

Simmering DU Campus

Intersecting feuding has reportedly reached flash point at the Dhaka University campus. Any day, there could be a violent outbreak. Security personnel posted around the area have already raided couple of dormitories known as the bastions of the armed cadres, but as usual, to no avail. Only some cocktail bombs were recovered, said the press reports.

The fears of a possible trouble have a different dimension this time. It is not the traditional rivalry between BCL (Bangladesh Chhatra League) and JCD (Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal), the student fronts of ruling Awami League and opposition BNP, rather it is rivalry within themselves — factional feud at its literal worst. Causes are despicable for their sheer pettiness. It is almost entirely the result of different factional leaders' attempt to consolidate their powerbases.

Heightening of tension on the campus has followed close on the heels of an apparent administrative stasis observed in the recent rhetorical collision between opposing fronts over DUCSU or student unions' elections in the latest meeting of the *Paribesh* committee (formed to monitor university atmospherics). BCL has demanded immediate dissolution of the current body of DUCSU which is now in the eighth year of its existence, a gross aberration of the legitimate practice. JCD, of course, has taken a contrary view of the matter for obvious reasons. What is annoying here is the University authorities' muted or non-committal stance on the issue. A decisive step on the part of the authorities, one feels, is likely to boost the process of normalisation in the university.

We are worried the escalation of tension on the campus might spoil the atmospherics and spirit of Ekushey February. We plead for enhanced vigilance in that area by the law enforcers; but having said that, we also feel, rather reiterate that no solution will follow if the political parties do not delink their student fronts. Unless a consensus is reached on the issue followed by strict and ethical adherence to it, things will never look up no matter how keen or active we are in de-escalating tension.

So, we goad the political parties once again, please, do away with your systemic insensitivity and hypocrisy and pull out whatever stakes you have in the educational institutions. Law then can always take care of the agents of squabbling and bickering.

Transit Debacle

No pulsation after three truck-loads of pulses — that is the story of sudden death occurring to the Banglabandha transit corridor between land locked Nepal and sea port-endowed Bangladesh. The route was opened on September 1 last year in an extended pursuit of the trade protocol earlier signed by India, Bangladesh and Nepal, but on an experimental basis for six months only. After the inaugural day's passage of three truck-loads of lentil nothing moved through the route during the last five and a half months. The make-shift immigration and customs outfits on both sides of the border have shuttered down. The so-called six-month experiment turned a non-starter from the second day, it seems.

Why, what happened? The prominent Bangla daily which published this news item traced the origin of the anti-climax to India's laying down of certain conditions for the transit like using Indian trucks only for transportation of goods and that too under the supervision of Indian Army units and on two specific days — Saturday and Sunday. Saturday is closed in Bangladesh and Sunday in Nepal. Apart from other things, such stipulations foreshadowed higher transportation costs. Apparently what has been given by one hand has been taken away by another, and Nepal can hardly be blamed for reverting *ipso facto* to the Calcutta port.

We regard this as lip-service done to subregionalism by none other than who should be at the vanguard of it — India. At the same time, let's be prepared to greet free trade which is emerging as an irrepressible agenda for the next century. We need improving the services and infrastructure on our side — right up to Mongla Port, the natural deep sea entrepot and outlet for effective subregionalism in this part of South Asia.

This Hilsa Gospel

Dhaka press has gone into a spree of superlatives in the last few days praising the many qualities and health giving powers of the Bengalee People's centuries old object of adoration *hilsa* or as they say in Hindi and English — *Hilsa*. Physicians and nutritionists were in two minds about this best loved of all fishes — and possibly still are. And then the newspapers started extolling the sterling and so far unknown good points of *hilsa* — beginning with The Daily Star. As a sea fish, *hilsa* was supposed to be imbuing a lot of plankton and as with all other sea-fishes it, because of that, developed fats that rather than adding to human fat, always cut on that substantially. But till very recently this good news was mixed with another positively bad. That while cutting on LDL or the bad cholesterol, *hilsa* being a veritable depot of triglycerides or TG, more than offsets its other good work.

The team led by Professor Sohrab Ali seems to have conclusively proved that *hilsa* oil greatly curbs TG as well as LDL levels and has an improving effect on HDL or the good cholesterol. This is not only good news as The Daily Star has said. This is fantastic. Heart and blood pressure patients have so long been avoiding *hilsa* knowing it to be poison for them. Now this has turned into an antidote for their ailment.

