The Paily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka, Monday, November 2, 1998

Inheritance Laws

The position of women in religion has always been the subject of some debate, in some form or another. This is more so in societies where religious scriptures are the guiding force for civil laws. In industrialised Christian societies, this debate has narrowed itself down to the workings of the Church itself, since the civil constitutions have successfully managed to eliminate all differences between the sexes under the law. In particular, laws relating to rights within the family including marriage, inheritance etc., have been harmonised to ensure equal rights between men and women. But in Muslim societies such as Bangladesh, these remain areas which require further scrutiny and reform.

State Minister for Planning Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, addressing a seminar organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Saturday, alluded to the economic as well as family aspect of inheritance laws, and suggested that these need to be reformed. The unequal nature of inheritance laws is being seen as an obstacle to the growth of women entrepreneurship in the country which, by implication, works as an impediment to economic growth in general. In other words, reform of the inheritance laws is needed, not only to ensure equal rights within the family, but also in the economic arena, and thus encourage the growth of women entrepreneurship. We may recall here that the Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Mohammad (SM) himself held women entrepreneurs in high esteem, and his first wife was a well-known businesswoman of her time.

However, since these laws are based on the Islamic traditions, any reform would require a great deal of consultation with theologians both at home and abroad. Important lessons may also be drawn from experiences in other Muslim countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia etc. What the government needs to do is initiate a national consultative process designed to build up public opinion in favour of reform of the inheritance laws. There should not be any misgiving about the reformist move, since Islam is inherently an enlightened religion, revealed to mankind for our salvation. There have been reforms of Islamic practices in other countries in the past, notably the amendment of family laws in Pakistan in the 1960s, which remained true to the spirit of the faith. There is no reason why inheritance laws cannot be reformed to further improve women's position in society and their ability to contribute to national economic endeavours.

Jolt to Primary Enrolment

In some Third World countries the child contributes substantially to its family's struggle for survival. To take it away and make it go to school is pushing the family to an impossible situation, unaffordable to the hilt. So, fair-thinking authorities in many regions have started to compensate the family for that. The minimum the family can be satisfied with in the circumstances is that the child would be fed free while at school.

We have done good in the matter. Our primary students get a free dole of 15 kg of rice each month. It is said that the boom in primary enrolment is greatly a result of that. But this year the food hasn't been available due to indecision at the policy-making level. The bulk of rice gift was so far being distributed through teachers. It has been found that this arrangement is harmful to the schools and it also leads the teachers involved to corruption. This should not continue, all quarters are agreed on that. The Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies has recommended replacing food with money. There is another recommendation that the rice dole be distributed through rice dealers.

The authorities have so far failed to go either way or decide on a third. Neither money nor food has travelled to the primaries. A national daily has reported that this has already occasioned a large-scale school-leaving. The authorities do not think so. The matter of concern is if that hasn't already started it surely will, and very soon. And that will be a very sad thing to happen, not only to education, but to the nation as a whole.

Cannot the harm be contained and then reversed

by early and resolute action? A Timely Good Thought

The government is said to be thinking about introducing a facility for consumers to pay telephone, electricity and gas bills — at a time. This is a very rare and most welcome brainwave. A national daily reported on Sunday that authorities concerned have already sat over the matter and had agreed on the mater in principle. The details are now being worked out.

Such a consumer-friendly, or user-friendly thought rarely occurs to product manufacturers and marketers. Sale of a consumer item could go up substantially if bulk of it could be available without the need to buy the packing everytime - a userfriendly thing because of cheaper cost that could plough in higher profit for the manufacturer.

With such a background, that the government, has thought of making things easy for the consumers of its services of gas, electricity and telephone is indeed a kind of unexpected gift. It can make it more charming and satisfying by includ-

ing water bill in the deal. To maximise the benefit of the facility certain days of the month, necessarily more than one, should be fixed for such payment. And all these payments should be received by one among the many authorised to do so. One stop bill payment — that should be the idea.

Now who is going to pay the banks for their service of receiving the payments and reaching it to government coffers, all properly accounted for? The answer is all too obvious — government. It must not pass on the buck to buyers of its services at rates already among the highest in the world.

One thing the government must not do: now that the consumers are already feeling relieved at the prospect of doing it all at one go, the arrangement should not be delayed at any cost. Or it will forfeit the goodwill the good work could accrue.

