I believe, provide sufficient ground for sticking to the second alternative. The latter alternative also ensures partici-

pation by the private sector which may serve two purposes. First, undue misperception re-garding the nature of the deal is less likely to arise that may otherwise be politically used. Second, local economy will benefit through various linkage effects.

We live in a world of uncertainty; and all the aforementioned cost elements may not be perfectly anticipated over a long period of time. This draws attention to the fourth element of the contract; its tenure. If all prices are to be stipulated in a contract, it cannot be a longterm one. Alternatively, the prices may be allowed to vary so that, if necessary, the provider may opt out of the contract by setting the prices high, for the government in the providing country, only price it may directly set is on account of the administrative costs. It may however influence the price of transportation of particular nature through various policy

The fifth and final element of the contract involves clear identification of products that are (or, are not) permissible to avail the transit facility. Such practices are common in all international flow of goods; and will not be out of norm to nego-

My effort to put together these thoughts will be fruitful if others come forward to identify the lapses in my identification of the problem, assumptions and the logic; and thereby identify the alternatives and their pros and cons so that the negotiators representing us may make the best choice.

The writer is a research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka.

# Northern Iraq: Tempest in a Tea Pot?

In order to justify her action the US has naturally looked for support around the world. Since the unfolding of

the events looks more and more like shadow boxing and not real warfare the support of the US allies is

lukewarm at best and some are downright critical.

Desert Storm - that is the inevitable conclusion one must draw from the spectacular events in Iraq.

There have been reports of forces of Jalal Talabani called Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), who called upon Iran to come to their assistance in Erbil, the capital of Kurd inhabited Northern Iraq. Reports have been sketchy but there is no doubt that the adversary of Talabani, Masoud Barzani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in desperation called on Iraq to drive the forces of Talabani out of Erbil.

The stakes were high for President Saddam Hussein. Erbil is well within the 36th parallel drawn by the US-sponsored coalition following Saddam's defeat in 1991. No doubt sensing US pre-occupation with the Democratic Party Convention. Saddam made a lightning move and sent his forces into Erbil. The dispirited forces of Talaham were easily expelled by the joint forces of Barzani and Saddam Hussein.

A predictable response has come from the US. She has launched missile attacks very close to Baghdad by expanding the southern parallel from 32 degrees to 33 degrees. The casualty appears to be light so far. In the meantime Saddam's forces within northern Iraq, the primary reason for the US missile attack is reported to have been withdrawn. Even the veteran CNN corespondent Christian Amanpour appears to have

forces in Northern Iraq.

The Horizon This Week

Israel naturally is vociferous in its support. failed to discover Saddam's In order to justify her action

the US has naturally looked for support around the world. Since the unfolding of the events looks more and more like shadow boxing and not real warfare the support of the US allies is lukewarm at best and some are downright critical. British Prime Minister John Major appears to be forthright in his support. The Arab World has preferred silence whereas Arshad-uz Zaman

In Turkey a consensus has emerged that she is a net loser in this conflict, which interests her deeply. Turkey has been literally counting her days for the re-opening of the oil pipeline between Iraq and Turkey's Mediterranean port of Yumurtalik Turkey would get a substantial part of the \$2 billion from the oil sales of Iraq. Due to

tary-General Boutros Boutros-

of the pipeline. President Bill

casualty is in the region of 20,000 dead the latest conflict UN Secre-One unusual fallout of the latest Iraq-US conflict has been Ghali postponed the re-opening the strain that has developed between the coalition partners. Clinton confirmed this in his Turkey has a coalition led by the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) and Centre Right True Path

TV address to the nation.

Another major worry of

Turkey is that now the two

Kurdish leaders in northern

Iraq - namely Barzani and Tal-

abani have selected hostile

camps, the Kurdistan Workers

Party (PKK) is likely to benefit

since she will have a free hand

in northern Iraq. Turkey has

been battling with PKK guerril-

has for the last 12 years and the

Party (DYP). US President Clinton's message concerning the conflict has been delivered to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller of the DYP rather than to Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan of the RP.

Ciller has been moderate and circumspect in her comments on the US missile attacks although she has not gone to the extent of extending support. A senior minister of the RP castigated the US by saying that the problems of the region should be solved through negotiation with the countries of the region and not force. The fact that Prime Minister Erbakan was not involved in the US-Turkey diplomatic moves and Ciller was continuously in the news was heavily underlined by the media.

If there is consensus that ar invitation from Barzani to enter Erbil and thus cross the 36th parallel was a God sent opportunity for Saddam, which he seized with both hands, it also

provided President Bill Clinton a wonderful opportunity to wave the flag at minimal cost. Saddam Hussein is the favourite whipping boy of the US and President Clinton took full advantage of the situation. Commentators have pointed out that timing was near-perfect since it came in the wake of his nomination for reelection to the Presidency of the US.

In an editorial entitled "Are all these fireworks for the Clinton Campaign?" Ilnur Cevik the Chief Editor of the Ankara Daily News wrote: "The American Tomahawk missile attacks are nothing but an election campaign ploy for President Clinton." Cevik wrote: The American administration was caught unawares and now out of rage they are displaying a kind of irresponsibility which is highly dangerous for the world leader and a superpower".

