# The Baily Star Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka, Friday, September 25, 1998

# **Employment Bank**

Few government decisions impress people for their timeliness. But certainly this one has: setting up of the Employment Bank. Here is a financial institution at long last that promises to make some contribution in curing the country of the curse of unemployment. We at The Daily Star have a special reason to rejoice over its coming into being because this in effect is what we have been preaching for all this while--a youth bank. It may not have emerged under the name we suggested earlier in this column nonetheless the idea has been translated into reality and for the first time in our banking history, a bank has made its presence felt with the express intention of aiding people who are keen on standing on their feet but hamstrung by financial constraints.

The Employment Bank which was officially inaugurated Tuesday last by the PM would lend a one time capital of Taka 50000 to the deserving loanseeker. Unlike what is demanded by commercial banks the loanee won't be required to come up with any collateral or mortgage against the loan. This should be a harbinger of an opportunity for people who though being full of potential and ideas have so far been languishing in frustration due to cash crisis. People keen on enterprises in the agriculture sector are likely to find the loan very useful though the more techno-type with an eye for business in computer and other mechanical ware may just deem the money not enough. But then this is only the beginning, and the Bank, one hopes, would reassess its credit extension limit in the light of its experience.

The vast population of unemployed youth is one of the major obstacles in Bangladesh's quest for economic emancipation. With so many young able hands idle or unbridled energy misspent it is no wonder Bangladesh over the years has found the going so tough. It also explains the alarming rise in behavioural aberration and the deterioration in law and order. Employment bank, one hopes, will be first serious attempt at resolving the crisis youths of our country are finding themselves tangled in. Indeed as the Prime Minister so aptly observed in her inaugural speech banks in our country only help those who have money; the poor never come under their purview.

As we hope the Employment Bank would make up for this long-felt absence we also counsel the authorities to emphasise on the strict adherence to its germinating objectives. Supervision should be kept under unfailing vigilance as should be the possible invasion of the unhealthy culture of favouritism at the cost of eligibility.

# On to Rabi Crops

With Aus and Aman crop losses on the debit side, we are relying heavily on rabi crop cultivation to generate a reasonable level of agricultural income and help make both ends meet as nutritional supplements. In an extended sense, if the rabi yields should fall short of the desired levels it could negatively impact on the next boro crop deemed as a compensatory silver-lining around the clouds. So much for the high stakes.

Large quantities of seeds for pulses, potatoes, wheat, oil, cauliflower, cabbage, beans, et all have been lost in the flood waters, sold out in distress, or eaten up depending upon the edibility of stuffs. The farmers' requirement of working capital and seeds is far more compelling now than ever before. Since we have to concentrate on quick-and high-yielding varieties the fertiliser and irrigational compulsions are that much more acute except for the redeeming feature that the alluvial deposits might have appreciably enriched the soil capital.

Under the current budgetary provisions we have a Tk 3200 crore accommodation for the peasants as farm loans which might not prove adequate in the end; so, the ceiling will have to be raised somewhat by scrounging money from other sources. Essentially, however, it is an effective utilisation of the present allocation that we must strive for. Farmers often complain of bribery and procrastination at the local offices in the matter of granting loans. If a paltry amount is ripped off and it is received late in the season by the farmers then the whole purpose behind such a lending operation will be lost. The same holds true about agricultural inputs. The government's lending and agricultural extension services will have to be fail-safe, timely and farmer-friendly.

Dhaka University's seed-bed development project on a crash basis should provide a cue for organisations in public and private sectors to try this in their sparable lands and help build mini-seed banks.

# Little Comfort for Rushdie

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has said the death fatwa on writer Salman Rushdie was by now a lapsed matter. This comment was followed later by a government clarification to the effect that Tehran now had no intention to carry on with that fatwa. Rushdie lost no time to rush to the British foreign office to get the details of the news

as also to be sure about their implications. Ayatollah Khomeini is long gone and the ten years of the fatwa has accrued nothing to Iran's relationship with the nations of Europe. Khatami was the first to see through the thing and to move away from the fatwa and its myriad spin-off. Iran

under Khatami is definitely on a the liberal path. Nevertheless, the fatwa has not been withdrawn. Is it only suspended? Will Rushdie continue to be a condemned man in the Iranian state's eye? The fact probably is that Khatami or his predecessor Rafsanjani had no heart to change a Khomeini decree. And it is doubtful if even ten years from now the new Iranian leadership would be able to formally invalidate the fatwa. In fact, Khatami has travelled the farthest that can be gone under Iranian conditions by committing that the fatwa will not be enforced.