Granting that the news is all true, it devolves on both the people and the government that *hilsa* fries are not caught and sold and consumed. For the netted *jilka* has not had its chance to go to sea and develop into the medicine it was destined to be. Point two — care should be taken not to allow entrepreneurs to grow *hilsa* in ponds, as they have done with *pangash*, another sea fish. And perhaps in the light of the new knowledge, it would be wise not to allow export of *hilsa* until our production of it has increased to wholly satisfy the domestic demand and surpassed it.

There is no end to good things happening to Bangladesh, things like gas and oil strikes. It is us humans that fail ourselves. Let *hilsa* be an exception to that.

A Farewell to Arms

In the annals of human history, it is hard to find a parallel where ethnic conflict has been resolved peacefully through talks. Examples of never-ending conflict abound. In Sri Lanka we read daily gory details of bloodbath. The Kurdish minority is a telling example

THE signing of the historic Peace Accord between the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts, led by the Chief Whip in the National Assembly Abul Hasanat Abdullah and the Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS), led by its Chairman Jotirindriyo Bodhipriyo Larma (nicknamed Shantu Larma), is an unprecedented success of the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The accord was signed on 2 December 1997 at the Prime Minister's Secretariat between the two leaders with a beaming Sheikh Hasina watching. It is the culmination of two decades of insurgency and intermittent efforts at peace-making through talks.

The war started in 1977. The first contact between the Bangladesh Government and the PCJSS started in 1985 during the regime of president H M Ershad. The talks did not appear to make much headway when the government led by Khaleda Zia picked up the thread. In 1992 the BNP government formed a committee headed by Communications Minister Col (ret'd) Ali Ahmed to resolve the problem. On August 1, 1992 Shanti Bahini, the military arm of the PCJSS declared unilateral cease fire which would continue till December 31, 1997. In November 1992 Col (ret'd) Ali Ahmed held the first talks with PCJSS at the Khagrachhari Circuit House. Until October 1995 Col (ret'd) Ali Ahmed held six rounds of talks with the PCJSS but was unable to reach an accord. It is a fact that the BNP government made some serious efforts to settle this two decades-old problem with the Shanti Bahini. It had some moderate success in bringing back more than 3000 refugees from the camps in Tripura.

The Awami League government of Sheikh Hasina picked up the thread where the BNP government had left off. By tak-

ing a bold personal initiative, Sheikh Hasina wrote to Shantu Larma to immediately start a dialogue. She appointed as the head of committee for negotiation Abul Hasanat Abdullah, the Chief Whip. The fact that Abdullah is a close relation of Sheikh Hasina has helped the negotiation by establishing the fact of the sincerity of the government. Shantu Larma apparently placed his full trust and confidence in Sheikh Hasina and has been fully rewarded by a Peace Accord, which fully protects the interest of the two sides and the honour and dignity of both parties are fully vindicated.

The arms surrender ceremony took place on 10 February at the newly-built stadium in Khagrachhari. Long before the



The Horizon This Week

Arshad-uz Zaman

armed cadres of PCJSS silently marched past with their weapons and departed them in the open field in full view of the entire population of Bangladesh, their compatriots had started returning to their homes from the Tripura refugee camps by the thousands. The Bangladesh Television deserve a lot of credit for arranging to telecast the entire ceremony live. With the stadium bursting at the seams, the diplomatic corps present in full force and Shantu Larma presenting his weapon to Sheikh Hasina and receiving a bouquet of very appropriate white roses, these are images that will remain imprinted on the minds of the citizens of Bangladesh for a long time. The ceremony was at once solemn and joyful as a bouncing Hasina went to inspect the surrendered arms and greet the fighters.

In her speech Sheikh Hasina

has spelt out the need for harmonious living by the hillsman as well as the Bangalee settlers. Indeed the hills people are peace-loving by nature and from the manner they have rushed back to their homes in the beautiful surrounding of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, it is evident that they want to get on with their lives. Indian government has been praised for its cooperation in settling this problem. Indeed India has extended her hand of friendship and help in harbouring the nearly 50,000 refugees and arrange for their safe repatriation.

