Dhaka, Tuesday, October 27, 1998

# VGF Card Watershed

The Government's VGF cards food safety net cast over the most vulnerable among flood-affected households has not just caught, but in fact fired, the imagination of WFP and bilateral donors, including the US in particular. Convinced of the programme's potential to stave off starvation and famine they have swung into making fresh commitments to back it up. In the first phase when 13 lakh VGF cards had been distributed by August, the donor community wanted the number of beneficiaries increased to 40 lakhe by October. And, now they are urging the Bangladesh government to go beyond even that number.

The time-lag between the arrival of food at the ports and its distribution to vulnerable groups is said to have overshot the October deadline. Besides, the consignments from abroad have been mostly of wheat while the 16 kg quota hand-out per household includes 8 kgs of rice which the government has to draw from its own stocks with a possible knock-on into OMS operation and Foodfor-Work programme.

So, we have a carry-over on the 40 lakh target and an extended task of going beyond that number put together as a formidable challenge requiring to be met well before the next harvests are in.

The WFP and the US have a quick disaster response rating from direct experiences in troubled spots so that we see an ace in the hole as far as expediting food transshipment goes. Then we can further dynamise the unloading operations at our ports. Finally, we should not have any let-up in bringing the food to the interior. There is certainly some unrealised potential for a better orchestration between various stages — arrivals, stocking, off-takes and distribution. With private sector imports coming in, the pressure on the government for exercising the OMS option sooner than later will have decreased substantially. Wheat being in abundant supply Food-for-Work programme should have a smooth sail.

That said, we have these complaints from the opposition members on the parliamentary body for the relief ministry to pay heed to. The DCs are keeping the opposition MPs at arm's length in preparing the list of flood-hit people and many UP chairmen were allegedly involved in irregularities while distributing relief goods under the VGF programme. This is an aperture through which the opposition is exercising its right to watch-dog the operation, sometning that must not be trifled with.

### Let the Wards Bloom

The Dhaka City Corporation is soon going to have 100 wards instead of the present 90. The good decision has been prompted mainly by the consideration of bringing all wards to have about the same number of voters, 23,000 that is, with a view to coping with the bulging city population. This has occasioned fresh delimitation of wards which is a ticklish job because of a plethora of suggestions and objections that come pestering. But the fact that so far only 10 objections have been received speaks of the uncontroversial nature of the work.

Do these wards exist really outside of their electoral necessity? One can be never too sure. Mayor Hanif strongly feels that Dhaka with its 8 millionplus population should have had a government of its own — a subsidiary of the central dispensation. Our present unitary form of government, as issuing from our Constitution, does not admit of that. But the needs felt by Hanif could be met substantially without hurting the Constitution. Hanif for his part though could easily have decentralised much of DCC's functions by empowering the wards to discharge their municipal responsibilities.

Decidedly Mayor Hanif has made a mess of the garbage collection and disposal job. Some wits, and wit comes so naturally to the native Dhakaites, must by now have started using the choicest epithets about the yellow bins stradding the Dhaka streets and presiding over stinking filth spread in the fashion of empires. If the wards were charged with caring for the garbage and asked to make their own innovations, Hanif would have been spared a world of bad headaches and very very bad names. Some innovative ward commissioners have, without anyone's asking, already solved their wards' garbage problem with the co-operation of the citizenry in their respective areas.

As with garbage, many things could be sorted out at the ward level. By now many, if not all, ward commissioners have set up office. It's a leadership centre, to be sure. Stagger the DCC's ponderous charges and let the wards share the responsibility. The ward residents will have someone, some office, just next door who and which they can cultivate regularly for all kinds of needs. Let the 100 wards flower into wonderful cells giving life and meaning to DCC as also to its eight million charges.