Rushdie's security worries may not all be over with the Iranian assurance. For, the presence of Islamic militant groups could still impel attachment of special security detail to him.

# Alphabets of Agony

The best example is what I have seen during the prolonged period of a national disaster and almost utter despair. And that example is of our new generation's. Their parents, elder brothers and sisters had once gone to the front to liberate the country, to proclaim with their lives, that we are Bengalees and we are free. The young people are fighting an even more prolonged war today against poverty and hunger, against powerlessness and despair.

Twelve of us spared from our

savings of that months what-

ever we could and carried with

us a little over 160 or 170 bun-

dles (may be more) of 5 kg rice.

Some basic medicines for

common diseases were also in

our boat in charge of the two

young doctors. Perhaps what we

took that day would be less that

adequate for a week's staple for

the families that we served. But

the young people who took us

there have been providing food

to the hungry, since the flood

water stared rising and are con-

tinuing to do so. Their resources

are limited, but their love for

their people is limitless like the

professionals, doctors, business

people, political workers,

school, college and university

students and field workers of

similarly stood by their fellows

human beings. They travel to

Many other compassionate

ever widening horizon.

immersed, human habitats devastated. Listless children float and drown, swept away by the onrush of water like fingerlings of fish or tiny vaccine nearby nor can he afaquatic weeds. Mother's tall ford to treat the animals. Will and handsome son is lost in the they survive for the next

wilderness. ploughing season? As the fury abates, the waves roll down the hill tops in gentle murmur. The river goes to the south. The cropland blossoms with the fragrance of alluvial soil. Plants germinate and listen to the lullaby sung softly by mother earth. The farmers. with the hibiscus-like red wound mark still on his back, tills the soil. The fisher folk tends the minnows. Birds come back to their nests. Singers and flute players, women and the the right variety and the best children sing and dance. Soon will be the festival of Nabanna' planting methods. (new rice). And brown birds will come back to the field for the

left over grains. Does agony have any alphabet, or does it have any sound? Perhaps like my mother reciting her blessings in soundless dew-drops with tears in her

IVER is a medley of

colours, images and

Lalphabets. Sometimes it is

dark, fierce and hungry like the

python devouring everything

on its way and across. River

banks erode and overflow.

Croplands and plantations are

But I heard that soundless sound floating like a mist last Saturday. The name of the village is Kundaghat. It is in Boali union in Kaliakair thana. There is water all around the village. A mother, her face stark and tired, looked at me with almost sightless eyes. There were others, about seventy of them. People bent down and shrunken, older beyond their age; young women and men who have never known the wondrous joys of youth; little children with no blood in their veins, as it were, and silent like the graveyard. As the cockerel with a red comb on its head crows for the morning all its life, they are all waiting patiently for the moonless night to disappear, for the moon that was swept away by the fury of water to float back and for the morning sun to reappear in the horizon. They will rebuild their lives again and the little homesteads they once had.

A middle aged farmer rowed his tiny boat to where we were standing. His seedbed for Aman has been devastated. So he now ferries people across the beel (water-body) for survival of his family and himself. There were bunches of wasted seedlings on one side of the boat. He would use it for feeding his cattle. But again, the pair that helped him ploughing are infected with foot and mouth disease. There is no

Water has receded from his little land. He can still transplant late-variety Amon if he can get the seedlings. Yes, they are available, but at four times the normal cost. How can he buy? The group of young persons who were with us whispered among themselves. They decided to buy the seedlings for him and on that very day. A senior agronomist, now retired, volunteered to help in choosing