Fortunately for the war torn Middle East Desert Strike appears more like an one-shot affair unlike its predecessor the Desert Storm. Saddam appears to be the maximum gainer since he managed to cross the 36th parallel and thus shatter the no-fly zone.

#### Thanks to commentators also

Sir. Let me take the opportunity to congratulate the Bangladesh cricket team for their success in winning the ACC Trophy in Kuala Lumpur. would also like to thank Bangladesh Betar for their tremendous effort in arranging the live commentary of the matches played by Bangladesh. Cricket fans all over the country were glued to their radios and transistors to listen to our commentators, who despite facing various drawbacks, managed to became in the details of matches from different venues. Along with our players they also acted as ambassadors of goodwill and the importance Bangladesh attaches to cricket has also been highlighted. which was mentioned by Star Sports in their telecast.

I would like to counter some remarks made in a vernacular daily regarding commentary alternately in Bangla and English. People interested should know that all the cricket teams sent abroad from Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan, always broadcast in English and their respective state languages. We also noticed that during the ACC matches, interviews of various important cricket personalities were taken during the games, which was managed so well by our commentators. Their performance has definitely enhanced the dignity of

the country. My heartiest congratulations again to the Bangladesh cricket team for their glorious achievement and also a cheer for the unsung heroes — the ra-

Well done Bangladesh Betar and we hope the authorities will continue to take measures to cover future important sporting

Altaf Hussain 144/I Bijoy Nagar, Dhaka 1000

#### Well done

Three cheers Bangladesh cricket team. We are proud of you. Bangladesh rightly deserves that for emerging as champions. Their performance throughout the ACC tournament was excellent. Our boys proved very good against all their opponents. The final match was the one to be remembered. That was the match when Bangladesh has proved to be a strong cricketing force and their convincing 107-run win over the world-cuppers rightly

Apart form the middle order collapse but eventually they made good efforts by making 212 in 49.3 overs. A target good enough to defend. Bangladesh once again proved a tough competitors by bowling out UAE for a merge 105. It was indeed a superb task required for the situation. Our boys demonstrated high quality cricket.

Sunil Gavaskar the legend was full of for our players. We would request our cricket authorities to provide every facilities to our heroes and to do everything they can be in the same side for the next Asia cup in Malaysia, where India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be participating.

Khawja Vigar Moinuddin

#### Nothing unofficial about it

Sir, Congratulations to the Bangladesh national cricket team for emerging as the unbeaten champion in the recently-concluded Pepsi ACC tournament. Though in the group stage most of the opponents were new-comers to cricket, but demolishing the fairly strong UAE boys in the final was a real victory for the Bangladeshi lads.

Winning this championship we have kept our position intact in the Asia cup where Bangladesh has been taking part regularly alongside the

three Asian test giants. There is no doubt that winning the ACC trophy has boosted our morale tremendously but the players and the authority concerned should be aware that presently our main target is reaching to the World Cup extravaganza by occupying one of the three top slots in the coming ICC meet next year Therefore too much excitement and enthusiasm for winning the ACC trophy should be restrained by all as over-confidence often bring nightmarish results even to the most bal-

anced teams. So an advice to the Bangladesh national cricketers - "Be calm and prepare most seriously for the upcoming ICC meet and prove your talent as the ICC winners.

Aziz Amirul Uttara, Dhaka

#### Cricket

Sir, It is a great leap forward Of course standard of our cricket has shown marked improvement. Now Bangladesh is qualified to participate in the next Asian games to be held in Sri Lanka. Before going to Sri Lanka, our team will need adequate exposure of big game temperament. For this, I suggest that our team plays one-day matches with national teams like Sri Lanka, India and Pak-

istan I request the BCCB to arrange three matches all in Dhaka or in respective countries. This will give a strong boost to the morale of our cricketers to be bold enough to face world renowned cricketers of the subcontinent. If Bangladesh makes right approach to these countries, I think they will response positively, as these countries sincerely want to see us as one of them. Our Cricket Board should give serious considerations to this.

MRR Khan 38, Naya Paltan, Dhaka-1000

#### Lip-deep

Sir. Scientists in Bristol are reportedly worrying over the amount of lipstick literally eaten by women. Such a consumption is being regarded as health hazards. Chemicals used for painting the lips, faces or any other part of the body may

have an ornamental use, but as edibles, unless medically processed and prescribed, they may be dangerous. When a note of caution comes through any scientific

experiment, usually we take it for granted. So as far as the feminine beauty is concerned, we still tend to believe that the scientists with normal human perceptions have not developed any serious distaste or disliking for it so as to launch an atvogue for centuries. Hopefully, as serious as is feared.

tack against cosmetics which have been in special feminine the danger does not seem to be But it may come as a genuine shock, for the women of course, to learn that the government of

Malaysia's Kelantan state has defended its recent ban on the excessive use of lipstick by women saying that such practice were a preludé to undisciplined sex. They also maintained that prohibition on excessive use of lipstick was part of Islamic teachings and should not be viewed lightly. What will our young women say about it?