# Call for a Judicial Enquiry

It is about two months since Saiful Alam Mukul, editor of a vernacular daily from Jessore, was gunned down on his way back home but his killers are still at large. Frustrated by a strange, quiet yet unmistakable campaign of apathy and non-cooperation that followed the death of this intrepid journalist, Mukul's wife yesterday held a press conference on her own and sought the intervention of none other than Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to bring the killers to book. We lend our fullest

support to the plea. Allegations made by Mukul's widow that local correspondents of some of the leading national dailies might have been involved in the sordid episode are very serious ones which do call for proper investigation at the earliest. We do not know how far these allegations are true but it is apparent that a very strong influential group is at work trying to sweep the murder case under the carpet. Leaflets and handbills have reportedly been distributed in different parts of Jessore to show this dauntless journalist in a dim light. We condemn this evil design from our heart and ask for an immediate judicial inquiry into the matter. The Daily Star had, in a recent condolence meeting over Mukul's death, aired that demand. We take this opportunity to reiterate it because it is clear that people behind Mukul's killing are very powerful and there is every chance that they will use their clout to stymie the course of justice in the

Judicial enquiry is likely to be immune to these unholy influences. We would urge the Prime Minister to ensure that sooner than later. It should be remembered by both government and those working in the newspaper industry that if the killers get away with Mukul's murder, more committed journalists like him will be targetted and journalism as a profession committed to the cause of truth will be jeopardised.

event normal criminal proceedings get underway.

Keeping Surveillance or Running Politics?

HECKING antecedents of officers is nothing new. Air Force Chief S K Sareen felt unnecessarily embarrassed when a clueless policeman landed in Dehra Dun to check his background with his father. Someone at the office of the Prime Minister messed up things. Otherwise, the Intelligence Bureau is all the time keeping surveillance on top

military and civil brass. The real problem is about new entrants to government. Police have to check the antecedents of all those who are selected through competitive examinations or through interviews by the Union Public Service Commission. Some of the selected have been rejected on the basis of police report.

The guidelines for verification are, "In order to ensure that persons in government service are loyal, upright and impartial, it is necessary for the government to exercise discretion in the matter of appointments with a view to seeing those persons who are likely to abuse the confidence placed in them are not appointed to public service. The appointing authority has also to satisfy itself that the candidate is in all respects suitable for appointment to the service or post in question."

So far those belonging to radical and religious organisations have been blocked. The Naxalites, the RSS members and the Jamaat-e-Islami supporters have been black balled invariably. In fact, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru intervened in the cases of two candidates who had been rejected by police for their connection with the Students' Fed-

ERIES of sensational news

sity campus rape have hit

newspaper headlines. One strik-

ing revelation, amongst others,

is this: A lot of students, par-

ticularly the girl ones, knew

ported that some of the victim

girls complained to the authori-

ties seeking punishment of the

offenders. They were placated to

keep mum presumably on

ground of adverse social reper-

cussions. Where the general

students, the university author-

ities and the rape victims kept

mum, could it be expected that

the rapists themselves would

kick up the incidents to court

protesting voices which initi-

ated to bring the crime to the

notice of the public for action.

From a write-up of Rahnuma

Ahmed, titled "See No Evil,

Speak No Evil, Hear No Evil'

published in the DS on Septem-

ber 27 it is know that long be-

fore the issue of campus rape

was open in media the writer

took the matter up with her

colleagues, university adminis-

trators etc. in a bid to freeing

the campus of this menace. This

was a commendable effort con-

scientiously and courageously

was assaulted by the Chhatra

she was taking snaps of their

rally. She lodged a written

complaint with the university

authority. The Discipline Board

heard the matter and awarded

some punishment — which ap-

peared quite meagre — to two of

the five accused students. Rah-

numa Ahmed felt disappointed

at the mood and working mode

of and punishment awarded by

the Discipline Board. She has

League student activists while

A few days afterwards she

taken by her.

Still there were some

troubles for them?

of Jahangirnagar Univer-

Intelligence agencies' defence is that since there is hardly any significant political activity, domestic or foreign, national or international, which does not impinge on national security, their activities are justified.

eration, a communist outfit.

The "undesirable elements." according to official sources, "are those (a) who are, or have been members of, or associated with anybody or association declared unlawful after it was so declared or (b) who have participated in, or associated with. any activity or programme (1) aimed at the subversion of the constitution, (2) aimed at the organised defiance of the law involving violence (3) prejudicial to the interests of sovereignty and integrity of India or the security of the State. or (4) which promotes, on grounds of religion, race, language, caste or community, feelings of enmity or hatred between different sections of the people.

Till the other day, the "progressives" were regarded as subversive elements. The Congress governments felt that the RSS connection was a bad mark against a candidate. I do not know what are the instructions after L K Advani has become the Home Minister. The IB is under his ministry. The guidelines are so vague that they can be interpreted differently by appointing authorities. Not long ago, three IAS recruits joined their training course at Mussoorie a few months late because their past association had raised doubts about them in the Home Min-

It looks as if there is too much emphasis on political

leanings. In fact, the whole process of police verification is subjective. Besides, what happens to a person who at the time of verification is "all right" but becomes "undesirable" after completing his probation? It is necessary that a commission or parliamentary committee should be appointed to look into the process of checking. It should also examine the cost of intelligence. Funds for such work, rightly or wrongly, are not subject to public scrutiny.

as a legitimate practice. The IB's counterpart in the states is probably the most abused institution because it is employed to harass the critics and opponents and to concoct cases against them. The bulk of work by the agencies even at the Centre is to find out which politician is meeting whom and talking what. Dissenters within the ruling party are no exception. Attorney General Soli Sorabjee has said, "an intelligence report should be taken with the pinch

### BETWEEN THE LINES

### Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

But there must be some way of knowing whether the money is well spent. There have been instances where an informant has collected payment from more than one organisation by supplying the same informa-

The RAW is doing its job abroad and the IB within the country. Their secret funds are never disclosed. As India's High Commissioner in London. never knew what RAW was spending and where. Over the years, even the credibility of the two agencies has become a question mark. Politicians use them and it has come to be accepted

Rajiv Gandhi would use RAW to check the antecedents of Congress candidates before elections. Some did not get the ticket because the agency did not give them a clean chit. He also used the intelligence agencies to find out how the polls would go. The IB claims that it told Mrs Indira Gandhi in 1976 that if she were to hold elections, Congress would lose. I do not know how far it is correct because her remark after the polls was that the IB let her down by telling that she would

The intelligence agencies

have now got so deeply involved in domestic politics that they have unchecked access at the top. IB chief walks into the Prime Minister's room straightaway. They talk about politics. So do the intelligence chiefs in the states. I would not be surprised if Vajpayee keeps a tab on their senior colleagues. During the Gujral regime, former Prime Minister Deve Gowda said publicly that his telephone was tapped and that the CID checked on his movements. Chandra Shekhar made a similar allegation when V P Singh was the Prime Minister. The CBI probe, however, showed that it was not true. Nobody knows the truth. One intelligence agency going into the allegations against another is bound to protect it. Many sleuths are transferred from CBI to IB or the other way round. After all, they are part of the same establishment.

India has not found an Aslam Beg yet. The retired chief of army staff in Pakistan claimed on solemn oath before the Supreme Court of that country last year that ISI was involved in the domestic politics of Pakistan. He said that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto created a special cell in 1975 "to collect truth and distort the record of the operations of the military intelligence agencies since independence." Bhutto probably did not want the truth of Islamabad's debacle in Bangladesh to come

The late President Giani Zail Singh told me more than once that his telephones at Rashtrapati Bhavan were tapped. It is an open secret that Rajiv Gandhi kept a check on visitors to the President's house. Those were the days when the insurgency in Punjab was at its height and when poor Giani's name was dragged for political gains. That was also the time when the Giani had before him the petition from George Fernandes and Rajinder Puri, seeking permission to sue Rajiv Gandhi in a court of law.

In fact, there is a larger question involved. A person considered dangerous in a particular regime may be having such beliefs as are not liked by those who are in power. In other words, the antecedents can become acceptable when a different government is sworn in. Critics of yesterday are rulers of today. There is a case to ponder over the mode of checking. No method is correct per se. Should a brilliant candidate be rejected because he held particular view at a particular time? And then what about politicians who are all the time being followed by the intelligence agencies because of their importance in public life?

Intelligence agencies' defence is that since there is hardly any significant political activity, domestic or foreign, national or international which does not impinge on national security, their activities are justified. This may be true as an argument. But at present they look like running our poli-

# Where Mum Reigns, Evil Remains Unseen, Unspoken, Unheard

by A R Shamsul Islam

Where means of acquisition are no consideration and only deposits of acquisition constitute full credit, anarchy becomes a law, declared or undeclared, of the land. Anarchy obviously stifles the voice of protest against wrong and injustice.

that there occurred rape incirightly questioned the effecdents on the campus. But they tiveness of this organ to ensure kept mum. The incidents were security of the teachers and imnot unknown to the University pose discipline on the students. authorities including the VC. They also kept mum. It is re-

The question is why the general students, the rape victims, the university authorities kept mum over the acts of rape on the campus? The answer rank be found, at

least in part, in the following: First, every section of the Jahangirnagar University appears afraid of the offender students who are identified as the armed cadre. They enjoy massive political backing of the national parties. They have enough money and power to move things the way they like. They not only indulge in toll collection, tender control, ransom receipt, but are also found to have sometimes obtained a hand in the appointment and assignment of teachers. It is really hard for a teacher to stay honourably and unharassed in the university by purchasing the wrath of the so-called armed student goons.

Second, History teaches that with all love for the government by the subjects as fear of the government by them is essential for the protection of the innocent and punishment of the wrong-doers. Unfortunately none of our governments has so far been able to instil such a benigh feeling among the people. That is why the government rules, ordinances etc. are, so to say, freely violated with impunity. On the other hand it is the terrorists who have coerced us to show a feeling of fear for them. In most cases their desires and declarations are actuated without protests from any

quarter. Can Jahangirganar

University stand out as a pleasant exception?

Third, our values have corroded near extinction. We want to get things immediately. We are opposed to wait to achieve things duly. The former needs brute force and the latter demands patient labour. Where means of acquisition are no consideration and only deposits of acquisition constitute full credit, anarchy becomes a law, declared or undeclared, of the land. Anarchy obviously stifles the voice of protest against wrong and injustice.

Fourth, suicidal selfishness has seized us. We are now in a mad race to satisfy our narrow ends. It is the same urge that goads on the rapists to abuse their girl mates, the general students to refrain from protesting against campus rapes, the varsity authorities to sleep over the issue without compunction. Each of us is lamentably short of realising that ultimate consequence will spare none of us from paying in full the penalty for consenting to "see no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil". The general students, the rapists, the rape victims, the teachers, the university authorities, all have by now been caught in a welter of harassment and humiliation. Penalties that have started to be exacted may not end until the full premium is paid off regard-

less of the time it requires. Fifth, there is an acute lack of exemplary punishment to the rapists. The judgment of the Syndicate of Jahangirnagar University has just come up to the press: One is expelled from the university for life, two are expelled for three years each,

one is expelled for one year and two are served with warning notices. Six accused abettors are acquitted to charge for lack of sufficient evidence. The accused are punished on charge of moral degradation. The agitating general students unity (GSU) has termed the Syndicate action as "farcical". In fact the criminals are too hardened to be curbed by such light punish-

Sixth. "There is no scope for the Syndicate to take action for criminal offences like rape", is a remark of one Syndicate member. But why they have not lodged a complaint with the police station for legal action is a weary question that remains unanswered.

Seventh, the university authorities are sometimes found apathetic to exercise available rules even against the offender students. It has come to a section of the press that in the past when a rape victim complained to the authority she was calmed down by the logic of social repercussions.

Eighth, the bogy of social repercussions is used as a multiple trump card by different

**OPINION** 

The hazardous contamina-

9-98 that smuggling was occur-

ring only due to very high price

of sugar in the retail market in

fixed mill-gate price of sugar at

Tk 25 and 22.50 in 1991 when

the retail price of Indian smug-

gled sugar was Tk 20-22 because

Bangladesh sugar was dumped

Bangladesh government re-

our country.

present.

hands. The university authorities use it upon the rape victims to avoid action taking task that their might and mettle cannot probably stand. The rape victims, in majority, are not the stuff to challenge the frown of the conservative, prejudiced, women-unfriendly society. The young rapists are old enough to read the favourable temperament of this situation to reap it to the full.

Ninth, even if at all a rape complaint gets through all the preliminary obstacles and reaches out to the investigation desk the deluge of questions, in the name of cross-examination, sometimes containing "specifics of private life" put to the complainants can easily wreck the victim's nerves, bathe her in shame as if she, instead of the rapist, was guilty. In the words of Rahnuma Ahmed: What was she wearing? Why was she there? ..... How did she behave? Did she talk, did she smile, did she lower her eyes? Does she go outdoors and often? Does she have a good reputation? Is she meek and humble or is she the protesting kind?" She terms it as "masculine way

of thinking, of seeing, of evaluating and assessing". Which rape victims, after hearing about such epic tests, will dare to file complaints to punish the culprits?

Tenth, Jahangirnagar University is the only residential university of the country. A score of miles away from the metro-politan capital Dhaka the campus is stretched over a huge chunk of land bedecked with dots of trees and other natural beauties interspersed with ever increasing number of buildings. These might have rendered the university to be a safe hide-out of the terrorists and criminals who find resident girl students near at hand to pick them up unchallenged to bucolic surroundings away from the lightening grip of the

The above factors might have contributed to leading the inhabitants of the world of the Jahangirnagar University to practice and master mum under which, strangely enough, all the screams, wails, shrieks of the rape victims have gone drowned. Maybe mum has a universal teaching: See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil as enunciated by Rahnuma Ahmed. Maybe the next lesson is: Never call an evil an evil. Let us not hope that inmates of the Jahangirnagar University will go one step forward (backward?) to learn that lesson.

law-enforcing agencies.

### BTV: Airy bottomless!

Sir, What's wrong with the BTV news department? How can an annual anniversary (and a global one at that) be the top and main news of a national news bulletin? These anniversaries are repetitive items and have low news value, and are casually mentioned at the bottom end of a bulletin. The busy developed countries have little time for ceremonial blah blah and ritualistic displays of rhetorics and mock processions. Perhaps beggars cannot be choosers.

Another instance of sycophancy: the ministers got out of the main bulletin and went into a separate programme of facing the TV cameras! The addiction

is worse than that of smoking! What has happened to the Bengalees' sense of balance and poise? Try ballet dancing, Bangla version? We are fed up of the classical political raags, which last too long to reach climax. Now Tofael and Ershad are crossing swords - how about a TV debate? Top shows are avoided!

It is sad to note the plunge of BTV from ethereal heights to the bottom of the bottomless basket (BTV still reappears the next day — what resilience!). How to escape from the Bangladesh tasher vhavan (BTV)? Perhaps wait for E-21 TV channel — old sherbet in new bottle?

A Zabr Dhaka

## Project — BTV

Sir, Prof Abu Sayeed, Minister of State for Information has recently asked the top officials, producers, engineers, cameramen and others concerned of the Bangladesh Television to submit in writing their recommendations for improving the quality of programmes of the state-run BTV.

In my opinion, if BTV wishes to survive as an ever-green

channel, both commercially and functionally, by competing with the cable TV programme, it must raise its programme standard and quality through incorporating objective peopleoriented news reporting, more interesting and entertaining recreational programmes plus strengthening its commercial wing so that more sponsors could be brought in.

M Zahidul Haque BAI, Sher-e-Banglanagar, Dhaka-1207

### Whither DU?

Sir, I was bemused by Mr Fazlul Alam's noble effort to defend the 'chastity' of the hoary University of Dhaka (DS Oct 15), irked by an earlier DS editorial. Love for one's alma mater cannot be hypocritical, hence he is entitled to the benefit of the doubt in the contention that his approach to the 'problems' in DU is honourable.

He skipped lightly the main culprit, the creeping effect of politicalisation, not only at the educational institutions but almost in every other sector of the society, including the distinctly professional areas other than political.

Since his defence, the elections in the student-front organisation at DU of a leading political party has been held. At the post-election function, a young speaker called for introducing a new trend in student politics, with the proviso that political activity should not be banned officially. This is a very high-level debatable issue, better handled by the top leaders of the society (not merely the politicians).

through a continued flux since independence, with no sign of settling down, to enable the citizens some respite, to be able to settle down to a normal mode of life. The virus of activism is

The society is passing

strong in all areas of life and business — and, illegal busi-

There are many national priorities. DU has its place in the list. We need an integrated scenario, not an isolated one. Everything has not been said about the Dhaka University, and what is happening in the educational sector.

An Outside Observer Dhaka

### Amartya Sen and his house

Sir, It is really a great pleasure to know that a Bengali economist Amartya Sen of India won the Nobel Prize for Economics this year. Mr Sen is the second Bengali to win the Nobel after Rabindranath Tagore. The winning of his Nobel Prize has given us a profound sense of joy and pride. We were more delighted when we came to know that he is a Bengali and passed his childhood at 14 Larmini Street, Dhaka and was a student of Saint Gregory High School.

We came to know through newspapers that the present owner of the house is Mr Amanullah, a businessman, is soon going to demolish the house, with a view to build multi-storied building.

I fervently request the gov-ernment of Bangladesh to give Mr Sen the citizenship of Bangladesh. I also request Mr Amanullah to establish at least a primary school in his house after Amartya Sen from where a number of scholars will pass out in future, and in fine to keep the memory of great Nobel Prize winner alive forever.

Bidyut Kumar Dey 92, New Elephant Road, Dhaka-1205

# M A Gafur

tion and pollution of cheaper Indian sugar during smuggling across the border was clearly elaborated by Mr M A Jalil in his letter 'Smuggled sugar' published in The Daily Star on 2-9-98. It was further stated by Mr concerned Yasin Ali in the 'Check Smuggling of Sugar and Streamline Market Price' published on 30-

in the warehouse and remained unsold for a long time due to very high price (Tk 29/27 per kg). During that time the price of Indian smuggled sugar was much cheaper than at present because open market sugar price was only 12-14 Indian Rupees against 18-19 Rupees at The smuggling is basically due to low yield of sugar cane per acre, insufficient cane supply to factories and very low recovery percentages and lower factory capacity. BSFIC Director (Cane Production) did not accept STP-technology since 1978. It is learnt that only the external Chairman BSFIC placed a big thrust for large scale adaptation of STP in 1990-91 cane planting season. He himself visited all the sugar mills accompanied by Chief Research Coordinator (SRTI) and held free discussion with sugarcane farmers and motivated them to plant STP cane. A total of 22 thousand acres of STP cane plantation was achieved in a single plantation season against a target of 32 thousand

of the sugar mills and Mills farms. The STP programme was apparently discontinued by the Director (Cane) after the transfer of the external chairman. Thereafter sugar production continued to decline due to stagnant low cane yield and lack of adequate cane supply to the smaller sugar factories resulting in increased production cost of sugar in our country and largescale smuggling of polluted

acres. Cane yielding of 30-80 tca

wise achieved in the STP fields

cheaper sugar from India. BSFIC failed to produce sufficient quantity of cane by adopting STP technology at farmers' level and thus ensure

Sugar Price and Sugarcane Rehabilitation tion of Bangladesh is sought to the same.

It is further suggested to

supply required quantity of

seed cane free of cost to rehabil-

itate sugar cane cultivation in

the flood affected cane growing

districts and thanas where se-

vere crisis of sugar cane seed is

prevailing as the sugar cane

supply of 3.50 lakh tons of cane to produce 30 thousand M tons sugar from each factory. There has been allegation of corruption too against its official (s) To the best of our knowledge India does not consider

crops had been submerged Bangladesh as its market for partly causing them unfit for sugar because India herself is planting as seed. Such a meahighly deficit in sugar. Per sure will help rehabilitate sugcapita consumption in India is arcane cultivation which is only 14 kg against 22 kg in Pakconsidered a tall but flood tolistan. It is gathered that India erant crop in Bangladesh. has made projection to raise Restoration of cane cultivation level of sugar consumption to by providing free seed in the 25 kg per head and also the proflood affected areas will help duction target to 300 lakh M increase gur production and tons against 150 to 160 lakh M thus decrease the present exortons at her 448 mills of which bitant gur price. Increased cane 80 per cent are in the private production in the flood affected sector including the cooperative areas will further help reduce sub-sector at present. Virtually diversion of sugar cane for gur there is no sugar industry and making from the sugar mills sugar production in our neighzone and thus help increase lobouring states of India - West cal sugar production and also Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Nagadecrease the amount of sugar land, Monipur and Mizoram. export and smuggling during These states are allocated about the next sugar milling season 12-13 lakh M tons sugar by the (1999-2000). Indian Central Ministry of It is learnt that the then Food yearly and the distribu-Chairman, BSFIC arranged to tion is made monthwise. These distribute seed cane of imamounts of sugar are procured proved varieties suitable for gur and transported from the sugar making since 1983-84 planting surplus states of Uttar Pradesh season and the programme (UP) and Maharashtra. Further, continued till 1992-93 planting the states of Bihar and Orissa season. BSFIC used to distribute although having better sugar in cooperation with the Deptt. industry are also deficit in of Agril Extension 5-10 thousugar due to higher difference in sand maunds of seed cane in the sugar price between India and non-mill zones in order to re-Bangladesh. Indian sugar is place degenerated varieties and forced to be smuggled in a very also to increase the production large quantity. If the governof gur as well as to minimise the ment of Bangladesh implement diversion of cane for gur from the proposal of Mr Yasin Ali in a package deal and re-fix the price of sugar at Tk 23 per kg, we strongly believe that the smuggling will be stopped due to market economy and the assistance of the border security forces will not be needed. It is

strongly recommended to the

Ministry of Industry. Ministry

of Food and Agriculture, Min-

istry of Commerce, Ministry of

Finance and Board or Revenue

to give serious consideration to

the proposal made by Mr Yasin

Ali as published in The Daily

Star on 30/9/98. Further, kind

attention of the Ministers of

Industry & Commerce, Agricul-

ture, Finance, Food and Agri-

culture and Food Advisor to the

Prime Minister, Consumers As-

sociation of Bangladesh,

Bangladesh Economic Associa-

tion, FBCCI, BMA, BAAS, BAC,

and Sugar Merchants' Associa-

the mill zone. Surprisingly, this programme was suspended from 1993-94 and the newly released gur varieties ISD 24, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27 & 28 could not reach the doors of farmers outside mill zones, particularly in flood affected river beds. Government should make arrangement to procure at least 1.50 lakh maunds of seed cane from the sugar mill zones and distribute among the farmers of flood affected cane areas. Out of this quantity BSFIC should restore their suspended programme and distribute at least 20 thousand maunds free of cost to the farmers of the non-mills zones and the balance 1.30 lakh maunds should be included in

the Agriculture Rehabilitation Programme of Ministry of Agriculture and some NGOs particularly Grameen Bank, BRAC and Proshika.