Awaiting Democracy's 'Critical Mass' to Explode

The informed sections of this country may swing between the extremes of views but our ordinary men seldom

fail in their judgement on any issue facing the polity. While our omniscient intellectual class is cynically

democracy - the democracy of egalitarianism, equality, welfare and social justice - is long over. We yearned for that democracy for years without ever tasting it. Even after our freedom — the struggle for which had indeed built up on our quest for democracy — it persistently eluded us. The AL's absolutism, Zia's shrewd political opportunism and Ershad's decade of predatory rule defiled it to the extent that the democracy started to lose its traditional appeal. The post-1990 political process and its experimentation with democracy also have not been particularly reassuring; neither have they opened up new vista to our democratic aspirations. This is a setback of national dimension, tragedy and a disappointment for a generation which so much and so passion-

Ostensibly, the country after one and half decades of direct and indirect military rule, is now back in its democratic frame with representative governments in power. There are assemblies, cabinet, political parties, relatively free press and other trappings of democracy. The elections were held and there have been, not too turbulent, transfers of power. In formal sense. Bangladesh is today a parliamentary democracy and at least on paper meets all of its criteria. Yet our democracy suffers from a plethora of illiberalism, imperfections and inadequacies reducing it to what can be aptly called a fake democracy. This is a democracy which promises transparency but where all important decisions are taken in secrecy. The welfare is far cry and is, at the

best, meant for party loyalists

HE Government has fi-

respect to . its future policy

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opaque on the problems of democracy, our common people, with their traditional wisdom, are crystal clear on of the ruling party. Participation — of a sort — is there but with mere changes of people who actually participate after

each change of the government. It can neither be widened nor empowered.

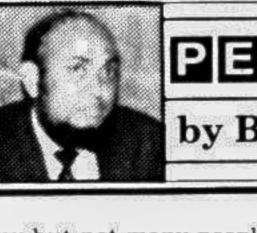
Under the creamy layer it is full of sleaze. The hands of the successive governments are also smeared with stark abuse of power and repression of civil rights as were experienced during the autocratic regimes just preceding the 'democratic spring'. And social justice or rule of law? Yes, but each government has its own definition of justice and interpretation of law as well as policies for their implementation and enforcement suiting the purpose of the establishment. In the meantime the parliament has already ceased to be a meaningful forum for public debate. A back to future' approach of the governments in power lacking both experience and vision has only managed to turn the people's psychological clock back. While the party functionaries have no problem in sustaining themselves — or even flourishing the mass of our population continue to lurch in miseries. It is not thus surprising that an increasing number of the members of the public are now looking askance if a country becomes democracy only with

its identifying symbols. The symbols may be good enough for the donor agencies of the West to consider aid grant to their client but not for the polity itself. After all, even with our autocratic rulers who also

professed democracy there was no dearth of symbols. Unless restored with its spirits, principles and tolerances the democracy is not only inadequate, it can be dangerous bringing with its revival also all erosion of liberty and a new wave of tyranny. Our 'democratic spring is replete with the instances where the conduct of the democracy has been dictated by brute state power, not by its own power of reasoning. In the wake of Ershad's fall in late 1990 there has been, no

doubt, a resurrection of democ-

tion it is the same known corrupt people - the tax evaders. the bank defaulters, the smugglers, the criminals and robberbarons who are foisted upon an illiterate poor electorate unable to make an informed political choice. The elections under prevailing system throw up not necessarily the best, the noblest or the fittest but the scum of the society because they are rich, unscrupulous and most powerful to bag the votes through tricks, manipulation and muscle power. What is in any case the credibility of ballot box -



PERSPECTIVES

by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

racy but not many people with democratic principles produced to make it work. Even if the country was headed by the Generals for more than half of its life span, it was, in fact, the politicians and the civil bureaucrats who were behind the scene to steer the nation's destiny. Today after a traumatic transition to democracy it is the same vain lot who run the affairs of the state. So, there is hardly any difference in the style of governance or in its at-

We pride on having now, after all, an elected government. But also in a 'democratic' elecand even the entire election machinery, when the election can be rigged with coercion and intimidation and votes can be purchased with money? It is thus axiomatic that elections alone, even if they are fair and impartial, do not make a political democracy.