Sikandar Rana Dept. of English Jahangirnagar University

### **OPINION**

# "An Appeal to Begum Zia"

I couldn't help myself when I read the article "An Appeal to Begun Zia" written by Mr Waliur Rahman in The Daily Star dated 2.9.96. In my opinion the heading should have been 'Criticism of Begun Zia' rather than as an 'Appeal'. To me when a person is appealing to a respected person such as the prime minister or to the leader of the opposition, he/she should try to give concrete and neutral comments and not a politically motivated one of

his/her own party of interest. There were certain areas which I feel Mr Rahman should have highlighted for both the parties. The June 12th election is highly termed as free and fair, if somebody is not absolutely biased then it will be clear that the election was, free yes, but fair — please let us not be too confident about that. The Janatar Manch of the bureaucrats, the TNO of the polling stations, the presiding officer of the polling stations (those who are also bureaucrats, and some of them who even participated in the Janatar Manch quite a few law enforcing agencies please do not be too sure about their role in the election of 12th June, which are still not above question. There were quite a few cases that were filed with the EC on various polling stations by both the parties (please note it included AL also). What hap-

pened to them? We as citizens, would very much like to have answer to those cases openly and quickly As for the outside observer, you know as well as I, how tricky Bangladesh's people can be, it will never be in their capacity to trace rigging when it comes to that. Even then, BNP has taken the result and accepted the role of opposition. We should therefore try not to push them too hard. Please do not say that BNP served as the Chief Executive of Bangladesh for five years; they practically served Bangladesh for three years and the rest two good years' credit actually goes to the then opposition who had to impose continuous hartals, strikes, roadblocks, and even stop the Chittagong port in the name of democracy. Why wasn't there any appeal to Sheikh Hasina at

that time? I simply fail to understand why does everybody (specially the political parties) wants to see BNP as a good, clean, effective, conscious party now, while they themselves after 1991

Anwarul Mahir Azim election not for a single time appreciated any steps that was taken by the then government. Is not the expectations of the present government too high? The opposition's role at that time was very clear, busy finding loopholes by which they can observe hartal and strike.

rather than engage themselves

in decision-making for the bet-

terment of the country. The first strike they made was on the issue of anti-Liberation forces and enforced hartal along with Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (which was highly appreciated by the people, and we all supported it) practically against Jamaat, but eventually they formed a team with this same Jamaat in the name of democracy to achieve their goal (which was on the issue of caretaker government) and then left them by not giving any portfolio as ministers where three of the Jamaat MPs are there in the Parliament. How do you define this type of national consensus'? Note our present PM's own comment as there is no word as end to politics." If you truly believe in democracy then you really cannot differentiate between par-

The issue of a caretaker government was a genuine one and we all stand by it, but the opposition could have enforced hartal non-stop maybe for last three months or even six months of the five-year tenure of BNP regime and make the government step down; why didthey need two years for doing that and make people's life miserable? Did AL - by doing that - achieved absolute majority? The BNP is basically, I think, now doing their homework just like the opposition did at that time. Can we really blame them for it? Continuous hartals and strikes basically put the opposition into power and we all accepted that (as there were no appeal at that time). So why are people like you so cautious about BNP now? The opposition should have known, "what goes around, must come around." I think you have seen noth-

ing which is yet to come and that is the normal phenomena in Bangladesh context of democracy. I know I might face criticism for saying that, but that is the reality and that is the truth. As for your comment on Deve Gowda government in

India, please note the Congress basically wanted to stop BJP to forming its own government. We should be thankful that it didn't happen here in Bangladesh because, just to stop AL the BNP could have proposed JP to form their own government while the BNP could have backed them. In the question of mastans and terror ists, the government should at first check their own terrorists. The student wing of BNP is said to have most of the terrorists and we all as conscious citizens condemn this kind of terrorism. Please tell me to which party does the so-called cadres of "Faridpur group" and the "Gopalganj group" belong? As per various newspapers, what are they doing with arms on the campus? Should not they be defined as terrorises? Just like our old tradition of "char dakhal" why are they involved

in "hall dakhal?"

The Home Minister is m talking tall about removing terrorism while in the heart of the Dhaka city they are not arresting only a handful of their own terrorists since they belong to their own party. How do you justify that? This is not neutralism at all. The press conference of former PM might have hurt you but the press briefing of the present prime minister is not also up to the expectation of the people where she is continuously blaming BNP of their past performance and thereby always comparing themselves with BNP. We all know about past performance of BNP, so we are not interested about the past. That is basically why we have made AL as our government. We would very much like to see what were promised get implemented, and what is the present and future plan for this country (taking into considera tion all sorts of hartal and strike). It should not take that long to give autonomy to the state-run television which has again become a bibi-gulam box for the present government.

Mr Rahman's quote from Cicero is fascinating, but why was this appeal not made to Sheikh Hasina after 1991 election? We feel that this type of one-sided appeal should not be encouraged. An appeal that was made by the editor of *The Daily* Star on the issue of repealing the Indemnity Bill (with con-sent of both the parties) regard-ing the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is an ideal example of an 'appeal'.