

Courageous Action

Tangail has been anything but normal for over two weeks. Terrorists belonging to rival factions of Chhatra League have been fighting each other with guns at the cost of making the townspeople a hostage to constant panic.

The government action speaks of courage, determination and its sincerity in stamping out terrorism — whatever the source it springs from. Kader Siddiky is a national hero and a majority of our people hold him in unique esteem and reverence for his matchless performance in the Liberation War.

If the government has been determined enough to go after such a charismatic hero and a leader of the ruling party in search of perpetrators of the Tangail terror, all Mr Siddiky can now do in consonance with the great admiration he commands nationally, is to cooperate with his own party government.

It is in the press that the high-level police and administration meeting which worked out the details and the schedule of the raid was leaked much before the coming of the action. If this cannot be healed, the best of intentions behind the anti-terrorism protestations of the governments will hardly come to anything.

Let's See

Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) has chipped in with its share in the fact-finding efforts and urges going all around over the unabated slump trend of the bourses in the same stunning manner they had skyrocketed earlier in the year.

Although the SEC and the Finance Minister sounded pretty optimistic about the investigative prospective of the committee, more people in the know have expressed their skepticism. Most of them are of the opinion that the members culled in the committee do not have enough insight into the ups and downs of the stock market.

What A Shame!

A national daily first broke the news of the recent barbarous incident in Chittagong — an incident made of the ultimates in cruelty and indignity and violation of the human person rolled into one.

But the follow-up was sadder still. The problem now has been ideally illustrated by a Daily Star headline reading: Police drive to trace 'rape' victims in Chittagong. At the end of a day's frantic search for them — the family could not be traced.

The Ganges Water Treaty and Our Future

The goodwill and trust that has been created by signing the 30-year treaty on the Ganges water sharing, has opened up a new chapter in our future water resources development plans. Let us take the challenge and build our future, writes Amjad Hossain Khan

THE 30-year Ganges Water Treaty for sharing the water of the Ganges at Farakka has been hailed by the people of Bangladesh. They are happy that a long term treaty has been signed with assurance that 35,000 cusecs of water will be available in the driest period.

The news media mostly hailed the treaty. Some columnists wrote rosy pictures so much that with the implementation of the treaty most of the dead and dying rivers will regain their flows in the dry season.

The Ganges Water Treaty provided for water sharing arrangements from 1st January to 31 May every year according to a formula given in Annexure I while a detailed schedule for sharing arrangements is given in Annexure II.

During my sojourn in Rajshahi in the third week of December, 1996, I visited the Ganges at Rajshahi near the T-head groin. Hundreds of people visit the place every day in the evening. I talked to a few of them. They are eagerly waiting for the 1st January when they expect to see the results, visible signs that the water level and the discharge increase appreciably in the Ganges.

Available records show the water level at Rampur-Boalia at Rajshahi on 30th Nov for the last 7 years are given below:

Table with 2 columns: Date and Water Level. Rows include 30 November 1996 (12.86 M), 1995 (12.89 M), 1994 (11.74 M), 1993 (12.07 M), 1992 (11.62 M), 1991 (11.72 M), 1990 (11.38 M), 22 December 1996 (11.95 M), 1995 (11.04 M), 1994 (11.03 M), 1993 (10.86 M), 1992 (11.11 M), 1991 (10.65 M).

Normally during the period in the first ten days of January after withdrawal of 40,000 cusecs in the feeder canal for Calcutta port should be around 70,000 cusecs for Bangladesh. The average availability of 40 years from 1949 to 1988 as shown in the annexure II of the treaty, provides that in the first ten days of January the actual availability is 1,07,516 cusecs and Bangladesh will be getting around 87,516 cusecs.

There should not be any difficulty in the months of January and February. The problem will start for the months of March and April when water is needed most for agriculture. During March the average lowest water level at Rajshahi was 8.62 M from 1991 to 1996. In April the average lowest water level at Rajshahi was 9.13 M for the same period. The distance between Rajshahi and Hardinge Bridge is about 50 miles and considering the average slope, the water level at Hardinge Bridge will be for the month of March 6.63 M and in April 5.76 M.

During March 1988, when the discharge was 35,000 cusecs, the water level was 6.36 M and in March 1996 with a discharge of 34,838 cusecs the water level was 5.76 at the Hardinge Bridge. The Ganges-Kobadak pump becomes inoperative if the water level is below 3.96 M. For normal operation of pumps water level of 4.7M is needed.

The only permanent solution for all these problems is to construct the Ganges Barrage near Pangsha as identified in pre-feasibility study in 1984.

