The Baily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

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Encore!

The climax to the Wills International Cup tournament may not have been the most exciting in the world, but the sound of the drum beat and cheering from Dhaka's Bangabandhu National Stadium is likely to reverberate around the cricketing world for years to come. The sense of gloom that was threatening to descend on the city due to the home team's non-participation, was swept away by the carnival that the tournament finally turned out to be. Who said Bangladesh was not "playing"? Bangladesh was the "player of the tournament", in the form of the drum-beating, bugle-blowing, flagwaving multitude in the galleries, in the streets and at home. Where else in the world would visiting teams -- all nine of them -- play in packed stadiums and enjoy such vociferous support?

No wonder, the players' appreciation of the crowds knew no bounds. And our admiration for the players of South Africa, West Indies, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, New Zealand, England and Zimbabwe know few limits.

During Sunday's grand finale, as South Africa powered to their biggest tournament win since returning to the international cricket fold in 1990, it became clear that success of the Wills Cup has put Bangladesh firmly on the map. Officials of the International Cricket Council could not have praised the Bangladesh cricket authorities more for the excellent job done. The international media could not have done a bigger favour, with television beaming images across the world which showed a country steeped in culture, endowed with extraordinary natural beauty, populated by a fun-loving people and full of potential for progress.

Now that the curtains have finally come down on the greatest sporting theatre ever staged in Dhaka, the time has come to ponder over the possibilities of encores. The effort that everybody has put in for the success of the Wills Cup should not be seen as an isolated event, nor a on-off endeavour. It is events like these that provide opportunities for positive international exposure. The enthusiasm and sporting behaviour of the crowds at the stadium have done more to improve the image of the country abroad than a thousand diplomatic speeches could ever have done. Now it is upto the government to capitalise on the success of the Wills Cup and make Dhaka a regular venue for internation cricket events which would also generate foreign exchange and help to improve domestic cricket.

A Glimmer, at Last

The rabbits-of-a warren traffic situation in the metropolis has been such a bristling concern that there is no question of another priority on the civic map competing with it in terms of notoriety. Given the sheer waste of man hour, shying away of investments and depressive dungeon-like feeling it has been holding us down to, most people felt baffled as to what was holding the government from treating this sore point under our very nose as a number one problem and address it accordingly. Sardine-packed Calcutta is looking forward to vastly improved mobilities in its streets by 2002 when six sprawling flyovers will have been built across the megacity with Japanese credit support.

The persistent gloom over Dhaka city is at last clearing out with Bangladesh Communications Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat having the signed an agreement with the World Bank in Washington for assistance worth US\$ 27 crore towards a 38-crore US dollar Urban Transportation Project conceived by the Government of Bangladesh. One wished the gestation period for the project were less than five years, the demographic pressure on the city being what it is now. We take heart in the fact though that the structural changes are being engineered with one long foot on the future. We are going to have a couple of 2.5 km-long flyovers — one laid across Mahakhali and Tongi Bridge and another between Jatrabari and Viswa Road points. Under the project eleven 'missing links' will be forged to connect the arterial roads. Major traffic intersections will be simultaneously expanded with separate lanes provided for rickshaws and their plying restricted to subsidiary roads only. Traffic signalling is to be modernised as the police get fully equipped to stave off vehicular pollution.

Let's get a move on this at the earliest.

Mouldering Relics.

Historical relics mouldering away in northern districts. A Daily Star headline on Sunday. Nothing could be truer. We, of course, have an archeological department but more as a legacy of a colonial past than as an expression of love for our past struggles and achievements. The department earns nothing and spends very little and no politician feels he or she has a stake in its undertakings and performances. From R D Banerjee to Debala Mitra, there has been a host of passionate diggers, not just government functionaries. No doubt we also have very competent archeologists waiting for the right atmosphere to bloom. But the national and governmental setting for archeology is one of stagnation, a complete lack of interest. That affects.