No. this little advance is not going to be a gift. It will be a loan. After meeting the cost of production and consumption requirements for the family. the farmers will put aside the loan amount with a ten per cent interest after the harvest. This will be the seed-capital for cultivation of winter-crops, beans and vegetables as also for rearing some homestead poultry and fish in the little pond be-

hind the homestead. A question arises which is quite valid. What is the need for such fragmented and miniscule endeavour? It is no more than a dew-drop in a sea of hopelessness and despair. Government has already undertaken a mafor and country-wide programme for providing farm production credit. Ministry of Agriculture has launched a gigantic effort for agricultural rehabilitation, through collection and distribution of cereal seeds for wheat and Boro, for mustard and various kinds of beans and vegetables. So also for increased facilities for irrigation, both groundwater and surface. Vulnerable Group Feeding Programme will commence on a large-scale immediately Soon enough Food for Works Programme and test-relief works will be undertaken on a massive soak. Besides, socially responsible NGOs like GRAMEEN, BRAC, PROSHIKA and others have embarked upon a major endeavour in expanding their net-works for provision of micro-credit to the marginal farmers, the landless and the women for both on and

off farm enterprises. The question, as I have admitted already, is as natural as the morning and the evening. But when disaster has struck almost everywhere in Bangladesh, is there no value of the little efforts that these young women and men are making everywhere to unit with the most distressed people and embrace them as their own parents, elders, or brothers and sis-

There is a further questions. How much can these isolated endeavours achieve? And that is what I am going to talk about I shall also submit a rather modest proposal for my readers and for the comparatively affluent civil society at large to consider.. But, to that I shall

come later. First, let me briefly sketch



villages, similarly surrounded by the water-body of the 'beel' area. The name of one village in Namshulai Khalpar and of the other, Chapair, If one travels by a country-boat powered by a shallow-engine, it takes about 50 minutes from the Srifaltali Girls' School in Kaliakair

There also we saw the silent agony and yet patient resilience of more than one hundred women and men - young, adolescent, and old. The young group who took us there prefers to remain nameless. The oldest among them, perhaps in his forties now, is a Professor in Dhaka University. Two others, who happen to be brothers, are medical graduates and are now internees for post-graduate degrees in medicine and surgery As for us, some like me are approaching the evening or night fall of our lives, some younger, may be in their post-noon or afternoon years. All are professionals. An economist, a sociologist, an agronomist, a livestock specialist, an ex-banker, or an ex-bureaucrat like me.

the inaccessible areas day in and day out and when they come back home exhausted and still tireless, the only image that comes to my mind is of the song that we sang in our younger days. We shall overcome someday!" One doesn't have to go too far. The flooded area in Badda rubs shoulder with the aristocratic neighbourhoods of Gulshan-Baridhara. Keraniganj across Savar is not that far either. They are there. They are also in the south in Gournadi and Madaripur or in the north in Gaibandha, Nilphamari or Kurigram. The handloom weavers of Narayanganj or Mirzapur have lost the only source of their livelihood their looms. Who are rehabilitating the weaver communities and their looms? They are Jayadi of Kumudini Welfare Trust and her dedicated young volunteers.

And that brings me back to the second question and a modest proposal that I want to place before the comparatively afflu-

ent members of civil society in Bangladesh. The sketches that have drawn earlier provides the perspective. I do not have the exact statis-

tics of the number of middle class or higher middle class families in the whole country. So let us take the case of Dhaka city. With a population of eight million people or roughly two million households. At least eight to ten per cent have earnings that can be spared, some, a little less and some, much more. Similar affluent families are there in divisional cities and district towns.

If 200,000 such privileged families adopt 10 families each. roughly two million children women and men can aspire for an adequate if not a wholly decent life. Such adoption needs to be for a period extending up to ten years. The rational is that if the girl or boy child is eight to ten years old at the time of adoption, s/he can look after the family from then onwards. provided they receive access to education and training.

This adoption will not be considered a charity. It is the moral duty of any socially responsible human being. There will be conditionalities for both the adopters and the adoptees. Those who have taken the responsibility for adoption must also provide necessary support for access to employment and income earning opportunities by the able bodied, and for access to education and health care particularly for the young ones and the women in a family. The beneficiary families, on the other hand, will have their responsibilities. The small farmer must strive harder for accelerating production, the marginal farmers and the landless will have to find self employment through micro enterprises. Every one will have to contribute some labour for improving rural infrastructure The most important task will be to make sure that the children get access to decent educa-