Besides, a bitter and blind interparty confrontation, the intraparty infightings, the absence of intra-organisational democracy and the antiques of our political leadership continue to impede the growth of democratic culture in our country. It cannot be in any way conducive to democracy when the political opponents are hounded, harassed and persecuted in the name of rule of law while acts of gross misconduct, betrayal of people's trust and abuse of power and rampant corruption go unpunished. The necessary checks and balances in a democracy cannot be expected from the judiciary when the judges try to adjust their legal expertise to the exigencies of current politics and shift with the political wind. We have reached a sad pass where the guns of the armed cadres patronised by the politicians speak louder than their lan-

guage of democracy.

One of the most troubling deficiencies in our democracy today is the absence of a moral authority that was once exercised by our leaders imbued with the ideas and ideal of service. Today's self-serving politicians cannot exercise that authority. There is no more an ethical compass to guide us in our conduct as responsible citizens making inevitable, for example, the shameful episode of Jahangirnagar University. The political connection of the episode is all the more alarming. The role of the civil society institutions like the student bodies and cultural groups which were once in the forefront of democratic movements, are now marginal. The voice of the intelligentsia is muted and its role is confined. at the most, to the issuance of statements. The pen pushing intellectuals are cautiously vocal but not prepared to court hardship to uphold their ideals.

There is no Andrei Sakharov or Solzhenitsyn in our midst to go to prison or on exile. There is no Nelson Mandela to rise above his personal anguish only for his country's sake.

Yet an efflorescence of democratic spring is possible in this country. But that and the spread and quality of democracy depend heavily on the quality of democrats of the country. The democratic efflorescence has been likened to the explosion of a critical mass. Also for our democracy a critical mass of people with democratic principle has to accumulate, a critical mass of democratic passion has to accrue. How and when will that accumulate is the moot question.

The people's inherent capacity in Bangladesh to create a democratic critical mass is tremendous. The informed sections of this country may swing between the extremes of views but our ordinary men seldom fail in their judgement on any issue facing the polity. While our omniscient intellectual class is cynically opaque on the problems of democracy, our common people, with their traditional wisdom, are crystal clear on them. When our intellectuals straddle on the blurred line between euphoria and obsession, for example, in appreciating the achievement of a Nobel laureate of another country, our ordinary man knows where exactly to draw the line. The ordinary people of this country is our greatest asset and we have to tap anew this resource for our democratic breakthrough. That all are required to best utilise this resource is perhaps to undertake urgent structural changes, institutional reforms as well as measures to revive their lost faith in democracy.

A Glimmer Perhaps?

We make inveterate "enemies" and inveterate "friends", without even attempting to balance the obvious against the public good. A real friend is he who can look his friend in the eye and tell him what is good and bad for him.

trends in the economic and foreign affairs fronts. While chest-beating has its moments. it does not bring food to the table. One must thankfully acknowledge that pragmatism now seems to be the order of the day. One may not be entirely comfortable with some of the things we have to live with but to survive as a viable economic entity and maintain our independence in the region, one has to swallow some bitter pills. Particularly in the matter Saudi Arabia. Other than the fact that alof governance of a country, pragmatism must always occupy priority of place. Uptil

indulging in "noora kushti". We know now that in fact it has been a combination of both. Recently, the Foreign Office confirmed that the PM has been invited by US President Bill Clinton to a State visit in early December, primarily to focus on Pakistan's economic travails.

now the government has been

giving conflicting signals in the

approach to the various crises

engulfing the country, causing

doubts whether GOP was

pursuing "voodoo policies" or

Almost simultaneously Foreign Minister Senator Sartaj Aziz confirmed that the government was seriously contemplating signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and other associated protocols such as the Fissile Material Control Treaty (FMCT) etc. and that it would not jeopardise Pakistan's nuclear capability since it had been so advised by its principal nuclear scientists. A White House signing ceremony about nuclear restraints would be a feather in the US President's much maligned cap, it would also do a world of good for Mian Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan in investor perception.

A firm direction is now apparent in our foreign policy. with the US backing off from its sanctions, for which the US President now has the authority from the US Congress for a waiver. We now take it for granted that with the sanctions waived we will see the IMF programme coming on track, with much lesser harsher terms than apprehended, or even acceptable. To put it bluntly, there are no way we could have avoided IMF sanctions without giving

way to CTBT signing. The visit of Deputy Premier of Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Abdullah has been a very significant event. The Prince himself is known for his conservative bent as well as his love for Muslim causes. He is one of the known advocates in the Saudi Royal family of a strong, stable Pakistan. Crown Prince Abdullah has always had a special place in the hearts of all Pakistanis, the visit has only added to that affection. There is good reason to believe that it is mutual.