The Daily Star story enumerates dozens of relics. These are all widely known sites. Many of these are already under the care of the department. And still many more remain governmentally unrecognised and thus perfect targets of vandals of the most mindless and greedy kind.

Now what to do with the uncaring attitude to the invaluable monuments that must live to give us an identity? Our society must wake up as a whole to the importance of historical and archeological sites and monuments. Before that happens it is imperative that government leaders sit down with luminaries to devise ways and means to adequately preserve the treasure-trove of our national heritage.

Bangladesh—a Case for a Bipartisan Foreign Policy

Bangladesh is a poor country trying to get on to the fast track of development. Bipartisan stand in our

interactions with the outside world will enhance our international credibility and esteem, will

facilitate obtaining increased external assistance and investment and thus accelerate

the process of our economic development.

OOKING back at Bangladesh's external behaviour pattern, two periods of our somewhat chequered history stand out. These are the initial years of Bangabandhu's government and the latter part of President

From the moment Sheikh Mujib set out on his journey back home "from darkness to light", on his release from Pakistan's captivity, "not with", as he put it, "any rancour in my heart for anyone" (meaning Pakistan) he was able to lay the foundation of Bangladesh's foreign policy with remarkable ease, maturity and foresight. It has to be said that Bangladesh did not receive a spontaneous welcome in the comity of na-

There were quite a few countries which, for their own reasons, did not wish to see the emergence of a new country in this region. Ethnic states like Bangladesh did not then figure in the political configuration as they do now, what with the breakaway countries from the erstwhile Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and the like. Then there were countries with incipient secessionist problems, such as Sri Lanka and Nigeria that felt ill at ease in recognizing Bangladesh. The Islamic countries, on their part, did not relish the idea of, what they then viewed as the dismemberment of a fellow Muslim country. Pakistan.

In the then bipolar world Indo-Soviet support for our cause did not help matters for us in the West either. The policy of the US government bore a 'tilt' towards Pakistan in spite of the support and sympathy our liberation struggle enjoyed among large sections of the informed American public. The same could be said about the governments of the Western European nations. After all Pakistan had been a steadfast western ally ever since its birth. and with the chips down, Bangladesh had to contend with considerable sympathy for

Pakistan's predicament. Then, as far as the US was concerned, the timing of our liberation struggle was not propitious. President Nixon was then trying to open up with China through the good offices of President Yahya Khan and at that point of time, 'the Bangladesh thing' was a distraction, the US could do without. For its part, China, in view of its relations with India, regarded the struggle for Bangladesh as a development that would weaken a friend, and wished to see its problems settled within the frame-work of a united Pakistan.

Therefore gaining international acceptance was one of the initial challenges for Bangladesh. The matter assumed considerable urgency as the devastated economy of the country called for immediate interaction with the international community. In this, Bangladesh's experience was very different from what it had undergone as a part of Pakistan, a quarter of a century earlier, when, with the departure of the British, world recognition was automatic.

Within the first few days of his return home from Pakistan, indeed even as he was travelling back home, Sheikh Mujib made moves that established, to a great extent, Bangladesh's credibility as a sovereign country. with policies distinctly of its own. For instance, while in London on his way back from Pakistan, Sheikh Mujib told the British leaders of Bangladesh's intention of joining the Commonwealth. Coming from a country born with the support of the Soviet bloc, this move, so soon after its birth, signalled to the West our desire to pursue an independent foreign policy. Yet, the Soviet Union was the first country to which Bangabandhu paid a state visit when he succeeded in obtaining the continued support of that country in the urgently needed task of clearing the Chittagong port, of vessels sunk during the war of libera-

