

Dhaka, Thursday, October 8, 1998

Smoking Vehicles

On June 6 this year Environment Minister Sajeda Choudhury launched a programme of checking and penalising vehicles emitting black smoke. There was much fanfare and we welcomed it with cautious enthusiasm. Seven days passed, then a fortnight without the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar checkpost accruing any effective result. And we duly recorded together with a deep sense of frustration that such, an important initiative should so easily be undone.

The June 6 show was, as it now appears, a woolly affair. The October 6 outcome of a Department of Environment meeting with representatives from other ministries as well as a number of NGOs promises to be somewhat less goofy.

Encouraged by the meeting's repeated objections to the import of two-stroke engines we want to put in a few suggestions although they are as old as when Dhaka's azure sky first turned black through machine-made smoke.

1. Why isn't government stopping import of leaded petroleum? Government being the monopoly importer, it can do so by itself provided it indeed cares for people's health and environment. Why isn't Mrs Choudhury waging a war over this?

What about our old suggestion that government take a decision, at the PM's level, that none of the government vehicles should smoke beyond a pragmatically set date. This is the best test of the government's sincerity about clearing the Dhaka sky. Without the government's coming to desmoke its own vehicles, Mrs Choudhury or even the Prime Minister has no moral right to punish the private vehicle owners or to ask them to mend their vehicles. Charity as well as cleaning should begin at home.

3. Any motorised commercial vehicle — twostroke or not - should be put off the road for good if 20 years old.

4. The CNG way-out should be embraced by Mrs Choudhury's ministry and the DoE as their very own cause and the two should make it a regular campaign to convert all vehicles to CNG. The CNG company should be wholly purged of its present protagonists of undoing and helped to grow to take the pressure of tens of thousands of vehicles.

Fine or whatever punitive measure against black-smoke culprits must be such as to be an effective deterrent.

Democracy in Pakistan

This has a ring so typical of power struggle in Pakistan even after elections have mandated someone or some party to rule for a term. Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has received a suggestion from Army Chief Gen. Jehangir Keramat who has until next January to retire that a National Security Council be established to involve the army directly in the country's highest policy -making process. In postulating his demand the army chief added, "Pakistan could ill-afford the destabilizing effects of polarisation, vendettas and insecurity-driven expedient policies."

Nawaz Sharif's government has been embattled since early in the day despite high hopes that his comfortable majority in the National Assembly would easily see him through. He had a row with a Chief Justice over judicial appointments that created a constitutional deadlock affecting governance for a couple of weeks or so. Yet this time around with the army chief seeking a direct role in police decisions which are better left to elected political leaders in a democracy, Sharif faces a litmus test in the exercise of his authority and power as Pakistan's head of government.

In Pakistan where the military have ruled for half the 51-year time-length of her existence as an independent country any politically assertive remarks, far'less a specific proposal for induction into an extra role, from the traditionally powerful army chief makes one sit up with trepidations about the fate of democracy in that country.

Nawaz Sharif has been juggling with too many fire-balls in his hands — an economy bedeviled by sanctions, religious fanaticism, corruption charges against Benazir Bhutto vis-a-vis allegations of corruption against his own self and simmering discontentment in the smaller provinces, especially Sind. When an army chief gets publicly judgemental over conduct of state affairs he might appear to be echoing some of the feelings of the opposition but that is no reason why the latter should make a bonfire of a ruling party's predicament.

How much we wish democracy in Pakistan to take roots, deeply and firmly for the sake of the people of that country as well as for the betterment of South Asia as a whole.

Najma, A Reminder

We have long left behind the tradition of poor students claiming top position in public exams through sheer merit. This is the age for the average with the means. At a time when the representatives of the more privileged section of the society are gradually making it a right of sorts to top the merit list, Najma has arrived as a revelation. Daughter of a poor van driver, this girl who appeared in this year's HSC exam from Jessore Board has secured the fifth position much to the pleasant surprise of all. She has proved that merit can still find its way through situational adversity. Hats off to you, Naima.

A good education system is that which makes sure that only the truly meritorious and deserving students irrespective of their social or economic status would do well in the examinations. Here the students don't have to be really good to top the merit list. Private tutors or the coaching centres do that for the result-seeking students and their parents. Carefully eschewing the path of originality these hired set of teachers hone the mimetic skills of the students so that they can deliver whatever they have gulped on a steady and relentless diet of notes, mock exams in almost light tight schedule of tuition. What it has brought the evaluative system to is a crass business cycle: the more money you put in the form of engaging private tutors and coaching centres, the better the chance of students performing in the exams. The whole system is based on such an unhealthy foundation. We need a change. And we need it real fast.

Whither Global Disarmament Agenda?

As a matter of fact the arms race would continue because even after signing of the Treaty and pressure from Washington both India and Pakistan would have ample room for weaponsization and deployment of various sorts. Example of India and Pakistan would further excerberate the ambitions of the aspirant nuclear states ...

cost/benefit of these weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have. on numerous occasions, Russia to conclude START-III to pointed out that there is no further cut their arsenals. He strategic rationale for having also deplored India and Paknuclear weapons. They are mostly treated either as a curistan carrying out their respective nuclear tests in defiance of rency of power and underlining high stature of a state or for world opinion. He has also sugcountering 'nuclear blackmail.' gested for the "non-use of nu-None of these propositions, clear weapons as one step on the road to these weapons' total however, are convincing enough to propel any state to go abolition." I, however, humbly feel that for nuclearization. But fact of the matter is that even after fifty-three years of the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki mankind is still obsessed with the possession of WMD and re-

VERYBODY knows about

E the actual utility of nuclear weapons. Pundits

and experts while analyzing the

luctant in its total renuncia-

tions. There is, however, no

dearth of proposals, counter-

proposals, seemingly tireless

efforts by the international

community (i.e. mostly by the

developed countries led by the

United States) as well as third

world countries, especially by

Nonaligned Movement led by

India (who has now lost her

moral ground), to get the world

rid of these awful weapons which can wipe out the human-

ity with a blink of an eye. So far

no crowning success. The Nu-

clear Weapon States' (NWS) en-

deavors towards global disar-

mament have been viewed with

skepticism by the non-nuclear

states. There is a lurking suspi-

cion that these states while

holding onto their own nuclear

arsenals are using carrots and

sticks policy on the other nu-

clear aspirant states (which,

those states feel, they need for

their vital national security

interests) in order to establish

To most non-nuclear states,

only Japan seems to fully

committed to the issue. The

only country, which suffered

the annihilation by the use of

nuclear weapons, has painfully

steered out of any nuclearniza-

tion for its national security in-

terests. It has both the technol-

ogy and manpower to do so

within six months but most

commendably shunned the

path. The Japanese Prime Min-

ister while speaking at the 53rd

anniversary of the nuclear

bombing of Hiroshima called

upon the United States and

LAYING one against the

other is a favourite pas-

world wide nuclear hegemony.

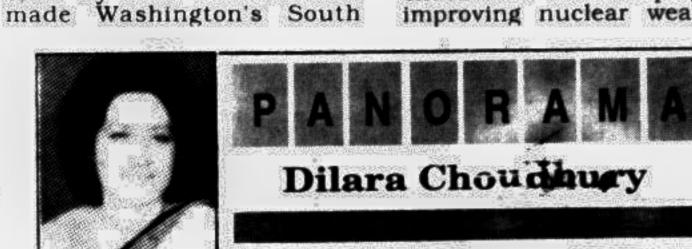
the endeavours by the international community towards the realization of global disarmament, despite its discriminatory instrumentality and mechanism, have not been one of complete failure. Since the end of cold war world's two most formidable nuclear powers, the United States of America and the erstwhile Soviet Union have concluded bilateral treaties to cut their existing nuclear arsenals. Understanding with China and its adherence to NPT, CTBT, MTRC and its cooperative attitudes with P-5 agenda in curbing nuclear proliferation have also been a boon in the over all agenda specific activities. Attempts of incremental nonproliferation have had success in regions like Central Asia, South America (Brazil/Argentina), and South Africa. The arguments have been that once incremental nu clear nonproliferation takes root it would pave the way for nuclear disarmament at the global level. Something like a

bottom-up approach. The critiques of such an approach, however, abound, India being the foremost. A holistic approach with a certain 'halo' would have been undeniably more effective but this incremental approach, at least, was keeping the world in the right direction. Now, however, the entire gambit and dimension of global disarmament agenda are under shadow with India and Pakistan going nuclear. The recent negotiations by Washington with India and Pakistan and their attempts to strike a respective deal on signing CTBT would, perhaps, forever change the course of global disarma-

ment agenda.

The nuclear explosions by India in May 1998 and a subsequent tit-for-tat test by Islamabad not only shook South Asia but the world as well. The reactions of the international community were quite predictable, both countries were slapped with economic sanctions. As a result, Pakistan was affected more adversely. Not that India was facing the music. But with its larger economy and solid industrial base New Delhi was in a better position than its adversary was when it came to deal with the United States on nuclear related issues. The fact of the matter is that the explosions by India and Pakistan

least prepared, a completely new ball game is taking place between Washington and India/Pakistan. The core issue is the insistence of Washington on signing of CTBT, whose fundamental aim is to "constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, contribute to the prevention of nuclear weapons and the process of disarmament," by India and Pakistan unconditionally. India objected to the signing of CTBT in 1996 precisely because of its fundamental aim of restraining effects on the nonnuclear states or ambiguous/opulent nuclear states' endeavours in developing and improving nuclear weapons.



Asian policy which was dominated by nonproliferation topsy turvy. Along with it NPT also became redundant.

The United States was hoping that its global disarmament agenda would get another boost once nuclear proliferation is contained in South Asia. It used varieties of mechanisms beginning with economic sanctions and ban on high-technology transfer in 1974 against India, and Carter administration's ban on the supply of heavy water to Tarapur power plant and application of Symington. Pressler and Glen amendments to Pakistan. It helped to establish London Suppliers' Group and Missile Technology Regime Control (MTRC). But nothing seemed to work. From freeze and eventual roll back of South Asian nuclear policy it came to maintaining nuclear stability

in South Asia. And now in the drastically changed environment, for which the United States was

The P-5 states which could bring qualitative improvement in developing nuclear weaponry while states like India with nuclear ambiguity would be forbidden to do so was not acceptable. Besides, New Delhi also insisted in 1996 that it could not sign it unconditionally due to the absence of a time-bound framework for the P-5 to destroy their existing arsenal. The high moral ground taken by India in 1996 most definitely was in line with its longstanding stance on global dis-

armament. New Delhi never accepted, even after China's first nuclear explosion in 1964, its own socalled peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) in 1974, Islamabad's admission of its nuclear capability in 1990 and CTBT debate in 1995-96 and World Court judgement that nuclear weapons are necessary evils and needed for national security or having them has any strategic rationale. Even the

threat of use of nuclear weapons was considered to be "repugnant' by New Delhi. But now there is discernible change in New Delhi's nuclear doctrine. A clear picture of India's turn about on CTBT and on global disarmament is emanating from the confidential negotiations between Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot and Indian Prime Minister's special envoy Jaswant Singh held in Washington. The last round of talks was held in August, which was followed by India's declared nuclear policy by Prime Minister Vajpayee in his address to U.N. General Assembly session of September 1998. Prime Minister Vaipayee categorically mentioned New Delhi's continuing desire to cooperate with international community on a number of nuclear issues including CTBT now that India's legitimate national interests have been taken care of. In effect it is discernible that after the May 1998 explosion New Delhi has a new sense of confidence in keeping up with the development of nuclear weapons.

welcomed by Washington. which seems to have recognized New Delhi's "security concerns, giving rise to a mutually beneficial strategic development. After the last round of talks scheduled to be held in November New Delhi will probably go public in its pronouncement to sign CTBT which also prohibits transfer of nuclear technology to third countries, deployment of missiles. India will also not object on the negotiation on Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FACT). Surprisingly, New Delhi is also not insisting on having time-bound framework for the P-5 to destroy their arsenals because there seems to be a quid pro quo. No objections or hue or cry for the maintenance of the existing nuclear stockpiles by the P-5 once they grant legitimacy to India's nuclear status. Thus, instead of going for the ban on the sub-critical

Hence the previous objections

This turn about has been

to CTBT have been dropped.

testing allowed by the current CTBT at the review conference scheduled in 1999 it would now go for signing it and become parteof a discriminatory disarmament order which was denounced and decried by it until it got its new found confidence from Pokhran II.

Pakistan would also sign CTBT in not too distant future. Islamabad's compulsions have, however, emanated from an altogether different dimension. As mentioned earlier, the policy tool of using economic sanctions to prevent India and Pakistan from weaponizing their nuclear capabilities by the P-5 and G-8 through the Geneva meeting, the London meeting and the UN Security Council Resolution 1172 has had more adverse affects on Pakistan than on India. From all indications, it is evident that Pakistan is in deep economic crisis and probably heading for a default. Obviously, the Government of Miah Nawaz Sharif, though talking about a quid pro quo for signing CTBT, in effect dropped all 'concern lists' which were previously linked with the signing. It would probably agree to drop its traditional opposition to initiating negotiations on FCMT at the UN Conference of Disarmament and begin negotiating the terms to sign CTBT.