Saudi Arabia's continuing support for Pakistan can never

be overstated. Pakistan enjoys a very special rapport with the Kingdom, a relationship that has been very beneficial to Pakistan over the years. The spontaneous welcome given to the Saudi Prince in Lahore was a reflection of how much the people of Pakistan appreciate the wholehearted and generous support given by the Kingdom of

most half of the repatriation of funds by Pakistani migrant workers comes from Saudi Arabia, the Saudis have repeatedly given us grants and credits at very easy terms. Their financial generosity has only been matched by the Abu, Dhabians and to some extent by Kuwait. The Prince spelt out very clearly that Saudi Arabia will not leave Pakistan alone in its time of crisis, he underscored whole-hearted support to Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. By itself this expression of solidarity has been invaluable. Besides the injecting of muchneeded cash liquidity, there was good indication of investing in Pakistan as well as possibility of cooperation in joint ventures, that translates into

positive cash flow for Pakistan. Will this be enough to stem the tide of red ink engulfing the economy? While the agriculture sector has been performing very well, the manufacturing sector is almost at a standstill. To add to the problems, banks in Pakistan are having difficulty problems getting Letters of Credit (L/Cs) confirmed abroad If the imports continue to be interrupted, it will have an adverse effect on product availability in 3-6 months. These shortages will result in an inordinate rise of prices through the broad spectrum of consumer prices, force-multiplied by the constant devaluation of the Pakistani Rupee against the US

While debt rescheduling seems to be on the cards, in the absence of revenue generation the problem of our debt servicing will become worse. At the same time like any third world leader, Mian Nawaz Sharii cannot separate himself from populism. He has this inherent tendency to go into schemes like yellow cabs, green tractors. easy loans, etc without proper verification and documentation which creates horrendous problems for the lending institutions. It is difficult to curb his spirit in this respect as he genuinely is into populism since April 1993 when the masses rather than the Establishment responded to his travails. For populist leaders it is always a matter of honour to dole out cash-rich benefits to the masses without really comprehending that the water-hole

is already dry and could soon

ASISEEIT

Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi

come up empty.

Addressing a huge gathering in Islamabad, Qazi Hussain Ahmad of the Jamat-i-Islami (JI) lambasted the government of Nawaz Sharif for dragging its feet about the most potent issue before Parliament, the Shariah Bill (CA-15). He also took issue with GOP about alleged corruption. Over 300,000 gathered in the premises and vicinity of Faisal Mosque to take part in the proceedings. Thankfully (and to their credit) the JI leaders kept the crowd under control but Qazi Sahib went overboard with respect to maligning the Army. Not only was it uncalled for, it was patently false and destructive. His speech was inflamma-

tory as it tended to destroy discipline through the rank and file. The Armed Forces have remained a bastion of uprightness, integrity and competence. Such attacks damage the fabric that is holding the whole national edifice together. While Qazi Sahib has every right to have a go at all politicians, particularly because they can reply him in kind, disparaging the Army's Command structure and causing disaffection between them and the other ranks is unacceptable, even in the most democratic of societies. While one has the greatest respect for Qazi Sahib, such spurious allegations need to be confronted as it does the cause of this country no good.

The promotion process in the Armed Forces is on merit and is exceptional, ordinary of ficers do not rise to the rank of Lieutenant Generals, one or maybe two from a Course, exceptionally three or four. Since a normal PMA Regular Course comprises an intake of 125-150 cadets who were themselves chosen out of 9,000-10,000 aspirant candidates throughout the country, the chances after 30 years of service can be pretty bleak. Only one of my coursemates of 34th PMA, 33 years to the day (Oct 31, 1965), is a senior Lt General, only one among the six Major Generals of the 34th PMA to make it. To achieve that superior rank requires a very special type of person in today's competitive Army, very

special indeed. There are horrible exceptions who do get through (e.g. Qazi Sahib's namesake) but they are very few and far between. As for the so-called "riches" of senior general officers, that perception is a burn-

out of the pomp and show, par ticularly because of the facility of a staff car and a driver, all re-

turnable on retirement. To maintain a standard of living commensurate to his rank, a senior officer is invariably under greater financial pressure than his subordinates. This may sound ludiorous but it is true, as a major I was in hock to the Canteen Contractor (like most of my colleagues) when left the Army. It was unbecoming of Qazi Sahib to disparage

the merit and constant struggle that goes into the process, instead of maligning the Army for no reason whatsoever he should leave well enough alone.