Sheikh Mujib most sincerely expressed the gratitude of Bangladesh to India for its invaluable support and assistance in our effort to achieve Bangladesh and worked towards establishing cordial relations with our immediate

the members of his family's neighbour on the basis of sovereign equality. Yet, he lost brutal assassination and the no time in telling Pakistan that clear complicity of his succes-Bangladesh wished to norsor, in that heinous crime. Bangladesh suddenly slid, as it malise relations with it. As were, into the middle ages. The early as February 1972, during his visit to Calcutta, when the bloody acts of violence and conspiracy that were to follow only heat of the war could still be threw Bangladesh deeper into a felt, Sheikh Mujib launched an

appeal for economic coopera-

tion among all the countries of

the region for 'the betterment of

the lot of our peoples'. 'If we fail

to achieve that', he said

dian troops from Bangladesh in

March 1972, to which Sheikh

Mujib attached the top most

priority in his talks with Indira

Gandhi, hastened the pace of recognition by the western

countries, including the United

States. He paid particular atten-

tion to improving bilateral re-

lations with key countries like

China, Japan and the oil rich

countries of West Asia. Even

without China and Saudi Ara-

bia according formal recogni-

tion to Bangladesh he estab-

lished contacts with those

countries. Although it is not

generally known. China was

perhaps the first country out-

side the sub-continent, to which

Bangladesh quietly sent an of-

ficial level trade delegation in

what turned out to be a success-

ful bid to establish trade links.

Relations with the ruling cir-

cles of Saudi Arabia were cor-

dial, so much so that country

made a substantial financial

contribution during the 1974

floods. Bangladeshi workers

found their way into that coun-

try, as well as into other oil rich

countries of that region, in rea-

sonably large numbers, to find

During Sheikh Mujib's visit

to Japan in 1973, he underlined

the importance for Bangladesh.

of having a bridge over the river

Jamuna, That visit set the tone

for the close economic ties that

were to develop between Japan

its existence Bangladesh played

an active and constructive role

in the multilateral field.

Bangabandhu enthusistically

participated in the Common-

wealth Heads of Governments

conferences, held in 1973 and

1975, in Ottawa and Kingston

respectively. In spite of all his

pressing preoccupations at

home, in 1974, he made a dra-

matic dash to Lahore to get

Bangladesh admitted into the

Organization of Islamic Con-

ference — a move that set at rest

the doubts created by the cir-

cumstances of its birth, about

the value Bangladesh attached

to its overwhelmingly Muslim

tend the Nonaligned summit

and in September 1974, when

with the withdrawal of the Chi-

nese veto. Bangladesh became a

member of the UN, he addressed

the UN General Assembly in

New York and then proceeded to

Washington to meet with Presi-

dent Ford. Bangladesh's under

standing attitude towards Chi-

na's policy regarding its emer-

Bangladesh's existence, Sheikh

Mujib, built up, brick by brick,

the pattern of Bangladesh's ex-

ternal relationship. His moves

were aimed at achieving

Bangladesh's two primary for-

eign policy objectives — one Se-

curity and the other Develop-

ment. It is with this end in view

that he assiduously crafted

Bangladesh's bilateral, regional

opments in 1975 sadly inter-

vened to raise doubts about

form any more as a democratic

entity and as an effective State

actor in the Comity of Nations.

First, the declaration of

Bangladesh as a one party State

only brought home to observers

the immensity of its internal

political problems. Sheikh Mu-

jib's abandonment of the mul-

tiparty political system was a

desperate attempt to deal with a

fast deteriorating internal sce-

nario and not an act of political

faith in the newfangled set up

that was hastily put up. And

this hurt the international

credibility of Bangladesh. But

what shattered it was his and

Bangladesh's capacity to per-

However two internal devel-

and global linkages.

In the initial months of

gence had thus paid off.

He travelled to Algiers to at.

credentials.

During those early days of

employment.

and Bangladesh.