Let us not forget the wide network of socially responsible NGOs who are providing microcredit and other support to the peer groups of the disadvantaged. Women members of Grameen have already shown that given the access to very litmembers of BRAC in pond culture, poultry rearing, dairy and even in contract production of high value exportable vegetables. Particularly impressive is BRAC's non-formal education programme and health and nutrition programme for mothers. children and the adolescents. "Nijera Kari' has concentrated on empowerment of the disadvantaged groups and enhanced awareness of environmental sustainability. Ubinig's farmers belonging to the 'new peasant movement' (j~J TiKw IJP\*Juj) have conserved as many as hundred varieties of local crops and land-races through community conservation of plant genetic diversity. Proshika has embarked upon ecological agriculture with the farming communities as partners. The young bare-foot doctors of "Gano Shasthya Kendra", mostly young ladies on bicycles, are providing primary health care through a cost effective health insurance scheme for the poor and the least privileged. There are many other examples of dedicated non-government and peo-

tle capital, how enterprising

they can be. Similar endeavours

are being carried out by

But the best example is what I have seen during the prolonged period of a national disaster and almost utter despair. And that example is of our new generation's. Their parents, elder brothers and sisters had once gone to the front to liberate the country, to proclaim with their lives, that we are Bengalees and we are free. The young people are fighting an even more prolonged war today against poverty and hunger, against powerlessness and de-

ple's organisations.

shall end with some lines which I wrote quite some time

They live for love Like the fragrance of jasmine. Holding a blade of grass in their

They face death by fire Or death by water And penetrate the enemy-camp. Their limbs are broken Eyes torn away. And still they sing We shall overcome someday."

And when the time comes again These very young people Will hold a blade of grass in their teeth And go to the jasmine-vine Become flowers in love

And fall down like petals of that only gives and never re-

## "Mending Ties"

Sir. This is with reference to the article "Mending Ties" by Pallab Bhattacharva in the editorial page dated Tuesday, 22nd September, 1998

The stance adopted by India about Kashmir does not give much scope for the international commuity to play "mediator". It also cements the ground that the present government is firm in its views about the country's security, first, by holding on to the nuclear capacity and secondly, by countering the "internal" issues raised on international forums As far as India is concerned there isn't any need to "firefight" the "loose" talk on Kash mir as it has been well commu nicated from time to time that Kashmir does not warrant third party involvement.

It only probably bears out as a warning to India that it has to be wary of intense lobbying by Pakistan and its allies to use world statesmen and leader as a front to raise the issue in the world's arena.

Anish V Koshu 272/4. West Agargaon Shewrapara, Mirpur

#### How to make our ports function better

Sir, I congratulate you for hosting the Roundtable conference on this vital issue that is plaguing the economic life of

this country for so long. As far as Chittagong Port is concerned, it would appear that the participants in the roundtable discussed almost every aspect of the causes for non-functioning of this port except that none had the courage (they cannot be blamed for not doing so — we all fear life) to point the finger at the man who is the root cause for the colossal loss to this port for his monumental corruption

I strongly suggest that the Mayor of Chittagong should be sincere to solve the port problems. The 64 million dollar question is: Can the ruling party rise over pettit party politics and take action? We wait and see.

A K Chowdhury Kashfla Plaza Agrabad C/A, Chittagong.

#### DS Roundtable on Ports

Sir, I read far into the night the 4-page transcription. It is interesting and informative, as diverse high-level opinions were available concurrently. I made some notes. There was not much on why the 22 labour unions are so much united in opposing so vehemently the international container terminal off Chittagong port; as their spokesmen appeared to keep a

low profile. Feeling rather guilty about rent-seeking culture entrenched in all sectors of the society?

Rent-seeking has become big business, as the Port is vulnerable to group pressure. The information gap has been deliberately cultivated by the rulers. represented by the 'politicians' thriving or wandering for the past two decades.

If not, some combined foreign and local vested interest might be interested in bringing about an Emergency which might suit some circles for a limited time. Anyway, there were hardly any new problems Why the COs (commanding officers) have been sleeping? Structural reforms are not introduced suddenly as an after thought. These are pestering sores familiar to all officials and service providers working in the Port. Time spent on strengthening the party base is not time spent on building up the nation — people can detect the difference.

The Shipping Minister was eloquent and informative, and sometimes brutally frank (the foreign investors will protect their formally-approved interest by all means). The draft of the Shipping Policy has to be debated as quickly as possible: and the political parties must

sit together to serve the nation. One last aspect: a key player was missing. The Hon'ble Mayor of Chittagong

A Husnain Dhaka

### Grameen audacity

Sir. It seems that the Grameen Phone and Grameen Cybernet do not care to seem apologetic at all for all their failure to keep up to their promises. The Grameen Phone has played the cat and mouse story for too long - bagging all the thousands of subscribers with promises and ending up that none can access BTTB lines as of today. No apologies.