With the construction of the barrage with a pond level of 12.2 M, it will be possible to head up the water level in the Ganges. The water that will be coming under the treaty will be able to maintain the pond level which will help in diverting gravity flow in the Goral for flushing in the south west and to stop ingress of saline water inland. The Ganges-Kobadak project will get assured water.

The feasibility study for the construction of the barrage on the Ganges provided for supply of irrigation water in the south-west of Bangladesh to irrigate an area of 1.35 Mha. In addition another 0.21 Mha could be irrigated through ground water and standing water bodies.

The Ganges barrage will be a 1940 M long structure constructed 60 KM downstream of Hardinge Bridge with road and railway. Provision will be made for supply of gas, power and other services over the barrage.

A right bank main canal, 76 km long, will be constructed to feed water into the Goral. Kumar, Nabajanga, Chitra and Kobadak rivers.

The Ganges barrage can develop her own manpower with specialised knowledge needed for such huge undertakings, we will have to depend on foreign consultants. A strong policy is needed to develop local consultants and local construction firms to undertake big hydraulic structures.

Unless Bangladesh can develop her own manpower with specialised knowledge needed for such huge undertakings, we will have to depend on foreign consultants. A strong policy is needed to develop local consultants and local construction firms to undertake big hydraulic structures.

The opportunity provided by the treaty must be utilised to maximise the use of water for establishment of water rights. Some of the projects identified in the Ganges-dependent area can be taken up on a priority basis. The north Rajshahi irrigation project, Baral irrigation project, and Pabna irrigation project can be updated for early implementation.

The South West Regional Study under FAP has identified a number of projects for detailed engineering and implementation. These should be taken up simultaneously.

The most important project is the Ganges barrage project. It is already reported that the Ministry of Water Resources is seriously considering the matter and the World Bank has agreed to finance Tk 7000 crore for the project (The Daily Star 19-12-96). The GIF of Japan has also identified the Ganges Barrage as a priority project.

Preliminary discussions are in an advanced stage for taking up feasibility-cum-detailed engineering of the project. With a 30 year water treaty on the Ganges, friendly donors will come up with funding the study, followed by implementation of the Ganges Barrage project.

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The goodwill and trust that has been created by signing the 30-year treaty on the Ganges water sharing, has opened up a new chapter in our future water resources development plans. Let us take the challenge and build our future.

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The water that will be available under the Ganges Water Treaty and the proposed Brahmaputra water treaty will not be enough to meet all the water demand of Bangladesh. Article VII of the treaty provides for finding a solution of the long-term problem of augmentation of the flows of the Ganges. The possibility of augmentation from storage in Nepal are enormous. The Kosi high dam is under active consideration of Nepal and India.

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The next big step will be the construction of the Brahmaputra Barrage on the Brahmaputra River with permanent water treaty of the Brahmaputra river. The government should seriously consider taking up preliminary investigation and feasibility study of the Brahmaputra Barrage. The article IX of the Ganges Water Treaty clearly provides for water treaty on all the common rivers including the Brahmaputra.

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Congress: Leadership Crisis and Impact on Indian Government

THE focus of the Indian political scenario now centres on the election of the new leader of the Congress parliamentary party in the lower house of the parliament (Lok Sabha). The matter deserves attention for obvious reasons. PV Narasimha Rao, the former prime minister, held on to this position till recently although he had to quit the party recently.

The Congress party in the lower house of the parliament (Lok Sabha). The matter deserves attention for obvious reasons. PV Narasimha Rao, the former prime minister, held on to this position till recently although he had to quit the party recently.

The leader of the majority party in parliament or leader of any group enjoying majority support becomes the prime minister of the country. The leader of the main opposition group evidently occupies the position of the leader of the opposition in parliament. The Congress stands on somewhat a strange condition at present in the Lok Sabha since it is neither in power nor in opposition.

With 140 seats in the 542-member lower house, the party strength is only after the opposition Bharatiya Janata party, which had a brief spell of governance as its leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee — the charismatic politician had to resign even before facing the majority test in the floor of the house since he was sure that he was not going to win the vote of confidence. But this did not see the second biggest party — the Congress — to power and instead it supported a loose coalition of several parties headed by the Janata Dal in formation of the government.

The Congress supports the united front government without joining it and hence it is neither power nor opposition. Any party supporting the government cannot play the role of the opposition in the house and as such, the BJP which was in power for hardly few weeks took over the opposition bench. The Congress is not exactly in the treasury bench but the government exists on its crucial support and it is the backer of the prime minister H D Deve Gowda's government. The Janata Dal and its coalition partners have much less seats in the Lok Sabha required for a majority and thus the support by 140 members of the Congress is essential for its survival. The moment this support is withdrawn, the federal

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government in India will automatically collapse.