The withdrawal of the in-

'posterity will not forgive us'.

quagmire. After an uncertain period of killings and conspiracies, during which Bangladesh's international stock touched its nadir, General Ziaur Rahman succeeded in controlling the chaos, although all was not well within the cantonments. It never was, during his term of office and he himself were to fall a victim of a conspiracy hatched and brutally executed

by some uniformed officers. In spite of the problems he faced in the home front, President Ziaur Rahman succeeded in curving out an active role for Bangladesh in the international arena. The fact that he was able to hold elections, on the basis of a multi-party system and universal adult franchise enhanced the acceptability of his government. Without bringing about any basic change in the major thrusts of Bangabandhu's foreign policy, President Zia actively pursued objectives as set out in the initial days of Bangladesh, be it in bilateral, regional or multilateral fields.

After a period of initial tension, relations with India improved leading to a watersharing agreement of the Ganges. A number of bilateral issues with India did remain to be sorted out, as is not uncomErshad's regime lasted far too long and, in the process, as a British newspaper bemoaned, we became a nation used to, 'living with lies'.

For a long and agonising decade, his autocratic regime with a democratic façade stunted the growth of political institutions, and the country, one dares say, still feels its pinch. As an actor in the bilateral, regional and international field Bangladesh was of course tolerated and dealt with. as any independent nation on the global stage would be, but it was hardly taken seriously. Bangladesh did not and indeed could not escape the experience of a country with an autocratic government not having a popular support base. An autocratic ruler, who, for the lack of any accountability, can compromise the nation's interest to secure his own position, fails to achieve any long term good for

the country. Bangladesh, with its geographical location, geo-political situation, burgeoning population, low level of economic development, poverty and lack of natural resources needs to, for its own good, interact actively with the world at large For this it is essential that it quickly and correctly identifies its national interests and acts vigorously to safeguard and promote those. This is possible only within a democratic framework where issues can be discussed and debated both inside and outside the parliament and where the decision making authority, i. e., the government of the day, enjoys a modicum of

and forward-looking policies and politics. Thirdly, as a country we have no intractable problems, left over by history, either with our immediate neighbours or with any country of our region. We have therefore no need for a big defense budget. This should enable us to set aside money for development, proportionately greater than any other country of our region. In fact as the largest non-nuclear country of South-Asia we are in an enviable position in this re-

The above factors should lead us to three-fold broad objectives in our foreign policy. These are to consolidate our independence and sovereignty, to develop friendly bilateral, regional and international cooperation to accelerate economic and socio-political development and lastly, to cooperate with the international community in the promotion of peace, progress and freedom..

· Bangladesh was brought back to the democratic path in 1991 by the sheer force of a popular movement. A ruling clique which was immoral and corrupt was brought down without any lawlessness and bloodshed. The two major political parties of the country worked at tandem to achieve this. The country has seen two general elections since then, in the first of which the BNP won and in the second, the Awami League. It is not unlikely that at least for the foreseeable future the country will have these two political parties commanding the political horizon and be capable of forming governments of their own without having to take recourse to coalitions with smaller parties. For a nascent democracy this is a desirable scenario, for one has seen in countries with more experience in democratic practices such as India, the kind of compromises that at times are made to keep coalition governments in power. These kind of situations would have been too much for a fragile democracy such as ours to endure without hurting national interest.

BNP have been in power earlier, the Awami League in the initial days of Bangladesh and the BNP in the latter part of the seventies into the early eighties. We have seen that as far as the country's foreign relations are concerned, President Zia heading a BNP government, more or less picked up the thread where Bangabandhu had left it and pursued those effectively and vigorously suiting the needs of his time in office. In fact the last two post general elections period did not revéal any noteworthy divergence of views on foreign policy issues: In the beginning there were attempts by interested political quarters to portray the Awami League as being 'soft' on India and the BNP on Pakistan. However now that both the parties have taken their turn in being in power and have had to deal with different governments in both of these countries, that kind of labelling does no longer carry any serious conviction.

The Awami League and the

The practice of democracy. in a poor developing country

like Bangladesh, is likely to reveal an increasing convergence of view, as to what is perceived to be in our national interest. There can of course be disagreement on methods and details but it is hardly likely to be over substance. If that be so, the virtue of our having to develop bipartisan positions on major foreign policy issues should become self-evident. The behaviour pattern of

both our major political parties, while in power, with regard to bilateral, regional and global issues shows a remarkable identity of view. For instance both the parties have sought to resolve out standing issues with India, Tinbigha, in case of the BNP and the Ganges-water issue in case of the Awami League through mutual discussions based on same arguments and briefs. The attitude of both the parties towards, be it the trade imbalance with India, economic cooperation, the 'pushin' issue or border smuggling, hardly reveals any serious differences. This holds good for the entire gamut of our bilateral relations with other countries. For instance, both the parties attach a great deal of priority to our burgeoning relations with China. It is no coincidence that China was the first country that both Begum Zia and Sheikh Hasina visited after they assumed office as Prime Minis-

Both the governments attached the same priority to the building of a bridge over the Jamuna river and arranged for and allocated funds on a priority basis. In respect of Bangladesh's role in the regional or global arena, whether it is SAARC or the Commonwealth, the Nonaligned Movement or the Islamic Conference, participation in the UN peace keeping operations or the export of manpower, there is hardly any perceptible difference in the policies of these two parties. There is therefore no reason why the government of the day should not on an agreed basis take a bipartisan stance on various foreign policy issues. For instance, assured bipartisan positions on foreign investment in key sectors of our economy like, exploration contracts for gas, oil and other natural resources and power production, will not only reassure the foreign investors but at the same time will also enhance the bargaining power Bangladesh. The same can be said about our dealings with international financial institutions about financial reforms and structural adjustments.

In the present tense political climate of the country all these may appear to be pipe dreams. But we have seen time and again that both the parties have, in what they perceived as national interest, reconciled their differences on internal issues such as the change from the presidential to the parliamentary form of government and institution of caretaker government to supervise parliamentary elections. Bangladesh is a poor country trying to get on to the fast track of development. Bipartisan stand in our interactions with the outside world will enhance our international'credibility and esteem. will facilitate obtaining increased external assistance and investment and thus accelerate the process of our economic development.

Frankly Speaking...

by Faruq Choudhury

mon between two immediate neighbours, but the basis of a satisfactory working relation ship was laid. Relations with Bangladesh's other land neighbour, Myanmar improved and regional relationship reached such a degree of normalisation that President Zia was able to renew Bangladesh's call for regional cooperation, this time within the concrete framework of SAARC

Never before in the turbulent history of this region such a specific initiative for peace and cooperation had been undertaken. President Zia was able to bring Bangladesh's membership of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) into full play and improved our relations with the Islamic countries to the extent that he actively lent his good offices to end the Iran-Iraq conflict. Excellent bilateral relations with China

developed in a number of areas. International faith in Bangladesh was restored and it was elected a member of the Security Council of the United Nations by defeating a powerful contestant like Japan. President Zia visited a number of developed countries seeking investment and the response was positive. For instance the Belgian King visited Bangladesh accompanied by a large businessmen's delegation. But alas, the assassin's bullet struck again and President Zia was killed in Chittagong in May 1981. Inspite of the immensity of the tragedy, the fact that the constitution worked following President Zia's death and the Vice-President took over and held presidential elections, as laid down in it, was reassuring

both at home and abroad. The success that President Zia achieved in re-establishing the good image of Bangladesh abroad was undone, not so much by his tragic assassination, as it was by the military take over of power by General Ershad, from his elected successor. That, sadly, again destroyed the credibility of Bangladesh as a democratic state actor as Bangabandhu's killing had, only a few years

earlier. The agony of President

teaching of Islam. In fact, Mus

lim men are obliged to pay

eration of women, in all soci-

The goal of Islamic law is to

public confidence and support. Even in a society such as ours today where the wherewithal of a democratic society is not ideally present, the government has to act keeping an eye on the demands of the electoral process, and as a result is less likely to jeopardize national interest than would a dictator representing an armed or civilian oligarchy.

Bangladesh has had a democratic infrastructure since 1991, but we have so far miserably failed to create in this country a democratic polity. In spite of this failure on our part, the mere fact that since 1991 we have had representative governments in this country has helped us enormously in our international dealings. Just to pick up one area, that of our reations with our immediate neighbour India, we have been able to sort out a number of outstanding bilateral problems. The issue of the 'Tin bigha' corridor was resolved during the last BNP government. The present AL government has reached a long term Ganges water sharing agreement and has by signing the CHT peace treaty, succeeded in bringing back thousands of our tribal refugees who had to flee the country during President Ershad's regime.

Now that we have a democratic set up, we should bring into full play our inherent strength as a nation. The first of these is that we are a compact nation jelled by centuries of common historical experiences culminating in the baptism in fire of a war of liberation. Unlike many countries of our region and beyond, emerging out of colonial volk, who are still struggling to achieve a sense of nationhood or to create multinational states in their respective geographical boundaries, we are a nation, with a near homogeneous culture, who now happen to have a unique opportunity of creating a mod

ern and progressive state. Second, ours is a society largely devoid of castes and permanent classes and as such we have a great deal of social mobility conducive to healthy

tional telecommunication regu-

The users of frequencies

such as BTV, BB, BTTB, Civil

Aviation, Cellular 'phone com-

panies, satellite transmission

users, the armed forces and oth-

sponsibility of the official regu-

latory agency, and not the

lations all over the world.

OPINION

Of Kurds and PKK

Mahmut Kaleli

Since I am a Turkish and a Muslim. I felt that it is my duty to clear something about the Kurdish people living in my country and the prevailing ter-

As it is known from the print and electronic media, recently the relationship between Turkey and Syria in once again heated up because of terrorism. The Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz gave final warning to Damascus (6.10.1998) to

stop their support to PKK. Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was formed by different nationals assumably to split Turkey. As the Turkish officials have several times pointed out, this PKK is supported by some foreign forces mainly Greece and Syria. Though Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bouezhad has dismissed. yet Turkish officials say that PKK guerillas live in northern part of Syria and Bekaa Valley of Lebanon which they consider as their safe havens. When they attack any place they forcibly take some people to join them and be militants like them. This is how they increase in number.

There are lots of Kurdish people living in Turkey as well as in Syria and Iraq. So far it concerns my country we, the Turkish, are having very good relations with the Kurdish. Indeed there is no difference between a Turkish and a Kurdish, both are using the same identity. When the Turkish people led by the great leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk got independence, they first made constitutional laws, the first of which is that Turkey is a sovereign and undivided country. Each an every individual of the country has the same rights. A Kurdish and a Turkish have the same rights. A Kurdish can be a President. The former President Turgut Ozal (the 8th President of Turkey) was a Kurdish. What I want to point out is that there is no difference between the Turkish and the Kurdish. As a matter of fact I feel little bit guilty to write separate words

like Kurdish and Turkish. It is an irony that all the foreign news agencies including BBC, CNN and Reuters report in such a way that anyone who reads or listens that will think that the Kurdish and the Turk-

ish kill each other. Even my classmates in the Dhaka University think that we, the Turkish have very hostile relations with the Kurdish, I can dare to say that these news agencies which are not at all neutral are very successful and clever in their missions.

As many Bangladeshis blame India as being behind every disaster that happens to Bangladesh, the Arab League also accuses Israel of being behind these recent terrors in Turkey. General Ahmed Bin Hilli, deputy secretary-general of the Arab League has already said: "Israel is behind the crisis. It benefits from such a tense atmosphere in implementing its aggressive policies in Arab land and stalling peace." Arab League accuses Turkey of having a good relation with Israel as well. Syria had pointed at Turkey's growing military links with Israel. Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri said in Beirut newspaper An Nahar: "The Turkish threats are nothing but a primary result of the Turkish-Israeli strategic alliance."

Turkey is not the only Muslim country, which has a relation with Israel. And also the PKK has been indulging terrorism in the country for the last 14 years which had so far killed some 29,000 people but our relations with Israel have been set

up just for the last few years. As to be neutral I can even affirm the Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's statement that Israel had no part in the crises between Syria and Turkey. Instead of accusing Israel the Arab League should try to dissuade Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad from helping the PKK. As I am trying to point out, the way the Arabs seek peaceful end to Turkey-Syria row is very

wrong and it will not help. As long as egoism, selfishness among leaders go on in the Muslim countries, instead of supporting and loving each other, we, the Muslims will not develop, as we should. I wish all these disputes should be solved by diplomatic negotiations so that there must not be any military action needed. No country

can derive benefit out of ten-The writer is a Turkish student studying at Dhaka University.

To the Editor ...

Doesn't make any sense

Sir, As per a decision taken up by the Bangladesh Homeopathy Board, students are to sit for the yearly final examination for the DHMS course in mid-November 1998, after availing themselves of classes for only four months in one session. am a second-year student of the Bangladesh Homeopathic Medical College, Dhaka. Our class started on the 31st of May, 1998. After attending classes for a period of 2 months and three weeks only, we had to appear in the Test Examination at the end of August, 1998. From

the end of August up to the first

week of October, we did not have

any more classes due to flood

and other reasons.

Nevertheless, we had to fill out our examination form for the Board examination within 24th of September. The authority of the college again resumed classes from 7th of October, which is scheduled to continue up to mid-November. Therefore, students are to sit for the final examination after attending classes for a total of four months period. According the rule of the Homeopathy Board, there should be nine to ten months of classes in one session before the yearly final examination. Instead of following

this rule, participation in an

yearly final examination after only four months of classes do not make any sense considering homeopathy as a specialised education of medical therapeu-

Mir Mostafa Kamal House:476, Road:32 New DOHS, Mohakhali Dhaka-1206.

"Tragic"

Sir, The editorial, "Tragic" of October 24, 1998 was timely. I have no knowledge of the background of this tragic incident. However, I would like to make some comments.

It was rightly pointed out that this case must be followed through. I agree with that. In most cases, there is a collusion between corrupt politicians/strongmen and ignorant religious agents. In this case also one would probably find such an alliance.

It was written: "..... a rare demonstration of courage and committment to love. ... took insecticide and died in tandem...".

Committing suicide is not a sign of courage hence such action should not be praised. Taking any life is a major sin and should be taken as

such. It is needed to speak up

against ill treatment of women,

children and the poor. Dowry

system is totally against the

dowry (Mehr). This is an obligatory (Fard) duty in Islam. So is treating women kindly. The message of Islam is a formula for the lib-

eties at all times.

bring about justice, and honesty in society, modesty, piety and personal accountability. I hope and pray to Allah (Subhana-wa-taala) that the

people who use Islamic law to further their personal desire be brought to justice.

Aziz Ul Huq Houston, Texas, USA

Frequency

management Sir. With reference to the press reports on the detection

and prosecution of illegal radio wireless transmissions, the usual practice is that in each country the allocation and monitoring of wireless frequencies are carried out by a national autonomous agency, guided by UN international regulations, as agreed upon by the UN member Administrations (including Bangladesh). The ITU is the specialised UN agency dealing with interna-

ers are to use the frequencies allocated to them officially (license to operate). Monitoring and prosecution are the re-

users, who cannot act as the regulators. Bangladesh should be having a Frequency Allocation or Wireless Board to look into this routine work at the national level, working outside the control of BTTB, a user. (There is also an independent Broadcasting Authority in other countries to control all types of broadcasting including private broadcasts, and issue licenses. Its function is different from that of the wireless board). The Ministry of Communication should be conversant with the

rules and regulations, the ap-

plications, and the practices.

In view of the recent incident. The Monitoring Cell of the autonomous agency has to be strengthened, with technical guidance from ITU. The users may also assist and cooperate.

A Zabr Dhaka