The Grameen Cybernet server breaks down for days together — no apologies.

Crores of takas from innocent subscribers have gone into Grameen's account as security deposit for the Grameen Phone and Grameen Cybernet while subscribers are paying BTTB for the phone connections everytime they dial Grameen but cannot establish connection to check their mails or go to a

What does Grameen think of themselves — the untouchables?

Ahmed Ismail 18 Karwan Bazar Dhaka.

website.

#### "United we stand, divided we fall"

Sir. Thanks to the DS for initially advocating the necessity that a national emergency should be declared and publishing subsequent endorsement of readers like Neelima Islam (DS Sept. 11, '98) reckoning the voice of the people, for the state of emergency and the necessity to work together at this hour of national devastation of unprecedented magnitude.

She has rightly said 'united

we stand, divided we fall. It's really beyond imagination 'as to why the PM is still hesitant to declare the state of emergency and take over total grip (without disturbing legitimate human rights) of the grave situation by forming an all-party relief committee - whereby she could in fact champion the cause and receive greater support and assistance from the

whole world. The PM and her parishad (cabinet colleagues) already made a great damage to the suffering humanity of Bangladesh by repeating their naive attitude (with shallow knowledge of the severity of damage) that they would not need outside help (what a bliss of ignorance!) but immediately had to come down to earth by appealing and begging help from the world community after realising that they could not handle the situation single handledly.

A F Rahman

#### Thanks to BCB

Sir. We thank the

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for their timely and bold decision of changing the national captain. But it was beyond our imagination that Akram Khan would be dropped. It apparently may hurt the fans of Akram. but we think that it will bring good for our cricket. Normally, our player's have grown up the tendency that they are the "first and last" option to be in the national team. They do not bother whether they have to play well They seldom realize that they have to play up to their potential as the whole nation expect from them. The remark made by the team management after Kuala Lumpur debacle that "they have no technique" is not true. They have all of it, but what is lacking are: total team work, proper motivation of the players and mental prepared ness to perform better.

The decision of leaving a gi ant player like Akram will certainly work as a caution to other players in the team. They must think that, they might have to face such consequence if not perform well. Now, we think, they will try their best.

S M Enayetur Raheem Hons. in Applied Statistics

#### Osmany blacked out? Sir. A large percentage of the

people of Bangladesh have been noting with sorrow, especially during the anniversaries, that the Awami League appears to be reticent about mentioning the name of late Gen Osmany officially and unofficially, formally and informally; al though it is careful not to criticise him openly.

The General's record of achievements are available publicly, and his place in history is assured. He had a strong personality, and was a man of strong principles; therefore sharp differences of opinion

would occur every now and then. This characteristic should not go against him. (I personally recall a case when he postponed a meeting being chaired by him as the majority of the committee members were not sharply punctual in attendance).

There is another public sentiment which needs appraisal by AL. Many others besides the Awami League supporters played some positive role, directly or indirectly, however small, during the liberation period (1971). AL should not give the general impression of usurping all the credit for the party, belittling the contribution of others. It may not look fair to many looking at the issue from the political angle. It needs to be seriously reviewed how far this subtle attitude has divided the country unnecessarily. Credit should be acknowledged where it is due, regardless of political affiliation or differ-

Another point: Banga bandhu is above politics and political parties (otherwise there is no point in calling him BB). This is not even indirectly conceded by Awami League. More broad-minded accommodation would bring forth stronger unity in this homogeneous society. These issues may not be kept pending, but nationally debated and settled once for all, for the sake of the budding nation. We have already wasted one generation of valuable time.

#### Flood and new cars

Sir. We are beset with century's biggest flood in our country wherein the miseries of the people are beyond description On the one hand our Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made an appeal for international aid and assistance to help alleviate the woes and sufferings of the flood-affected people and on the other hand it has ordered pur chase of fifteen executive Volvo cars the price of which is Taka 25.5 lakh per car.

True we need some cars for the heads of governments of 1) Turkey. 2) Iran, 3) Pakistan. 4) Indonesia 5) Nigeria 6) Malaysia and 7) Egypt who would be attending D-8 (Eight developing countries) summit to be held in Dhaka in near future. But everybody knows it that after the D-8 summit is over in a day or two, some of our ministers would be using the luxurious and costly Volvo cars.

There are many good quality cars available with our government transport pool which are being used by our ministers.