The global disarmament agenda would certainly get a set back as soon as both India and Pakistan would sign CTBT and drop opposition to the negotiations to FMCT. Both would become part of the so-called discriminatory disarmament order, especially India would lose its moral rights to speak for it any longer. At the regional level i.e. in South Asia no progress is apprehended towards any incremental nonproliferation. As a matter of fact the arms race would continue because even after signing of the Treaty and pressure from Washington both would have ample room for weaponsization and deployment of various sorts. Example of India and Pakistan would further excerberate the ambitions of the aspirant nuclear states. As long as states would need nuclear weapons for their "supreme national interests" the global disarmament agenda would remain as elusive as ever.

Hostage of Cloudy Thinking

by Kazi Alauddin Ahmed

If for any earthly reason the traffic police is not capable of bringing about the desired discipline in the street, would Begum Zia opt for continued indiscipline instead? And what is the harm if our armed services men — the most disciplined community in our society — let the users of our streets, roads and highways have the benefits of their discipline, regimentation and expertise even for a brief period? Would she ask for barring our soldiers from performing their part of the social service?

L time with many. Some have recourse to it only to fill in their state of thoughtlessness and yet there are some more who indulge in such a gamble to mislead others. Whether they achieve their goals or not is of little importance. But when it centers around any sensitive area it can instantly turn to be seditious and, of course, preposterous.

At times it is fraught with potential dangers creating immeasurable disaffection among the referred community. Begum Zia's concern about using our armed forces for traffic control can most reasonably be subjected to closer scrutiny. This is not the first time that she dragged the Army in her political offensive against her adversaries, that is, the Government. It is not to suggest that she doesn't foresee the serious impact such playful utterance can have on the armed services. Indeed, it has been purposeful to create resentment in some members instigating divisions among them. Let's not try to measure her depth of wisdom. Instead we may try to see the magnitude of the damage her reckless statement could have perpetrated.

In war and peace alike the lone goal that the national army of any country has, is to ensure or to assist the Government in all its endeavours at defending the national boundaries and at protecting citizens against all social ills. In natural calamities they are the ones capable of providing swiftest and flawless material or rather physical support to the affected people. It is not at all true to say that our valiant armed services were not deployed to relief operation or to help civil administration in repairing the breaches in the embankments. dykes etc working round the clock. Indeed, they did, as usual, a very commendable job to earn universal acclaim. Our Airforce and Navy personnel either air-lifted or transported by waterways relief goods to inaccessible places and offshore islands. However, they were withdrawn as soon as the most difficult part of the job was ac-

complished. The BNP chairperson took umbrage at using the Army in traffic control. Obviously, she didn't consider it a respectable or worthwhile job and conclusively she adjudged it unproductive. Perhaps she was right in her own way. But, read against her earlier proposal to the government to have an all-party relief committee which went unheeded by Sheikh Hasina. leaders. Begun Zia's expressed unhappi-

tion at all of the role of the Notwithstanding her patent stance, her offer, at one stage of the calamity, to give the Government unconditional support in its relief work was indeed unique and deserved appreciation. But that too, fell on deaf ears for untold and vet palpable

ness over Army's doing the role

of traffic controller is bound to

present a double standard, be-

cause her proposal for an all

party relief body had no men-

reasons. BNP claims that in spite of Government's assertion that all the members of parliament, irrespective of party affiliation, would be involved in the local advisory committee or relief, their MPs were not given their status in the committee. Even there was accusation that BNP relief teams were not allowed to do their work smoothly. If this was true, the Government would of course owe a public explanation. To-date it seems to be unfounded because the BNP MPs (expect Begum Zia, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Barrister Nazmul Huda) are, by and large,

However, in the attempted confusion, or rather, misleading statement of the BNP chief one would not fail to remember the 'exclusive' relief measures of BNP in 1991 after April 29 cyclone and tidal bore. All the

BNP MPs were provided with Tk 25 lakh each to disburse among the affected when the MPs from the opposition bench were rudely excepted. There were blatant incidences of discrimination in distribution of relief materials and financial assistance in their constituencies. Sporadic criticism too didn't so far evoke any reaction from Begum Zia and her party

Mishandling of or corruption with relief materials have been a perpetual stigma in the mind-set of those who are habitual offenders trading with human miseries. They do not fall in any category of human being. These criminals have no respect for decent and honest living. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already and quite legitimately given a stern warning to such perpetrators in unequivocal terms. She even went to the extent of asking people to haul them up assuring that she would put the culprits on the TV screen for national condemnation. Till now, it appears that PM's message has reached the devils' ears. So far 2/3 cases of default have come in the news concurrently with the immediate punitive measures taken. Though these are small and, may be, insignificant reflections on the assumed transparency of the Government, it is capable of creating an effective deterrent to the brazen-faced rascals still prying around for their opportunities.

Turning back to Begum Zia's objection to using the Army in road traffic Management and control one might ask what is so bad about it? If we consider the heavy traffic jam ... most of the city streets a perpetual social problem besides being a colossal infringement upon the smooth pursuing of our economic activities, why shouldn't

every sensible citizen contribute towards mitigation of the problem? If for any earthly reason the traffic police is not capable of bringing about the desired discipline in the street, would Begum Zia opt for continued indiscipline instead? And what is the harm if our armed services men - the most disciplined community in our society - let the users of our streets, roads and highways have the benefits of their discipline, regimentation and expertise even for a brief period? Would she ask for barring our soldiers from performing their part of the social service? How would she define the great services these brave men are called upon to render to mend roads and highways against erosion of river banks, to re-build sheds and homes of the poor, to provide medi-care to the diseased. malnourished children, men

and women?
She must be knowing fully

well that the civil administration have several independent and inter-dependent departments to do all these odd jobs Why then the Army is deployed? The answer obviously is that it is an emergent situation that demands such action. The awe-striking traffic

jam, so baffling to the civil administration having risen to an unmanageable proportion that would call for suitable, alternative intervention. And only our armed services personnel (having admittedly a sort of psychological advantage on the civilian population) can provide such a desireable alternative to attain positive results. Here is the logic, the stark reality, the untainted truth.

However, when she talks about deploying the Army only for relief distribution her inner message has been the Awami Leaguers are not to be trusted. In her words, they have had a 'bad' history. And when she says so

she doesn't give an account transparent or hazy - of the huge amount of money each of her party MPs was given in Actually, the question is not

that. Nor it is difficult to find an answer to the unmentioned question. It appears that she had already and unofficially launched her campaign for the next general election. It could be even a mid-term exercise because, according to her, "the present government has miserably failed to address the problems facing the nation". In the same breath she warns "if the government fails to provide or rather, to take adequate postflood measure to ameliorate people's sufferings she would wage "andolan" (movement) "with the people" to topple the government. In fact her relief activities have been more replete with her usual political offensive than with actual relief she distributed.

Her threated 'action' coming or not, one doesn't have any illusion that Sheikh Hasina cannot live for a single day if she cannot ensure a meaningful realization or materialization of her words into action. So far, despite weaknesses here and there, she appears to be on track. It is hoped that her wisdom doesn't betray her, nor she becomes complacent in any manner.

OPINION

Does Women's Dress Really Cause Violent Sexual Responses from Men?

Tanzina Chowdhuri Priyaanka

In a recent letter September 18. 1998) Dr. S. Nasrullah claimed that men are, by nature, aggressive and less intriguing because of the hormone named testosterone. This opinion of Dr. S. Nasrullah reflects the ideologies of a certain school of thought which is known as "biological determin-

This school of thought maintained that human behavioral patterns are regulated by biological factors; in other words, human behavioral patterns are pre-defined and fixed from birth. This notion of a "fixed from birth" seems apparently true since it resembles the religious concept of "fate" and "destiny". But in the light of modern knowledge, the "biological determinism" theory has been rejected by the scholars.

The "biological determinism" theory, which was immensely popular in Nazi Germany, was often used to justify the oppression of one group of human beings by another. Nazis used this theory to denounce the people of semitic origin as "impure" and therefore worthy of being "purged".

And now, the same theory is being used in the subcontinental and other developing countries to justify the enslavement of the females. Dr. S. Nasrullah also

claimed that the excessive sexual tendencies displayed by some of the males of our country are instinctive. "Instinct" was a term coined by Sigmund Freud to describe some basic and fixed behavioral patterns in animals and human beings. Ethnology rejected the notion of Instinct. Human beings are not guided by instincts. Each and every behavior that a particular human being displays is

learned during the process of enculturation (i.e. when the culture or of the society he or she belongs to is being passed to him or her from the previous generation)

An individuals morality (i.e. sense of right and wrong), values and perception of reality is shaped by culture. And if the culture to which the individual belongs has a distinct definition of gender roles, that individual would grow up with THAT conception of gender role. In our subcontinental culture, men are supposed to be aggressive and so they ARE aggressive. Hormone has very litle control over an individual's level of aggression. (I'm not saying that hormone has no role to

How is enculturation responsible for male aggression? In a traditional subcontinental household, male offspring are exposed to a greater degree of violence whilst the female offspring are exposed to non-violent environment. Let me give you a few examples: a malechild is given toy pistols, the dad plays "roughly" with his boy etc. (see how the boy is exposed to aggression from his child-hood?) On the contrary, a girl-child is given barbie dolls, the dad talks sweetly with her. the mom encourages her to play

"raanna-baati" (cooking) etc. Now suppose if the opposite thing happens, that is if little boys are placed in a non-violent environment and little girls are exposed to a greater degree of violence, what do you think would be the result? Girls would tend to display a greater amount of aggression! (Believe

me, psychologist have experimented with this notion.) Another thing that Dr. S.

Nasrullah has implied in his

arousal in a male observer. This theory of his is not correct The visual stimuli do not cause "arousal" but perception do the trick! Our perception of reality is never objective. Perception depends on the mental structure of an individual and therefore subjective.

letter is that "exposure" of fe-

male body parts would cause

Let me give an intriguing evidence to demonstrate the above mentioned fact: When a physician touches a patient's genitals during examination and when a lover touches an individual's genitals during love-making. the physical stimuli provided by the touches are of the same intensity but what causes the arousal by the lover's touch is perception (in other words the individual's interpretation of the touch).

Now, what women's wear would cause arousal in which individual, depends entirely upon the observer who'd be perceiving (i.e. interpreting).

He also mentioned prevalence of rape syndrome in certain individuals. Well, if a guy is really suffering from that disorder, no dress (not even the highly venerated burkha) is capable of protecting the female from the lust of that guy. In such a case, the arts of self-defense would stand the victim in good stead. I suggest that instead of putting an embargo on women's wear (thereby interfering with their independence), the society should divert it's attention towards making the women more conscious of their possible danger from "sick" males and, if need be, teach them the arts of self-defense.

The writer is majoring in Anthropology at Iowa State University, U.S.A.

Democratic and secular Bajpayee

Sir, Kuldip Nayar a journalist of much repute sent a revealing article 'Tete-e-Tete with Bajpayee' (DS'20-9-98). Revealing in the sense that during a casual conversation between the two (Bajpayee and Nayar) we got an inkling of Bajpayee as an outspoken man and his fragile position in a 14-party coalition government

When Nayar told Bajpayee that during his visit to Kohima he found that extortionists were living in ministers' houses. Bajpayee nodded in agreement. It reminded me of Imdu who took shelter in the house of the then state minister Kasem. Fortunately police nabbed Imdu even from his safe sanctuary.

When Kuldip drew Bajpayee's attention to UP Chief Minister Kalyan Singh's son's making money in the name of his father in Aligarh, Bajpayee replied "We should accept it as the fact of life. None can do anything about it". It means that he (Bajpayee) confirmed the corruption but expressed his helplessness though he stands shoulders above his colleagues. For the first time it was confirmed by a prime minister of any country of the world that his police force played a partisan role when Bajpayee revealed that "the Kar Sewaks did not demolish the Babri Masjid it was the police" — the police had begun to take sides. In the same context he lamented the role of police in Mumbai riot too. The police all over the world is paid from the national exchequer which is filled by the tax payers (including Muslims in India). If they (police) played such a nefarious role as in Mumbai and Ayoddah then where the minority Muslims stand?

Syed Fida Hussain is a renowned painter of India whose solo exhibitions were held in many western countries. But what an irony of fate that only because he is a Muslim he is now hounded by RSS, an armed wing like Siv Sena of Bishwa Hindu Parishad. Kuldip did not broach the subject with Bajpayee seeing Hussain's painting in his (Bajpayee's) room. But even if he should have raised the subject he might

have got the same advice to accept it also as a fact of life and the adviser was none else than Atal Behari Bajpayee, the Prime Minister of India.

Syed Abu Saleh 170, Malibagh Dhaka-1217.

Reduce electricity rates

Sir, Due to erratic power supply the electric bulb and tube get frequently fused. TV, refrigerator, air-conditioner, water pump machine and lift become inoperative and defective and one has to spend a lot of money for repair and maintenance of

We would request the PDB to realise and consider the above facts and financial difficulties of the members of the public and to cut and reduce the current electricity rates by fifty per cent pending improvement of power supply in the country.

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