The BNP is clearly on the wrong track by attacking the Peace Accord. The facts are there for all to see. BNP government of Begum Zia had tried

numbering more than a 100,000. The casualty list is more than 20,000. Such examples abound all over the globe. It is to the abiding credit of the Government of Bangladesh and PCJSS that they successfully concluded a deal whereby armed cadres are returning to normal life.

The Peace Accord will have to be followed by the proper rehabilitation of the returning refugees. Lives in the hills have been severely disrupted. Homes have been broken up. For a period of time there is bound to be tension between the hill people and the Bangalees. They will have to learn to live together. The civil administration has a big task on its hand. As it helps the hills people get on with their lives more than anything else, the administrators will have to deal with the problems humanely.

The signing of the Peace Accord followed by the surrender of arms by the men of Shanti Bahini has cleared the decks for fresh foreign policy initiatives by Sheikh Hasina. Her recent meetings with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appears to have gone off surprisingly well. Sharif has not only agreed to take back the refugees but open a long delayed debate in Pakistan over Bangladesh. On the Bihar refugee question a word of caution may not be out of place. Late Gen Zia-ul-Huq had once declared that if needed he would carry the refugees on his shoulder. His pious declaration was effectively scuttled by the bureaucracy. Nawaz Sharif has to guard against the machinations of the bureaucracy, who are not well disposed towards the Bihar refugees.

With the historic signing of the Peace Accord the politics of south eastern part of Bangladesh and indeed its adjacent Indian territories has changed for all times to come. There is rightly joy in the air of the hills of Chittagong Hill Tracts — Joy and hope for a much better tomorrow.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Iraq — the West's Proving Ground

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed writes from Princeton

Very few people in the Muslim world will shed a tear if Saddam Hussein is killed. However, if a single innocent Iraqi civilian man, woman or child is killed as "collateral damage" to Western bombing, or the Iraqi children continue to die because of Western sanctions, the West will have blood on its hand!

AS the West gets ready to pulverize Iraq the second time in seven years, let us get certain facts right.

Saddam Hussein, is a dictator. He has caused the innocent Iraqi men, women and children enormous harm. Even at this late stage, he would do Iraq a great favour by simply disappearing. That would deprive the West of the one man they need to work their population up to the zenith of moral righteousness. The West has demonized Iraq so completely, that to the average Western man and woman, every little starving and emaciated Iraqi boy and girl is a potential 'Little Saddam'.

The West is acting in its own interest, not on behalf of the 'world community', as they continue to shamelessly profess. If the matter was put to a vote in the United Nations General Assembly, the real 'world community', the economic sanctions against Iraq would be lifted in an instant! No nation can be under perpetual UN embargo. Four years into war with Germany, the West embarked on the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany. For seven years and counting, the West has turned a blind eye to the inhuman suffering of the Iraqi children, who are dying by the thousands every day, for the lack of medicine and food. Yet the West talks not about Iraqi relief, but more punishment for Iraq.

The West's mandate to take military action against Iraq, without renewed authorization from the UN Security Council, is questionable at best. Funny, the West hid behind the UN Security Council resolutions, when they deprived the Bosnian Muslims arms to fight the Serbian savages. Now they claim that new Security Council resolutions are needed to hit Iraq anew. The real reason? Because three out of the five veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council — Russia, China, and even France — are opposed to military actions against Iraq. Russia has

even warned of world war.

What has Iraq done to earn the West's wrath? Oh, the exaggerations! Iraq has biological weapons that can wipe out the whole population of the world. British Prime Minister Tony Blair tells us this. Really, Mr. Prime Minister? The truth: A Scud warhead packed with anthrax bacteria will not bother anyone if it explodes at an altitude of 1000 feet as Scuds do, or embeds itself in the ground. The germs have to be at nose level to be effective.

According to Dr. Norton Zinder, Professor of Biology at Rockefeller University: "They (biological weapons) scare people but they are ineffective as weapons, and that is a major reason why they have not been used. Part of the story today is building Saddam as a villain and a scary guy because he has these biological weapons." According to the New York Times, "In France, Italy and the rest of the continental Europe, the conviction is fairly widespread that America is deliberately exaggerating the threat of Saddam's biological and chemical weapons in order to justify an attack." "Iraq has used weapons of mass destruction, and must not be allowed to use them again," say the Western leaders. Even after seven years of UN arms inspection?

What has Iraq done against the US, Britain, France or Germany to deserve all this? Its greatest crime was to invade Kuwait, which has since been reversed. It has fought Iran, its own Kurdish population, and sent Scud missile to Israel during Gulf War in retaliation for Israel's unprovoked destruction of Iraq's nuclear facilities in 1981. Iraq has done nothing against the Western powers.

We are told that Iraq must not be able to threaten its neighbours again. After seven years of crippling UN sanctions, which one of its neighbours feel threatened by a toothless Iraq? None. Has anyone noticed that among all the so-called 'Gulf War allies', none of the Muslims nations —

Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, even Saudi Arabia or Turkey — are on board this time. So who is the West trying to assist?

Israel, of course. Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu came to Washington recently, defied President Clinton in every which way, and returned to Israel a greater hero to the Israelis and the American Jews. Any mention of the UN Security Council resolution 242 that requires Israel to withdraw to the pre-1967 borders elicits 'the finger' from Netanyahu. Is the West preparing to drop bombs on Israel for disobeying UN Security Council Resolution 242? No. The only thing they drop over Israel is billions of US dollars and Deutsche Marks annually, making Israel the only rich Western nation to receive foreign aid!

The US Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, who is Jewish, is a study in contrast. He is very reluctant to keep US troops in Bosnia beyond June of this year, to protect the Muslims. Yet, to drum up support against Iraq, he is spanning the globe, enlisting such far flung allies as Australia and Germany.

Concedes the New York Times: "Beyond the destruction of chemical and biological weapons, an eventual bombing campaign would serve several long-term American interests in the region: the maintenance of a weak Iraq; reinforcement of conservative Gulf regimes and cheap supplies of oil; maintenance of rough balance of powers between Iraq and Iran." And of course, all the time they are advancing Israel's agenda.

It has been seven years since Iraq has been dispatched by the West to the middle ages. The West has developed far more sophisticated weaponry in the intervening years. No weapon is a success, until it is battle-tested. Iraq's vast terrain is a perfect proving ground for the West's weapons of mass destruction.

New York Times columnist A. M. Rosenthal has warned

President Clinton that anything short of complete destruction of Iraq this time will be unacceptable to the 'American people.' His colleague, William Safire has suggested that Israel should not hesitate to use nuclear weapons against Iraq, if attacked. The 'yellow' Japanese were the only humans subjected to the inhumanity of the atomic bomb thus far. If Germany was situated, not in the middle of Europe, but say in Australia, would the West have dropped the A bomb on the fellow Caucasians? Doubtful. It is always easy to talk about nuking 'lesser people'. Ironically, as the West prepares to persecute the Muslims yet again, Mr. Rosenthal and colleagues are begging the US Congress to enact a Bill that will prevent the persecution of Christians by China and Muslim dictators.

Why do the West have to float such 'white lies' against the rest of the world? They think everyone else is so dumb? Why do they have to inspect Saddam's palaces, and pay no respect to Iraq's sovereignty whatsoever? Do they really believe that Saddam stockpiles the biological weapons in the palaces he sleeps in? Imagine how the British and the Americans would feel, if someone tried to inspect 10 Downing Street or the White House, and found their leaders cheating on their wives. Is it the West's real intention to document the construction of Saddam's habitats and their weaknesses and strengths so that they can be blown up in subsequent 'smart' bombing raids? Is the personal morality of the Western leaders beginning to encroach on the Western morality itself?

Very few people in the Muslim world will shed a tear if Saddam Hussein is killed. However, if a single innocent Iraqi civilian man, woman or child is killed as 'collateral damage' to Western bombing, or the Iraqi children continue to die because of Western sanctions, the West will have blood on its hand!

The Press Unfree

by Chanchal Sarkar

BECAUSE his younger sister, Fowzia, just wouldn't give up a stout commemorative volume has appeared on Bangladesh's distinguished journalist and our much loved colleague S M Ali. Even though he spent much of his working life in Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines and elsewhere and came to roost in Dhaka only two years before he died in 1993, Ali was quintessentially a journalist and a Bengali.

The book, expectedly, has a lot of reminiscence and biography but the untold story behind it is the attempt by a group of very talented Asian journalists to set up the scaffolding of a free press in East, South-East and South Asia against the grain of authoritarian, quasi-authoritarian and masked-authoritarian regimes in the region. They were basically idealists, this pack of journalists from Sri Lanka, East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Korea, Malaysia and India, and the only resources they had were their dreams and their typewriters. The umbrella for their effort was the Press Foundation of Asia under Amitabha Chowdhury.

Their dreams got a rude shock when Ferdinand Marcos dealt a stinging blow to democracy and a free press in the Philippines in 1972. Lee Kuan Yew had already been consistently hostile and minatory. In post-Tunku Malaysia the largest paper, *The Straits Times*, was mainly owned and controlled by the government; democracy was still touch-and-go in Thailand; in Sri Lanka the two main newspaper houses had been nationalised; journalists like Mochtar Lubis couldn't govern in Indonesia; undivided Pakistan had to cope with a government that owned the main newspapers, and in India, that masked-authoritarian country, the mask was snatched away when Indira Gandhi weighed in with the Emergency in 1975. Only Japan was envied by us; paradoxically, it had shrugged off its fascist past.

This consistent trend — in which there was steady method — put paid to the dreams of the PFA. It had to change tack and become principally a training body. Though it worked hard, it never recovered its ideals-inspired elan. The band of journalists had to find slots in newspapers once again to make a living. Owners and publishers who had taken scant interest (the Indians were a prime example) in PFA and had always kept themselves ready for deals with governments, continued to be prosperous. In some of the countries the journalists unions and their paranoic supporters turned on the Press Institute like wolves howling 'CIA' and made the night hideous with their baying. The ultimate result was the near collapse of the PFA (it now just ticks over).

Organisations like the Press Institute of India are emasculated for lack of support.

Throughout all this S M Ali is the only one who came out

with his idealism intact. Whether as Editor of the *Bangkok Post* or the *Hong Kong Standard*, whether as chief executive of the Press Foundation of Asia or the regional representative in South-East Asia for UNESCO, he kept dreaming of a good and truthful daily for Bangladesh in 1969 to do just that. The Daily Star appeared on January 14, 1991 and was a most agreeable and welcome addition to Dhaka's press. On October 17, 1993 Ali's severe and neglected illness caught up with him.

His life, the papers he worked for, his reactions to the rulers of newly freed Bangladesh and to fellow journalists at that time all mirror the experience of his Asian colleagues. For them all the overwhelming experience has been of disillusionment with the politics and political leaders of their countries. The bitterness which took hold of Ali when he returned to Bangladesh for a spell in 1974 and with which he left again to work abroad has been felt by all his friends in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Paradoxically, as in a country like India (partly because business houses have gone into the media) the salaries and perks of journalists have improved exponentially, their freedom has diminished. The editor in India today works in a gilded cage, the owners and managers call the tune in editorial matters no less than in business. No country in the subcontinent (nor in South and South-East Asia yet has a Right to Information law except, paradoxically again, Pakistan where an ordinance was produced during the interim government that ruled in the period between Benazir and Nawaz Sharif.

Looking back, the media in Asia (once again excepting Japan) have technological gloss but no more freedom than in the 1960s when the Press Foundation tried to tilt at the windmills. Television makes courage and opposition even more unlikely because the investment is so much greater.

What Ramananda Chatterjee said: "The editor must own the paper," is now quite impossible. Ali, after 40 years of dreaming and yearning, was very lucky to get good financial supporters who also accepted his leadership. The Asian that excellent weekly broadsheet from Hong Kong edited by Tarzie Vittachi had to fold up for want of resources, fortunately Ali's Daily Star still goes strongly on.

Am I justified in pegging these thoughts on to a commemorative volume? I think I am because Ali was very much one of us, sharing the same illusions and disillusion. The book is well planned with contributions from his friends and admirers interlarded with his writings. Of these his letters are much more interesting than his editorials and columns. That, at least, was my impression as I leafed through the life of my friend.

(Courtesy: The Hindustan Times)

OPINION

Can We Know More about Colonels?

Neeman A Sobhan

I read with interest a recent article dated January 28, entitled 'Peeping into the Shopping Bag', by Mr Shahdeen Malik. He makes a reference to a recent announcement by the PM about the purchase of some defence weaponry in the form of MIG-29s and some C-130s, and I agree with him that the taxpayers of Bangladesh have a right to know what the government is actually spending for our defence.

Although only parenthetically I mention that the story Mr. Malik refers to in his article is 'No One Writes to the Colonel', a novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, in fact I too took the cue from Mr. Malik and instead of wasting time writing to colonels, I contacted SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which believes in rendering accessible information, available from 'open sources', on all arms transfers and all military expenditures that individual countries incur.

Unfortunately, they too, like the citizens of Bangladesh, had only a sketchy idea of these latest transactions involving MIG-29s and C-130 cargo aircrafts,

Pieter Wezeman, in charge of queries regarding arms transfers, said that SIPRI had no exact information about the recent purchases and that, "in fact the information that MIG-29s and C-130s actually have been bought is new to me. I had only seen one report about plans to buy MIG-29s and one about the C-130s. The MIG-29 will probably come from Russia, although it is possible that they come from CIS states like Moldova or Belarus who have been selling off surplus equipment lately. I have no information about the number involved or prices. Jane's defence weekly reported in mid-December 1997 about plans to buy 4 second-hand C-130B Hercules transport planes from the USA. As these are quite old (although probably still quite useful) and would be sold under the US Excess Defense Article programme they are presumably cheap. As you can see we don't know more than you..."

So there we are, back to square one! Every well-informed Bangladeshi citizen has a right to know about state expenditures regarding something that affects all of us.

and then resigned from the Parliament.

True, they were not a party to such a historic decision and as a result they had hardly anything to celebrate. They did not like the elections, they condemned the results of the elections, called it a farce but merrily participated in the 12 June elections under a caretaker government constituted under the amendment passed by an illegal parliament elected through a farcical elections. Awami League, true to its tradition, never rejected the amendment which bore fruits for them but condemned the party that produced the fruit.

The Parliament was illegal but the law passed by it was legal. How sweet!

This party always believes in 'Head I win tail you lose' A Citizen Dhaka

To the Editor...

Promotion and prejudice

Sir, A new promotion policy has been proposed by the Establishment Ministry to the Prime Minister's Secretariat wherein it has been proposed that 'to be an additional secretary one has to have at least three years of Secretariat experience.' But it was never the case in the past. After promotion to the rank of joint secretary many officers were posted outside the Secretariat in directorates, corporations and departments because it was not possible to accommodate everyone in the Secretariat. So it is not the fault of the officers concerned for not getting posting to the Secretariat. Hence to impose such a condition is arbitrary, unfair, illogical and unethical. It is felt that such a policy has been pro-

posed by some vested interest group to exclude some officers, so that their interests are served better.

Mrs Nilufar Jahan
Uttara, Dhaka

Is might still right?

Sir, We, the humans have come a long way from half-naked barbaric primitiveness to well dressed, good-looking civilisation. But a close reading of this civilisation shows that primitiveness is still very much present even now, only with a different face. It is not only in the Stone Age when might was right — might is still right at the end of 20th century. In Bangladesh, a good example of this primitive doctrine is being displayed through 'chandabazi' (forcibly collecting money).

Over the years, the practice

of chandabazi has been going on — and by now it is deep-rooted in every sphere of life. It appears we are destined to accept it as an integral part of our social affairs. No corner of Bangladesh is left to turn to where you are free of the chandabaz. It is almost taken for granted that if you are to run a business or do away sort of construction, you are bound to give chanda.

The police have proved a complete failure to carry out their duties in this regard and what has made the situation worse is that a section of police is also sometimes found in league with them (of course for a handsome share). The failure or inaction on the part of the police has come to light recently when we saw that some helpless businessmen in Chittagong have taken hockey

sticks to defend themselves and their trade, leaving the hope of any sort of help from the police.

Does our home minister know this?

Shamim Ahsan
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Head I win ...

Sir, The ruling Awami League observed 'democracy killing day' on Sunday last. They organised a discussion meeting at the Ramna Batamul in the afternoon.

I happened to be passing by at that time and saw a few hundred people — men and women gathered in front of a big dias, on which there were more speakers than listeners. I asked my rickshawpuller to stop by and tried to listen to what the speakers were crying hoarse