After I had sent the article came the news about the breakthrough in the investigation into Hakim Said's assassination. Very rightly the PM has given the MQM three days to hand over the killers or face "a parting of the ways". That is the stuff we want from Mian Nawaz Sharif as PM, the correct path even when it may cost him political points. In the face of clear evidence, he has chosen to stand for the rule of law rather than opt for political expediency. Here is where a glimmer may well become a light at the end of the tunnel. Well done,

Prime Minister! Criticism should be objective, unfortunately in Pakistan

as in many other countries where there is an "us" and "them" syndrome, criticism is usually destructive. In such an environment it is difficult for people to understand how you can criticise one's friends unless you are an "enemy". It is even more difficult for a friend to stomach criticism, even though it may be for his (or her) good. We make inveterate "enemies" and inveterate "friends", without even attempting to balance the obvious against the public good. A real friend is he who can look his friend in the eye and tell him what is good and bad for him. Our leaders must have the maturity to absorb objective criticism in the same manner in which they accept felicitations for a job well done. With his standing upto the MQM in the name of the office he represents, Mian Nawaz Sharif seems to have finally come of age.

OPINION

Stalemate in CHT

I have been closely following the implementation of the CHT Accord since it was signed on 2 December 1997. The Accord was widely acclaimed at home and abroad. Felicitations were received from many distinguished world leaders. The people both of the plains and CHT were hopeful that peace would be finally restored and a new era of progress would begin in this

much affected region. Re-

grettably, peace appears to be a

far cry as yet. Trust of the peo-

ple of CHT, particularly the in-

digenous people, is fast evading I am mentioning a few of the post-Accord developments which may have caused the stalemate and increased the gap between the administration at Dhaka and the people of CHT.

There were numerous parleys in Dhaka and CHT between the government and JSS while preparing the four bills before placing them in the Parliament. It was reported that at the intervention of the Prime Minister it was agreed that the bills would be prepared as per the provisions of the CHT Accord To our utter dismay the first bill for an amendment to the Rangamati Hill District Counci Bill '98 was passed in violation of the Accord. The definition of non-tribal permanent resident as agreed in Accord was changed unilaterally by the government. The passage of the bill led to widespread anger and disappointment in CHT Chairman of JSS, Mr. Shantu Larma (who was a signatory to the Accord) rejected the bill Again after a lot of negotiation/discussion between GOB leaders and JSS, the issue was partially resolved. As an outcome of these meetings the Bandarban, Khagrachari and the Regional Council bills were passed as per the Accord with some deviations. It was learned that the government had assured the JSS leadership that the Rangamati bill would be amended as envisaged in the Accord in the budget session. Two sessions have passed but the Rangamati bill is yet to be amended in accordance with

the CHT Accord. The formation of the much talked about interim Regional Council (RC) is also uncertain. News of disagreement between the government and JSS regarding its composition was published in several dailies. It was reported that three nominees of JSS were replaced by the nominees as recommend by the local MPs. According to some CHT watchers the JSS does not feel comfortable in joining the RC before the Rangamati bill and the other discrepancies of the previously passed bills are amended as the leverage to negotiate will be limited once the JSS top-notches are inducted

S K Tripura into the interim RC. Sceptics are of the view that some vested quarters within the government (particularly local AL leaders) are creating unnecessary obstacles which is delaying the implementation of the Accord for reasons best known

The present Chairman and members of the three interim Hill District Councils were appointed from the members of Awami League. Recently Mr. Bir Bahadur, an Awami League MP, was appointed as the Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB). The appointment of Bir Bahadur MP, as Chairman of CHTDB is yet another example of AL-isation of the various posts in CHT. It may be worth mentioning that so long the GOC of 24 Infantry Division was the Chairman of CHTDB. One may say that the head of CHTDB who was a military person has now been replaced by a civilian. The government may claim this as a step towards transferring the CHT to civilian rule to woo the donors for funding. But for most CHT watchers it is nothing but substituting militarisation by politicisation of the various development institutions in CHT.