The Congress party in the lower house of the parliament (Lok Sabha). The matter deserves attention for obvious reasons. PV Narasimha Rao, the former prime minister, held on to this position till recently although he had to quit the party recently.

But bubbles of fears are there underneath the facade of this situation of unhindered Congress support and the condition exacerbates over the issue of election of a new leader of the Congress parliamentary party. Narasimha Rao was quite favourably disposed to the issue of long-term Congress support to the Deve Gowda government so much so that once he said this confidence will be there from his party's side for full five-year term. Rao had reasons for this policy as he thought the party can come back to power only after a full term since the last election was essentially a no-confidence against the Congress rule. Besides, since he was at the helm of both the party and the government for the five years that preceded the elections, he felt that the attitude of the electorate on the leadership of the Congress of which he was the steward, can change only with the passage of time. Furthermore, he might have struck some kind of understanding with Deve Gowda since Rao faces a barrage of difficulties including criminal cases.

Although it is difficult to extend patronage even from the zenith of power in the area of judiciary in India, Rao's predicament had drawn broad sympathy from a section of the government in New Delhi that may include the prime minister. But the coalition partners like the communists remain rabidly hostile to Rao, who remained in the position of party's leadership in the house despite hectic campaign by sections of party leaders and workers ever since the Congress lost the elections early this year. Under this situation when a party suffers colossal electoral disaster, naturally the leadership comes into question and also under attack for a change. But Rao clung to both presidentship of the Congress and its parliamentary party chief positions for a rather long time displaying remarkable sangfroid but had to quit both positions.

Why is the interest on the new leader of the Congress party in lower house so intense or for that matter who is the choice to step into the shoe of Rao and of course, what impact the development will have on the Indian politics and more particularly on the government? Undoubtedly, all these matters represent the main features of the current Indian political scene and much of the course of the politics in the world's largest democracy will revolve around, in the near future, on the affairs within the Congress stemming from the elections of the new leader in parliament's lower house.

In the even the Congress withdraws its support to the United Front government which is, however, much unlikely in the near future, the Congress may get a scope to form the government if it can muster additional support some. In such a development, the leader of the parliamentary party will clearly become the prime minister of the country. But such a possibility will remain a difficult exercise even if the government resigns in the wake of withdrawal of the Congress support. Because the desire to form the government without warrant support of a big number of members of parliament which will be a near-Herculean task for the party unless that is also drawn from the BJP and the partners of the UF. Both propositions seem impossible unless political exigencies weigh heavily in a spectacular manner.

Sitaram Kesri, who succeeded Rao as the Congress pres-

ident has already emerged as the most strong man in the party after Rao stepped down from the post a few months ago. As Rao quit the organisation's parliamentary leadership as well, only a few days ago, the fight in the Congress is presently on choosing his successor in the Lok Sabha. But the exercise is difficult and several persons are in the fray. Rao who gravitated to the position of party chief and prime minister of the country has taken a back seat after resigning from both positions facing party pressures and his own image being tainted in a series of scandals like criminal cases. However, the 75-year-old scholarly politician, who has also shown great ability to manage things when occupying the dual positions, has not given up and said he should not be seen as withdrawn from the scene.

Will Kesri try to take up the parliamentary leadership as well or the Maharashtra heavy-weight and former defence minister Sharad Pawar or widely praised former finance minister Manmohan Singh from Punjab? Or former Bihar chief minister who keeps his cards close to his chest Jagannath Mishra or young and redoubtable Rajesh Pilot will become the next Congress leader in the Lok Sabha? Kesri, who has already initiated a series of steps in the party following the exit of Rao, like removing the Rao loyalists from key positions, favours a leader by 'consensus' — which the India watchers see as an euphemism for choosing the leader without election, and he probably stands a fair chance in such an event. Pawar says election should take place since the schedule of election has already been announced. Suave Manmohan Singh finds a lot of supporters around him. Rajesh Pilot, one of the few Congress leaders who had fired the first salvo against Rao demanding his resignation and he feels the position should go to him. Jagannath Mishra, more suitable as the chief minister of a state as he apparently lacks the charisma for a federal key position.

— may save your life. An improvement in house numbering system is essential. A city ordinance — albeit a legislation — will save this 'sonar' city of this 'sonar' deshab from this disgustingly embarrassing and inadequate numbering process.

Mozharul Hoque Springfield, Virginia, USA

Golden girl Sir, The nation salutes Bangladesh's new Golden Girl Fehana Zaman for winning ten gold medals at the 6th Bangladesh Games. She deserves the best honour, encouragement and international training. We are proud of her.

She has the satisfaction that none can chase her!

A Zabr Dhaka

sition? This possibility, cannot also be totally ruled out. Kesri is less enthusiastic than Rao in extending support to the Deve Gowda government. The new president and the new leader of the parliamentary party can always pull the carpet from under the feet of the UF government by withdrawing support. But this is not a distinct possibility at the moment since Indian electorate is against fresh polls in near future.

However, one should not lose sight of two aspects of the scenario. The UF government may face problems due to contradictions within the coalition partners. And the other, whoever becomes the Congress leader in the Lok Sabha, the widow of the slain Congress leader Rajiv Gandhi, Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, who has shied away from formal politics so far, may now have a tacit say in the electing of the new leader.

Today, more and more people are seeking help of the architects to design their homes, shops, restaurants and offices. It is not only because they are more imaginative, adventurous and design-aware but also due to a backlash against the dreary properties churned out by the volume builders who are still sadly obsessed with the number of bedrooms. And to the delight of the clients, architects come up with imaginative and economical options for the use of space paying due attention to the potential of space. A lot of people are going to the architects as alternatives to interior designers. It is also to take advantage of designing space with light and colour, not just surface decoration.

OPINION Convert to an Architect?

A Murshed Anam

For a prospective client, finding the right person can be a daunting task. As for most of the individual owners it is a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity to go through the exciting experience of design and construction of a building from its inception to its final realisation, the choice of the key person (the architect) in such a process is of great importance. The client and the architect should have a relation of mutual trust and friendship, based on understanding the expectation of the client and professional competence of the architect.

The client may approach an architect directly on the basis of reputation, personal contact or just choose him from the directory of Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB). But before finally appointing the architect, the client should interview the architect personally to assess his attitude, inclination, philosophy and personality. The client should also examine the resume and portfolio of works already completed by the architect; and better still, to go and see the projects for himself. The prospective client should also contact some of the architect's previous clients and ask them for references, as there is nothing like getting the client's side of the story.

An architect's fee is usually calculated as a percentage of the total construction cost of the project. This can vary but is usually between six and 10 per cent of the total construction cost. Architects can actually be

tra/Barak system. The Tipaimuk dam in Manipur, India in the north eastern part is another project which needs attention. India has completed the detailed design and is planning to start the work. There is a genuine apprehension in Bangladesh about the impact of the Tipaimuk dam. India and Bangladesh agreed in a non-government forum to jointly examine the issue. The changed environment now created gives an opportunity to examine the Tipaimuk dam and its impact on Bangladesh.

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Addressed to the Editor

Street numbers

Sir, It seems to me that the engineers planners in Bangladesh responsible for the development of the country, do not know the basics of counting. How could they number streets or houses non-sequentially? Street No. 2 may be after street No. 1 (how lucky), but 13 may not be after 12! Sector 1 and 2 are not adjacent, and nobody knows where sector 4 is! Is 5A between 5 and 6?

Local newspaper of a small town, Waynesboro in Pennsylvania where I once lived, announced once that the houses in certain part of the town will be given new numbers by the local post office in consultation with the fire service. If the assigned number is not displayed in front of the house as minimum on a white background with black numbers of three and a half-inch size by a specified date (15 April), mails will not be delivered. Guess

what happened. All numbers were changed, and there were no reference to the old numbers. When John F Kennedy and Martin Luther King died, existing streets, highways and avenues were named in memoriam to them (by city fathers through proper referendum).

An 1855 R Street NW address in Washington DC, is in the North West sector of the city on R Street, which is after G Street but before S Street, between 18th and 19th Street. Again 60 W 42nd Street in New York — well, the biggest city on earth — is on right side of the street between 58 and 62 traveling west on the 42nd Street which is between 41st and 43rd streets west of the Fifth Avenue which divides the city (the only thing you need to know) into East and West; and 10301 SW 199th Street, in Miami, Florida is the first address on 199th Street in the South-West sector of the city between 103rd and 104th

Avenues. Nobody has any fractional number such as 16/3. An alphanumeric number such as 16G Main St will be interpreted as the Apartment No G of the building having mailing address 16 on the Main Street. If you exit off a North-South Interstate highway, for example, at Exit 167A, you will be 167 miles north of the southern state boundary going east. Had it been Exit 130AB, it will be 130 miles north from the state boundary having options to go east and west. Each time I tried to reach a place by rickshaw, scooter or automobile, the drivers had invariably asked someone for its location. For your own interest, the mail carriers and the fire fighters use the numbers most. They never get to see your 'khatrians'; nor are they interested in your 'daleels'. Ability to find you quickly — specially by the fire fighter and the ambulance