# The Baily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

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## Now for the Follow-up

The much talked about investors conference ended here last Friday with some serious messages for us to think about. It was clear from the speeches of foreign company representatives that most of them thought ours was a good country to invest in. Bangladesh shared a credit rating of "C" with India which was a notch higher than Pakistan's "D". We had a reliable repayment record having never asked for rescheduling. The macro scene and the average growth rate over the last decade were attractive. Our labour force is known to be a hardworking lot, efficient and cheap. The government's commitment to liberalisation and free market was now beyond question. So was the case with guarantees for repatriation of FDI. All in all, the policy framework coupled with and the country's economic indicators made Bangladesh a viable competitor for FDI on the global stage.

So what is holding us back? Three things. Politics, corruption and bureaucratic maze. In an unprecedented and highly questionable move the donors went public castigating both the government and the opposition for a politics of "violence, intimidation and confrontation." They left no doubt in anybody's mind that aid flow would be affected if this trend was not changed. Political instability was also a part of every potential investor's speech who attended the meeting. Wide spread corruption also came up for severe criticism as a serious impediment to FDI. Not only for foreign investment but for our own national development we need to rein in corruption which is now vitiating every aspect of our business and administration. The archaic and essentially obstructionist bureaucracy with its hundreds of permissions and clearances — much of it used as a means for greasing the palm — worked as a major disincentive for the growth of investment, both domestic and for-

The message was clear, and so should be our follow up agenda. Bangladesh could receive FDI if we cleared our act in the three areas mentioned above. We have a real chance of breaking the shackles of poverty and giving our people a semblance of decent life because of the new found gas and the resultant renewed interest of the international community. We believe that if we can tackle the politics than the corruption and bureaucratic impediments can be handled easily. To do so we need vision and a desire to compromise. So we don't see either, yet.

## A Truly Good Turn

A dependable headway has been made in solving the problem of arsenic contamination of ground water affecting almost a large part of our population. The World Bank will co-ordinate a two-year study to identify the causes of the contamination. Funded wholly by the British Department for International Development, this 800,000-dollar project comes in the nick of time to plug a big hole in Bangladesh's efforts to fight the arsenic threat to both life and society? Without identifying the physical agents and processes of the constamination. any action programme to minimise the danger must be founded on quagmire.

This is not to say that the great work put in by the Dhaka Community Hospital in identifying the affected patients in the districts and offering them mitigation of pain and suffering is in any way less important. The World Bank study would take two years and action based on that may take another two. In the meantime more and more people in more and more areas will continue to be affected by arsenic in drinking water. As long as the contamination process is not stopped once for all hopefully in next five years' time, what will happen to the thousands of victims? And who will monitor the situation and enforce closure of contaminated tubewells and motivate people in looking for alternative sources of potable water?

The answer that comes pat to mind is government. We have no doubt government. Particularly the Public Health Engineering Department is taken up with the job and some field work done by them has been useful. But the approach so far has been to minimise the danger and act as if they

wouldn't unless forced to.

Why is this so? If it is a big threat born of natural processes, why should government want it to look small? The World Bank took the all important step to investigate the causes and the money for that comes from Britain. Why didn't our government do this all? And if the WB initiative would not be forthcoming right at this time, which is already quit late, would the government sit snugly without going for the study?

## **Avoid This Ploy**

We are mortified to see that despite repeated exhortations to shun all counter productive and disruptive methods to register protest, country's jute, cotton and textile mill workers have gone ahead with their 48-hour strike and 20-hour rail road blockade programme from today.

Let alone the sane minds within the country that see hartal or similar programmes as pitfalls our emaciated economy can well steer clear, even foreign donors much to the chagrin of people with self-esteem have goaded against this economic hara-kiri. Any programme that stalls production is the last thing that leaders should think now; our economy simply cannot afford any agitational holiday now. This is exactly the reason this paper has so unfailingly lent voice to all calls to reject hartal as a tool to press home demands.

The strike callers in this case should have understood that their problem is neither a simple nor a new one. For over eight years , starting precisely from the days of Ershad their demands, mostly logical though, have come to suffer the fate of

promise given and broken by the powers that be. While it is true that an agreement with the government is immune to the vicissitudes of a party's fortune, as a party in power for only 17 months, the AL too needs time to honour an old agreement.

Nonetheless the government cannot drag over the matter for donkey's years bleating that being a complicated and chronic one the problem would take time. If sincerity is the theme then we do not see how the negotiating sessions can end leaving so many loose ends and unsolved questions. Efficiency or sincerity, we feel some basic elements are certainly missing in the government approach.

Government must will strongly enough to put this vexatious issue behind it as soon as possible. Labour leaders meanwhile should not let negotiations dissipate into more crippling strike or blockade calls.

## An Emerging Order in the Middle East

Egypt's foreign policy elite seem to have reached a consensus that the current peace process will further reduce

tion with Egypt.

Countries in the Middle their country's pour vis-a-vis other regional power particularly Israel. They already sense this subtle shift East - traditionally and of fortune in the rust: by the gulf countries and Maghreb Arabs to do business with Israel without any coordinapredominantly the land of the Arabs — threw off the shackles of Ottoman rule and post-1st world war mandatory arrangements of the European West through its strategic Suez Canal gave her an internapower it was for them a new tional clout, its enormous politdawn of self-assertion inflamed by an unprecedented ical and intellectual resources made Egypt an obvious choice nationalist passion. Both the new-found independence and to be at the helm of Arab affairs. wealth perked them up rekin-Seldom was her leadership contested except during the dling a sense of pride in their great Arab Civilization. A postpost-Camp David interregnum monarchy Egypt in the throes when Egypt turned into a of a new awakening catalyzed pariah almost overnight for her volteface over an Arab consenmuch of this resurgence. Although the cold war politics disus with regards to Israel. Nevvided the Arabs into radicals ertheless. Hosni Mubarak, the incumbent President slowly but and moderates, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser was able to keep steadily reintegrated Egypt in the Arab world thus restoring them, through his brand of an aggressive anti-West Arab nathe country's leadership in the tionalism, united at least in beregion now, of course, not withing proud of their heritage and a out potential contenders. But at common opposition to the imlong last Egypt's pursuit for an Arab unity and Nasser's Panplantation of the Jewish state Arab dream as well as the of Israel in the Arab heartland. country's leadership in the Inspite of an internecine intra-Arab feuds also a 22-nation Middle East seem to be under Arab League held them closely threat. knit within its framework Historically, the course of where none other than Arabs Arab-Israeli conflict had been dictated by Egypt's pivotal posihad entry. This exclusively tion in the Arab world and she . Arab regional in the Middle practically led the Arab inter-East was never questioned; neistate system. The Arabs, for exther was Egypt's position at its

FTER a protracted foreign

domination when the

if grudged. Egypt is the cradle of an ancient civilization as well as most educated and culturally advanced among the Arab nations. Stretching over two continents not only the country's location linking the East and

apex seriously challenged, even

aimed at strengthening her national security rather than ab-

dicating her regional influence. But in the maze of American shuttle diplomacy during the late seventies Sadar, it can be seen in hindsight, lost his way and committed his faux pas. The shifting sand of Middle East politics blurred his vision and he could see beyond the immediate gains of Camp David. The ominous conseeral mass of the Arabs was removed after peace?

Even after partial success of the peace process Israel is now bold enough to directly approach any Arab country and aspire to restructure the existing Middle East order. So much so that she has already been able to bring to the fore the new point of contention as to what should be the character and composition of a revised Middle

PERSPECTIVES

by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

quences of the inroads allowed to Israel into inter Arab politics both through Camp David and Oslo process have now started to manifest with their disastrous effects. In signing Camp David treaty and backing up Oslo process Egypt obviously hoped to be used as an unavoidable conduit between her Arab neighbours and US-Israeli axis but there are evidences now that she was outwitted by the latters' superior diplomacy. Why she should, after all, be needed as a conduit one the stonewall sepa-

rating the Israelis and the gen-

East order as well as the roles of Egypt and Israel in it. Their competing visions struggle to shape the region's dynamics in their own images. Israel hopes to construct a new regional order that is Middle Eastern instead of Arab, in which Israel would be the dominant power at least in the economic and military term. Israel has already called for expanding the Arab league membership to include Israel and other non-Arab Middle Eastern States so that the organisation's Arab character is diluted. Egypt, hitherto

the Catalyst for any event of significance in the region is genuinely worried over the development. But can Egypt undo Israeli design?

There are few signs that

Egypt can do it. Since the signing of their peace accord with PLO in 1993 Israelis have pursued active economic diplomacy to lift the Arab economic boycott against Israel and establish direct links with several Arab states. Israel's campaign has led to important breakthroughs with Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and some Gulf countries. The Arab boycott is being quietly and unceremoniously set aside. Three years before late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin himself successfully led a large team of Israeli businessmen at a major economic conference at Casablanca, impressed on their Arab counterparts the mutual benefits of economic collaboration and promised high financial return and incentives.

In Egyptian perception, Israel as indicated by her moves aims to dominate the region at the expense of Egypt's traditional regional role. Israel also wants to turn the historical Arab heartland into mere geopolitical entity called Middle East. The Egyptian ruling elite resents Israel's decisions to by-pass Egypt and establish

direct ties with other Arab states but can do little to thwart it. Egypt desperately hopes that she should continue to be the mediator between Israel and other Arab states — a hope dashed by Israel's determined move to penetrate through Egyptian barrier. Egypt is opposed to the formation of a Middle East common market but her opposition has been of no avail. All that a frustrated Hosni Mubarak could do was to allay the fear of his countrymen by telling them that 'Egypt has always been and would like to continue to be a pivotal state in the region, although the words rang just hollow.

Egypt's foreign policy elite seem to have reached a consensus that the current peace process will further reduce their country's power vis-a-vis other regional power particularly Israel. They already sense this subtle shift of fortune in the rush by the gulf countries and Maghreb Arabs to do business with Israel without any coordination with Egypt. In postpeace era Egyptian mediation between Israel and other Arab states is also otherwise not needed since Israel will have direct access to them and Egypt cannot, in any case compete with more dynamic Israeli economy

Given their political and military weights and geostrategic positions as well as competing interests it was inevitable that Egypt and Israel would one day clash in the new Middle East order. Both Camp David and Oslo process hastened that inevitability.

# Renewed Trend towards Secularism in Turkey

by ASM Nurunnabi

The top military commanders had expressed in clear terms that they were committed to democratic and progressive principles, and warned that any fundamentalism and fanaticism from the administration challenging the principle of 'secularism' would not be tolerated.

notable political change has taken place in Turkey. ▲ Lits secularists have found champion in conservative prime minister Mesud Yilmaz. President Suleyman Demirel used his constitutional powers to hand the mandate to the pro-western Yilmaz who had pledged to force an "Islamic-free" coalition from among the country's fractious political parties.

Turkey's new prime minister Mesud Yilmaz, who took office on June 30, 1997 and later faced a vote of confidence in the Parliament and won, has promised to be a champion of "civilian, democratic and freedomloving values." The fall of Neemmettin Erbakan, the country's first prime minister from the Islamic Welfare Party was inevitable due to constant pressure from the western powers, dished out through Turkey's powerful generals.

On assuming power, Turkey's new government under Yilmaz launched an aggressive campaign to roll back the influence of the Islamic-led coalition headed by Erbakan. Since Erbakan held an anti-western

stance, it created a scare among the western powers who didn't like Erbakan's revolutionary ideas of a global Muslim order an Islamic Common Market, an Islamic UN and a world Islamic Union. Equally disquieting was his economic blueprint that he intended to re-negotiate with the International Monetary Fund.

ample, could not make war

against Israel after Anwar Al-

Sadat left the Arab Circle in

1975 to gradually lean towards

the West. In the same vein none

could enter into peace with Is-

rael before Egypt signed Camp

David Peace Treaty. Even in

making peace with Israel, Egypt

This scared a section of the Turkish people, particularly the military all the more because Erbakan attempted to undo Article 24 of the Turkish Constitution which enshrines the principle of secularism in modern Turkey. This was a revolutionary step which the majority of Turkish population. especially the armed forces were vehemently against and would never allow it to be adopted. The top military commanders had expressed in clear terms that they were committed to democratic and progressive principles, and warned that any fundamentalism and fanaticism from the administration challenging the principle of 'secularism' would

not be tolerated. Turkey's military-domi-

nated National Security Council (NSC) comprising Turkey's five senior-most military commanders, the President, the Prime Minister, Defence, Interior and Foreign Affairs Ministers, champions the cause of secularism in the country Turkey's secularism is not only a form of government but also a way of life, and a guarantee of for democracy and social peace. It was feared that the construction of large mosques in Istanbul and capital city of Ankara as envisaged by the coalition partner of Erbakan, might undermine Turkey's secular values. The NSC, therefore, demanded a crackdown on antisecular groups of religious fanatics, who were trying to tighten grips on a section of the Turkish media and educational institutions.

Against this background, the Turkish military took up the responsibility of defending Turkey's secular traditions which had been found by the father of the nation Mustafa Kemal 74 years ago. The new government under Yilmas began reversing pro-Islam policies, halted pending government or-

ders and froze all recent government appointments, began investigation against several Islamic officials and cancelled government tenders.

Political commentators are of the opinion that the Yilmasled alliance represents "a state government" that is free of any Islamist orientation. This means the kind of government that high-raking commanders of the Turkish armed forces and various justice organs have wanted. The traditional Istanbul-based business community also backed a governing alliance that excluded Erbakan. Whatever the exact mechanism might have been adopted, it appeared that senior figures in Turkish establishment, zealous guardfans of the official secular order, played the key role behind the scenes in shutting out Erbakan and the Islam-based Welfare Party

Some analysts, however, may tend to feel the Turkish Secularists' move to banish Islamists might be elusive, given the still uncertain roles of some political parties wielding considerable clout in matters of re-

## Joke on Second Marriage

Farida Akhter

During the five-day visit in Bangladesh, the World Bank President, Mr James Wolfensohn made a comment about second marriage and dowry which is totally unacceptable to us even as a JOKE! The Bhorer Kagoj and the Daily Ittefag (17 October, 1997) reported that Wolfensohn was quite happy and enjoyed the visit to Bakpur village in the Banaripara thana of Barisal district. There he met some Grameen Bank women They asked him, whether Elaine Ruth was his only wife and whether he has taken dowry at the time of marriage, Mr Wolfensohn replied (laughing and jokingly) that he was thinking of a second marriage and since he did not get any dowry at the time of his marriage with Elaine, he was inspired for a second marriage to get dowry.

Usually the village women ask very clever questions to the foreign visitors. The Grameen Bank women in other areas have asked very personal but witty questions to Hillary Clinton the of USA and Queen Sophia of Spain. They wanted to know the situation of women and the man-woman relationship in other countries. Usually the foreign visitors think that they can ask such questions to the poor village women of Bangladesh with the prejudicial idea that they are in terrible conditions here and that the foreign aid is helping them to get out of such conditions. So far, it has been found the questions asked by the village women could not be answered satisfactorily by the foreign visitors, including persons like Hillary Clinton and Queen

They could not prove that they are out of the clutches of patriarchy. The claim that the World Bank support to the poor village women in the form of microcredit for self-employment, scholarships for girls need to be assessed in the real

context of women's rights and empowerment. The oversimplistic claim that they are helping the poor women is based on their ignorance about the history of the women's movement which has been raising the questions on women's social political and economic rights for more than a century.

Women's movement has been fighting against polygamy and dowry. Both these are the major causes of family or domestic violence for women in Bangladesh as well as in other countries. The women's movement is still confronting these issues. When the village women of Bakpur asked Mr Wolfensohn whether Elaine Ruth was his only wife, I do not think they wanted to hear that he is thinking of marrying again. am also very surprised to read that Mr Wolfensohn can even get "inspired" by the system of downyl On the contrary, the village women said very clearly that they are against dowry.

It may be a matter of simple joke among a group of village women and the World Bank President, but it is not acceptable to us as the activists in the women's movement. For us, the issues which have any connection with the violence against women cannot be a matter of joke in anyway. Polygamy and dowry are serious problems and we are fighting against it at all

It is an insult to women in this country that Mr Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank, can be insensitive to such issues. World Bank is now talking about women's empower ment. Mr Wolfensohn informed the village women that WB is helping 180 poor countries of the world. But if this is what the he thinks, then I have doubts whether they really understand what the women's issues really are. I hope, Mr Wolfensohn will

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. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

Sir, I had the opportunity to be at the ZIA on 29th October. 1997 around midnight to attend an incoming Malaysian Airline flight. Although I checked the ETA over phone before going to the airport, at the airport there was no way to check if the flight was on time or further delayed or landed. A close circuit TV screen which used to show the above information outside the building previously had been removed for reasons best known to the authority. As a result, one has to wait indefinitely in rain and shine outside the newly-erected fence, if one has that much of time, for the passenger to show up.

After one-and-a-half hours of wait, I was told by a gentleman that only way to know about the flight was to buy a 20 taka ticket and go inside the concourse hall where a board proudly displays the flight information, I was waiting for. wonder if any airport operating international flights is so illequipped and apathetic to the public interest. Or shall I assume that the CAA are doing this wilfully to help boost the sale of entry tickets into the concourse hall whose interior arrangement is like a cage and offer no other facility except viewing of the flight information display board as a cost.

About the maintenance and cleanliness, the less said the better. Our Kamalapur railway station gives by far a superior look than our international airport.

H R Chowdhury Maghbazar, Dhaka

## "Laser Pointers"

Sir, This is regarding a letter printed on the 2nd Nov in your daily by Saju. The theme of the letter was Laser Pointers. Though this is not such a recognised tool in our country but it is catching on fast. Especially with the younger generation, as it was correctly pointed out by Saju. This "toy-like item" apparently is causing a nuisance in the society. And the "wicked boys" are using them to harass

girls, the writer continues. The part which completely threw me off guard was the mentioning of youths turning out to be armed cadres if these wicked boys continue using these "arms

I recall when I was a child my favourite toy was this plastic army set equipped with tanks, jets, trucks and soldiers. My friend and I used to command our own bases, blow up the enemy base as well as to protect our own. And those soldiers who gave their lives would get a military burial. We actually buried them too! My friend has grown up to be a doctor and I am pursuing computers. I can hardly describe us as being armed cadres.

Saju, you mentioned that the youths ought to use "educational toys" instead. What is an educational toy? I have seen those geeky-looking kids with pimples and thousand powered glasses spending all their waking moments in front of computers. Now, is that your idea of a proper unarmed youth with an educational toy?

Masroor Ahmed Deepak By e-mail Dhaka

## A case for the bats

Sir, We have a general dis-

like for, nay discomfort, in presence of a bat. We suffer from the myth that bats are dirty and would stick to your hair or cloth if not careful. So a bat is unwelcome and invariably we would like someone to kill the little creature. But as the experts say, humans would need military night-vision scopes to see as well in the dark as some bats do. Most bats also 'see' not just with their eyes, but with echolocation. Emitting high frequency sounds that bounce off potential prey and return as echoes, bats can detect objects only two millimetres long and as fine as human hair. Conservationists like Merlin Tattle say: bats, whose nearly 1000 species make up a quarter of the earth's mammals, are not creepy, worthless creatures;

they are among the gentlest and

most benign of animals'. New research shows they are better friends of the human beings than we realise. In a season only 150 big brown bats can consume 600,000 cucumber beetles. About 300 plants worldwide need bats for propagation. To quote some of their activities: bats, pipistrelle can eat about 3000 mosquito-size insects in a night; fruit bats spread seeds over thousands of square miles in one night; cave nectar bats assist pollination by feeding on mangroves durian, jackfruit, mango and banana trees.

Finally, the world over the bats suffer not only from bad press, millions are spent to kill these useful creatures. We should understand that eliminating bats we only bring serious ecological and economic

Col(rtd) Mirza Shafi House 82F, Rd 5, Banani, Dhaka

## What next

Sir, People have become weary and restless, with foreboding by the current situation of our country. Law and order, discipline, morality are going down the drain. People never felt so insecure and perplexed before — chaos is prevailing everywhere, even the quarters, to which people look upon with reverence acting most disappointingly.

According to a report published on 29th October, 1997, in The Daily Star, an Awami League MP and his five companions arrived at the Zia International Airport five minutes before take-off time and demanded that they be taken on the flight but their demand was turned down since as per rule, one must board the plane at least 20 minutes before takeoff. This enraged the supporters of the MP and they threatened the traffic controllers. The scene created panic among the people who were present at that time. This sort of events are uncalled for and are bad examples. Another distasteful incident

materialised by the action of our Airforce personnel, which we learned from a local Bangla newspaper. On 31st October, 1997, forty-two members of Bangladesh Airforce were coming to Chittagong by the intercity train Mahanagar Prabhati. At 1 pm when the train reached Mastan Nagar, two members of the Airforce pulled the chain to get down from it.

Everyone knows that the chain is there to be pulled in emergency, otherwise it is a punishable offence.

When the Loco-Master and the attendant came to enquire. the members of the Airforce became violent and started beating the railway employees. We are stunned; behaviour of this sort from a highly esteemed quarter is really unacceptable.

Our police force has greatly disappointed us, now the Airforce, what next?

Nur Jahan East Nasirabad, Chittagong

## Security check-post

Sir, A security check post was build by the Uttara Association of Sector 7 near the mosque in view of the rapid rise of mugging by motorbike riders in broad daylight. This was conveyed to the residents of the locality during the Friday prayer some time back. Other measures were also taken by the Association to check mugging. It was indeed a tragic blow to the residents to find their security check post demolished by the City Corporation without any notice. This structure was an isolated one not interfering with any facilities of the area and was built to help the resi-

Why should City Corporation

target a structure which was helping the residents and turn a blind eye to all the illegal structures flooding from Azampur and stretching right up to Tongi Bridge? The City Corporation has failed to provide or maintain any basic facilities to the residents of Uttara such as bad roads, clogged drains, no garbage cleaning, no maintenance of calverts etc. The Association has itself taken up projects like security, garbage collection from the houses, planting trees etc. Other projects are also under consideration. Instead of joining hands with the Association for the betterment of the society, the City Corporation has decided to bulldoze all the good things from the society. There are a number of MPs, high government officials and reputed businessmen residing in Uttara Sector 7. Will these honourable gentlemen please protest this act and take up this issue with the Mayor of the City Corporation?

L A Ahmed Sector 7, Uttara, Dhaka

### Hills and Hillocks M Taheruddin

Every time I visit Chittagong, I come back with a saddened heart. To me like many others the attractions for the city queen of Chittagong are the open sea that washes the southern terminal of the city and the range of lovely green hills that start from Dhum near Feni and reach up to the centre of the port city. From my personal experience during my long stay in Pakistan unlike the hills and mountains of Pakistan which are mostly barren and sunburnt with gaping stones all over, our hills are blissfully different. The lush green hills soothe the eye, relieve the heart and broaden the vision of any mortal. Every time I gaze at the beautiful sight, I feel how beautiful and magnificent life can be on this planet.

But alas! My imagination is bombarded when I find what our fellow human beings are causing on this beautiful gift of God. Like many others again, to my utter sorrow and bewilderment I find that people are cutting the hills for making brickfields, poultry farms and what not. In a similar sojourn to Sylhet, to my utter consternation, I found that the green hillocks of Sylhet are also being dismembered and disfigured for small earthly gains. In the context of the mostly flat land mass of Bangladesh, the hills of Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts and tillas in Sylhet present a pleasant departure. When we visit Chittagong or Sylhet. the sight of such beautiful green hills and tillas brings a refreshing breeze of life. Topographically, the break from the monotony of flat land that mostly comprise our country is provided by the hills of Chittagong and Sylhet. But human cruelty and avariciousness have befallen on these beautiful landscapes and treasures of the

Can we not do something to stop this destruction of these heavenly gifts? Like many others, I am only trying to express my feelings and I expect others to join me to resist this defilement of the Nature's beauty spots. Is it too much to expect from the city fathers of Chittagong City Corporation and Sylhet Municipality to take effective steps to stop this indis-

criminate destruction of hills?

While one travels to Chit-

reflect on this matter.

tagong by train, the range of hills from Dhum to Chittagong presents a unique scenic beauty. We should do our best to preserve the Nature's gift. At the same time, we may plan to turn nearby hillside areas as tourist spots with minimum alternation and interference. The Sanitarium complex at Kumira is almost not being used for many years from now. The complex may be remodelled into a tourist complex by adding a few modern amenities like a few huts for tourists, rope-way, a few springs, children's playground, park etc. This will increase attractions for tourists and if our Parjatan Corporation can evolve a package programme with their Indian counterpart, this may prove to be a boon for foreign exchange earnings. Besides, foreigners who visit Bangladesh but cannot afford time for Cox's Bazar or Captai-Rangamati, may find this very useful. Likewise similar plan may be evolved for our tillas at Sylhet. For attracting tourists, some facilities may be built up on the tillas with minimum topographical alteration. It is not merely the natural

beauty that is at stake. It is now felt by environmentalists and geologists that destruction of the hills is eroding the natural shields against cyclone, tidal bores and other natural calami-