The whole world is aware of our wretched economic condition and poor standard of living of our people. We wonder why should we play ducks and drakes and make a pretentious and ostentatious show during D-8 summit? Our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has rightly cancelled her visit to South Africa to attend NAM summit for cogent reason of flood catastrophe. Can't our ministers spare their cars for a day or two for use of our distinguished guests?

O H Kabir 6. Hare Street Wart, Dhaka-1203.

# Now VAT on VAT

Sir, An emergency meeting of the Bangladesh Paint Manufacturers' Association was held on 27-08-1998 at Elite House, Chittagong, and chaired by Mr Karim, the president of the Association to discuss the implications of changes in the basis for the computation of VAT for the Paint Industry imposed by the Budget for FY '98-99, and as interpreted by the VAT collecting authorities.

There was a general consensus that a serious confusion has been created throughout the paint industry regarding the definition of "Retail Price" under Section 5 (3) of VAT Act,

ties have arbitrarily adopted a definition of "Retail Price" which results in the manufacturer, and hence the consumer, having to pay VAT on VAT. This is very unfortunate as

The VAT collecting authori-

VAT on VAT is against the very fundamental principles of the VAT system.

The position of manufacturers in the VAT chain is that of collectors. Since, VAT is an indirect tax payable by the consumer, which the manufacturer is collecting on behalf of the government, is it not unjustified to penalise the collector by imposing additional VAT on the VAT collected by them on behalf of the government?

This situation has come about by the insistence of the VAT authorities on adding VAT to the manufacturer's maximum retail price (MRP) to arrive at the total figure on which VAT to be paid by the manufacturers would be calculated. This results in VAT on VAT where the total amount of VAT is effectively 17.65% on the manufacturers' actual MRP which is contrary to the provisions of

the mother law, where the rate

of VAT is specified at an uni-

form 15%. Although this association is fully in favour of and committed to, a free market economy as envisaged and promoted by the government, it is regrettably observed that current fiscal measures have been adopted which are discriminatory and are biased in favour of imports at the expense of the indigenous paint industry. For example, in the case of imported paints VAT is collected on the C&F value plus Customs duty. This amounts to collecting VAT on not more than 60% of the retail price of the imported paints. Whereas, local manufacturers

l Karim President, Bangladesh Paint Manufacturers' Association

their total MRP.

are required to pay VAT on

#### "Letter from America: Shame on You...'

Sir. Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed's

scathing criticism of Naipaul and Rushdie (Letter from America — Shame on You, V S Naipaul, The Daily Star, September 22, 1998) appears to be written more in anger than in logic. One has every right to disagree with whatever is written by Naipaul and Rushdie but the language used by Dr Ahmed s far from civil. He calls Naipaul and Rushdie "cultural and spiritual traitors". Can he call someone a traitor just because he writes something criticising his own culture? Have these authors betrayed anyone or any cause? Do we take the socalled third world culture or Isamic world as a cause or a person? Betray a person, a cause or a country — that's what traitors do. Does Dr Ahmed mean a renegade? Even words like 'renegade' are controversial and one uses them with extreme caution. Dr Ahmed writes "if Naipaul does not desist from carrying out his crusade against the Muslims on behalf of the west, every Muslim country should consider banning him" Sounds more like a fatwachanting village mullah in Bangladesh, passing judgment against Taslima Nasreen or the white queen shouting - "off with his head" in Alice in Won-

It pains me to think that a respected Rhodes scholar writing in this vein. Dr Ahmed continues, "Naipaul was touted as the best prose writer in the English language. One could also say in the same breath that Hitler was the best orator of his time!" Logic does not seem to be the strong point of the scholar from Princeton! Has anyone ever made such a claim in favour of Hitler? Some, however, still think that Naipaul is one of the greatest English prose writers of our times even though they do not agree with him always.

derland!

Finally. Dr Ahmed laments too bad. Mr Naipaul will not be there to witness it, but in the next hundred years or so the third world may change place with the first." My humble question — is Dr Ahmed so sure that he would be there?

A Z M Abdul Ali House #9 Road #11 Sector-4. Uttara Dhaka-1230

#### "Shame on you...'

Sir. Hats off to Dr Ahmed for his brilliant piece "Shame on you, V S Naipaul". It will make Mr Naipaul and Mr Rushdie search their souls, if they have got any left. They will certainly think twice before putting their pen to paper again.

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