Even the succession of the Circle Chiefs (Rajas) are not spared from the interference. After the death of the Bohmong Raja Maung Shweu Prue Chowdhury of Bandarban, every one in CHT expected that Mr A S Prue would be the Raja as per customary law and law of succession. But to the utter surprise of all, the government recognised Mr K S Prue as the Raja. The reason for recognising Mr K S Prue as the Raja was apparently that he is a supporter of Awami League and the MP from Bandarban recommended that K S Prue should be the Raja. Mr A S Prue took the shelter of court and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court gave a verdict in favour of Mr A S Prue as the heir to the throne of the Bohmong Raj and advised the government to disassociate itself from interfering with the customary law and law of succession of the traditional rulers of CHT. The fate of recognition for the Raja of the Mong Circle by the government is still hanging. It is rumoured that the government is unlikely to recognise Unika Devi the daughter of late Raja Momprue Sain as the Raja of Mong Circle. It may be worth mentioning that late Raja Momprue Sain was a freedom fighter who crossed over to India along with his family during the war of

liberation. It is a pity that the

government who claims to up-

hold the freedom struggle and

rehabilitate the freedom fight ers seems (as alleged) to extend no recognition to a freedom fighter like late Raja Momprue Sain by not recognising his daughter as the heir to the

throne of Mong Circle. AL should not get carried away by winning the three seats in CHT for two successive terms in the national Parliament (1990 and 1996). The reasons for AL's victory was more from a tactical point rather than its popularity. It would not be prudent for the Prime Minister to think that all the indigenous peoples of CHT are die hard Awami Leaguers. One would recall that no political party of the national level ever won a seat in CHT. During the landslide victory of AL in 1970, the seats in CHT were won by independent candidates for the national and provincial Assemblies. In the election of 1973 the two seats of the parliament were again won by independent candidates. One of the winners was none other than late Manobendra Larma the founder of JSS (it was his second consecutive term as MP). In 1973 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited Rangamati to campaign for the AL candidates. In a public meeting in Rangamati he baptised the indigenous peoples as Bangalis rather than to be recognised as different ethnic minorities which was the wish of the indigenous peoples. Many view the baptism of the ethnic minorities as Bangalis was the turning point for the struggle for the right of the peoples of

Eventually the signing of the CHT Accord is a milestone towards the recognition and preservation of the diversified cultures of the peoples of CHT. It was indeed sheer courage, conviction and wisdom on the part of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, which culminated in the signing of the Accord when many parts of the world were and are still agonised with ethnic conflicts. Many feel and believe that Sheikh Hasina was genuinely trying to heal the wound which was inflicted by Pakistani rulers and further aggravated by successive military rulers after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rah-

Finally I would like to appeal to Sheikh Hasina to rise above party interest and consider the CHT issue from the national perspective as Prime Minister of Bangladesh and not as President of Awami League. Please give the CHT a chance to flourish in peace. A failure of the Peace Accord may be very costly for the country and all the national and international acclamations so far earned would flow down the Karnaphuly.

Aprés Moi...

Sir. The article by MM Rezaul Karim on the current political situation in our country published in DS on 29.10.98 has shocked us for a number of reasons. The views expressed in the article are not only partisan, they are motivated too.

It appears from the article that the writer's one and only mission is to uphold the wrong policies of the BNP. It is unfortunate that he overlooked the alleged misdeeds and crimes perpetrated by the young BNP workers. Many such criminal activities are still fresh in our memory. We have seen how the Vice-Chancellors of Universities were heckled, respectable professors were tormented and abused, the female students were publicly kicked and insulted, university and hall of-

fices were smashed, supermarkets were gheraoed and looted in broad daylight, public meet-ings were held on the Airport Road causing untold sufferings to the airline passengers, leader's imaginary birthday was celebrated with pomp and gaiety on the fateful day Bangabandhu was brutally killed with many members of his family and the process of smooth functioning of the JS was repeatedly obstructed by the BNP members. Syed M M Ali

Gulshan, Dhaka Reviving the glory

of the fibre Sir, Jute is still an important cash crop of Bangladesh. People all over the world are

again returning to the use of

this natural fibre by rejecting synthetic fibres because Jute is environmentally-friendly and In my opinion, research and

development activities on jute should be intensified in the country. The Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI) has been working on jute research and development and it has also made some significant contribution in jute agriculture and jute economics.

It is strongly felt that the government should strengthen the BJRI with necessary support so that it can contribute more effectively towards restoring the past glory of our golden

M Zahidul Hague BAI, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka