Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Project Issues

Dhaka, Friday, November 13, 1998

It is a known fact that in terms of preparing and designing projects, utilising or absorbing external assistance and implementing projects our trackrecord has been anything but satisfactory. But to re-discover the poor performance on a global scale of comparison and find our output quantified in tell-tale mathematical terms can be a shocking eye-opener — flies thrown on the face, so to speak.

An in-depth World Bank review under the picturesque title "Demystifying A Process: The Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) in Bangladesh' has made three jolting deductions: (a) WB projects are being implemented by us at 40 per cent lower efficiency notch than the global average; (b) disbursement ratio for Bangladesh throughout the eighties kept to 11 per cent but improved to 17.3 per cent in FY '96 which nevertheless is still 1.5 per cent lower than the world average; and (c) Bangladesh requires over 50 per cent more calendar time than other countries "to take a project from its conception to World Bank's Board approval."

Unmet physical targets, mid-term evaluation leading to wholesale or partial jettisoning of projects, project carry-overs crowding out new development schemes have routinely made us pinpoint the pitfalls in the system. While suggested remedial recipes are issued at regular intervals from brainstorming sessions at the NEC or via seminars organised by economists and policy-planners, decisive interventions at the government or parliamentary committee levels have been malignantly lacking. Administrative logjam at the top, dearth of coordination between line ministries, and lack of delegation of power to the project implementation machinery have often been compounded by political interferences getting the better of economic merits of projects. Unless we get our basics right, there is no way we can turn a corner in terms of project selection, negotiation and execution. It is necessary to infuse the bureaucracy with a no-nonsense approach exemplified at the top by subordinating constituency-nurturing to development considerations for the sake of the whole country.

One most important factor for a turn-around would be to improve our negotiating skill drawing on the talent in the private sector.

At one point in time our cumulative pipeline bulge stood at 5 billion US dollars, perhaps a record hump among the developing countries. If some other countries could carry their point with the World Bank to improve the disbursement ratio, surely we can, too.

Please Heed the Arsenic Threat

While politics is keeping our attention rivetted to the undoing of a public meeting and a 60-hour continuous national standstill and such other topics, the world is being told about what indeed is Bangladesh's greatest challenge at the moment. The challenge is not altogether unknown to the Bangladesh government and it is rather familiar to the Bangladesh press. But neither has so far treated the arsenic threat to this nation's health and life as any great national problem. In fact, there has been nothing in the Bangladesh press to compare with the great New York Times' coverage of it. The Times leads off on the front page of its November 10 issue with a story headlined: "New Bangladesh Disaster: Wells that Pump Poison,' and devotes a full inside page to a special report on the phenomenon, quoting world authorities and illustrating the data by photographs from Bangladesh. The Bangladesh government, on its part, has failed to match, in terms of initiative and urgent action and appropriate-size fund allocation. But the World Bank has given only 32 million dollars to fight the danger.

Why this when at least 20 million people in 43 out of the total 64 districts are already drinking every day of their life water heavily polluted with arsenic? And specially when the contamination area keeps spreading, inexorably? No other problem affecting this nation is as big and as bad as this arsenic threat. It is going to be a year that certain NGOs got to the problem area and started caring for the afflicted ones. They also brought down experts from Calcutta to have a first-hand reading of our situation. A scientific collaboration on in-

vestigations ensued.

Surface and recycled water seems to be the answer. How will people get it? This will entail gigantic projects costing billions of Taka. More important, this will take time. Even if the government gets down to business in all earnestness, perhaps there is no saving tens of thousands. We haven't been on a worse patch. Ever. O leaders of our citizens, please heed.

Not a Feminine Fisticuff

This is one politically tinged rumpus which might not evoke any supportive statement from either of the two major parties in national politics for what their respective girl student wings did to stage it at the Badrunnesa Girls' College Hostel on Tuesday night. It was a thoroughly apolitical bone of contention born of an attempted increase in the food charge by the BCL dining hall management body which the JCD inmates of the dormitory regarded as an imposition on their shoe-string personal budgets. But admittedly because of the highly divided state of student politics in Badrunnesa College Hostel even a purely pecuniary matter could prove to be a red rug to the bull.

Seen through a normal frame of mind there was nothing particularly wrong in asking for a higher food charge provided of course this was justified by prices, but at the same time these should have been a genuine effort on the part of the hostel management to accommodate any differing view over the

rate of increase.

True, a student wing could try to capitalise on an issue like this to steal a popularity march over its rival on the campus. Even allowing for that, we do not see how such a matter that could boil over in a way that produced slanging matches between girls' cracker-bursting and outsider intrusion. One time too many, if we are to recall the clashes that had taken place at other women's colleges in the city not long ago. The college authorities in consultation with political parties better take guard against this tendentious degeneration of civility and order in the educational institutions devoted to grooming future mothers of the country.

"We Shall Overcome"

It is essential that government policies facilitate such transition in a manner that benefits the poor and does not simply replace subsistence-related production risks with new market and policy failure risks which may be even more devastating to the poor.

women in the hinterland of Bogra. Rangpur and Dinajpur. I was struck by the ingenuity with which they were moving on. A political party calls a 'hartal' and the road is barriout of subsistence food production to a diversified production caded. Or, there may be factional strife among local power system responding to marketholders. The highways and demand. As I talked to them, I connecting roads are blocked was exhilarated as also disand they become hostages. Once picked, they cannot preserve Why? Let me share with you what I heard from them and re-

live the experience. I met a group of farmers in a village in Chirir Bandar thana in Dinaipur district. They are small farmers, their holdings ranging from 1/2 to 3 acres. They grow late tomato immediately after harvesting transplanted Aman. When they pick the out-of-season tomatoes in February/March, there is strong demand for the produce and almost non-existent supply. Naturally the product fetches reasonably high price both in the local market town and beyond, as far as the capital city. Bangabandhu Bridge over Jamuna has opened up a new horizon of hope for them. Buyers from Dhaka can come with

RECENTLY I had a unique learning experience. My

Leachers have been small

farmers and resource-poor

and at much less time. What they have been doing for the last 2-3 years, is to bring their product at a common collection centre in the village market on a scheduled day. The road net-work is excellent. Buyers from Dinajpur-Rangpur and Dhaka come and purchase.

their trucks much more easily

One farmer told me that he could get around 25,000 taka from an acre under tomato. But they have a problem. If for some reason, the buyers cannot come or the trucks cannot ply on the road they have to dispose off their produce or simply give it away. And it happens off and

the tomatoes. So they sell some at whatever price they can get and give away the rest to friends

and relatives. I heard a similar story in Mithapukur thana in Rangpur. was travelling from Mithapukur thana centre to Rangpur town. On the way I found heaps of 'Potol' by the roadside. I stopped and talked with the growers assembled there. A relatively young farmer-seller spoke up. He grows six kinds of vegetables in a year on a tiny patch of 50 decimals. Normally the buyers come from town and they sell. The price at the harvest-time is much lower than a month later. But they cannot hold on. They need the cash for sheer survival. If the buyers do not come somehow, they are devastated. On that day they were waiting. The road was empty except for, may be, a stray government transport. I did not have to wait long to find out why. The road was barricaded with hooligans flexing their muscles. I do not blame them. They were only carrying out orders of their 'godfathers' and they were paid.

Next day, I was in a rather remote village in Bogra. Two middle-aged women, Amena and Ayesha are both members of the village-samity of an NGO. They have invested in household poultry enterprises with

selves but at least for the gen-

BTV, the poor thing!

"neutral citizen", in response to

the recent programmes viewed

on BTV. Surely it is, as it always

owned organisation, yet the ex-

ploitation of this particular

media has not been made more

the new generation about poli-

tics. If the truth is really worthy

enough (the one they are talking

about), then it will be known

anyway. It does not need the

help of alluring songs and pro-

grammes in order to be known

BBC and CNN

programmes

questing to telecast BBC and

CNN programme by Mr O.H.

Kabir, in the DS dated October

requesting to the authority con-

cerned to telecast BBC and CNN

programme on BTV, especially

The great BR

utilise the services of our Rail-

way for visiting one or two

Sir. May I request our PM to

Supporting him I am also

Sir, I have read the letter re-

BTV is trying to brainwash

has been, a government

efficiently ever before!

and hence, believed.

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Arefeen Syed

7, 1998.

Shirin

in the morning.

5/7, Baily Square,

Sir. This is as a genuine

eral people stop these hartals!

Shehna F. Mulk.

New D.O.H.S.

Dhaka.

micro-credit from the Samity. First year they did well. They cleared off their debt with the sale-proceeds of eggs and live chicken and still had some profit. Next year they took another loan and increased the number of chicken to be reared. And misfortune struck. There was an epidemic of severe disease. They did not know what to

One of their husbands tried to reach the government poultry farm at the district town for medicine and advice. But he was

and anyway the shelf-life is very short. How can they circumvent the problem? Again, the NGO they belong to comes to their assistance. The NGO is able to import from across the border digestible vaccines which lasts for a month. So Ayesha and Amena are full of hope once again. Resilient and organized as they are, they bounce back. The stories that I have told so far, what do they lead up to?

Let us turn to the fast-growing countries in Asia and analyze their, transformation pro-



strike. By the time he could

come back with the required

medicine, 70 per cent of the

chicken were dead. Ayesha and

Amena suffered almost total

loss. But they did not give up.

Depriving themselves and their

children, they still kept up with

the repayment schedule. Their

younger members of the Samity

has been trained by the NGO as

a bare-foot poultry doctor. The

problem is availability of vac-

cines and medicines. The vac-

cines for Newcastle disease are

more often than not without

any efficacy. Those have not

been preserved in cool chamber.

places. I cannot think of any

Meanwhile one of the

Samity gave them fresh loan.

They are going to start again.

A Z M Obaidullah Khan cesses at earlier stages. As economies grow, subsistence food-production, though still important for household foodsecurity gradually but definitely yields to a market-oriented diversified productionsystem. The process of diversification from staple-food pro-

> etary shift in food-demand pat-The diversification in agricultural production in Asia can be seen at the aggregate level by the pattern of production growth in cereals compared to other high-value crops and

> duction is triggered by techno-

logical change, by improved ru-

ral-urban infrastructure and

with rapid urbanization, di-

products. As Delgado and Siamwalla point out, for all Asian countries, livestock production grew at 6.4 percent per year, and production of vegetables fruits and nuts at 4.4 percent, whereas cereal production increased at 2.7 per cent annually during 1973-96.

The pace of such change has been much slower in South Asia compared to South-east Asia. For Bangladesh, such a transition is only incipient, although perceptible at formers' fields.

The problems are : limited investment on education and technology-access of women and men frames to make crop/product choice decisions and move relatively freely between crops and other enterprises, the lack of development of rural finance system at the grassroots level particularly since such diversification requires lumpy cash input a few times a year; the uncertainty of secure property rights or the absence of land-market; inadequate investment for improving general transport, communications and market infrastructure; and even more limited support-services, including health, sanitation and nutrition, to transform the incomebenefit from commercialization into broaden human welfare benefits.

Further, it is essential that government policies facilitate such transition in a manner that benefits the poor and does not simply replace subsistencerelated production risks with new market and policy failure risks which may be even more devastating to the poor. Impor-

tant policy-goals should include avoidance of trade-stocks and sequencing of input and output market reform (Peter Hazel and Mark Rosegrant).

Having said that I am more troubled than ever before. Yes, the producers are ready and resilient. But there is a big 'if', a fundamental constraint. How can such policy-choices at macro-level and effective participation at micro-level take place in a political culture of intolerance at its best and undisguised violence at its worst? When the silent majority of the people are hostages to musclebound power game on both sides of the aisle all the economic rhetoric about pro-growth macro-economic and trade policies, liberalized and competitive domestic market and high domestic savings rate complemented by private and foreign capital inflows sound hollow. Human development, critical investments in health, education and nutrition for all people turn out to be hypocritical devises to keep the dominator-dominated structural predisposition unchanged.

This fundamental political problem has been recognized but swept under the carpet for fear of high cost of social disruption. So, I do not place my hopes at the higher echelons of social and political hierarchy. place my hope in the deepest sense with the tomato-farmers in Chirirbandar, or the women entrepreneurs in Bogra who will continue their struggle in the expectation that life will improve for their off-spring.

As I reminisce in a state of siege for sixty hours, I hum the tune of my long-past younger

We shall overcome! We shall overcome someday!

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

The wrong shepherds

Sir. For the millionth time. the people of Bangladesh have experienced the heavenly HAR-TAL. Why are our politicians to obsessed with HARTAL? What good do they seek to accomplish by calling HARTAL, month after month, year after year, and arguably, decade after decade? For decades every single political party has been calling HARTAL to protest any government misdeed.

As a democratic (!?) society, we do have the right to protest anything and everything that is unjust. Unfortunately, our politicians are taking advantage of such democracy, and they are giving democracy a bad name as well. What good will

Every time they call for this absurd event, the country is losing millions of dollars. I suppose that, maybe there is a good reason behind it, and maybe my brain cannot fathom the true meaning of this event.

calling HARTAL for every single reason, regardless of its merit, bring to the society? Every time they call for this absurd event, the country is losing millions of dollars. I suppose that, maybe there is a good reason behind it, and maybe my brain cannot fathom the true meaning of this event.

I sure would appreciate if some intellectual of our country would dare to take few of his/her precious moments and answer this question. When the country is sinking under enormous international debt, when more than one hundred million people are living hand to mouth, when we are in grave need of increasing our GDP. when we need to educate millions of young souls, when we need to provide people with the minimal means of shelter, our WISE and ever CARING politicians are stopping the wheel of production by calling HARTAL. Ah, how ironic it is that they were supposed to provide us with everything they are looting from us, yet no one, especially, the young generation, who were supposed have new visions, new thoughts and so forth are following these shallow minded, selfish, moral lacking politicians and their rusty, invalid, pathetic way of life! What is wrong with our young generation? And by young generation, I mean us who were born after the War of

Independence. Why are some of us following the politicians as sheep follows the shepherd?

Mofazzal Hossain Naples, Florida.

Can we afford political unrest?

Sir, We live in a Third World country. The recent floodhas done much damage adding to the misery of our people, and we are struggling to come out of the clutches of these problems.

On the eve of the twentyfirst century, we are struggling to keep up with the rest of the world. We still have a long way to go. In this situation, can we afford hartals and other political disturbances? Is this the time for all this? Isn't there a way to solve the political problems peacefully, or is it too much to ask? We all know the effects of such disturbances on each and every sector of our

economy . My appeal to the opposition is that please, we have had enough! Maybe not for your-

better idea than this to draw the attention of any responsible person associated with our Railway Department. They are all on leave! Otherwise, a person with slightest sense of duty could see what mismanagement and senselessness in going around.

The railway stations are filthy and diseased, the trains are filled up with beggars, vendors and every else other than railway employees. All time tables are dead. Trains often stop nowhere in the middle. The free-ride passengers and the smugglers have comfortable entry and exit. The entire journey is nothing but an agony.

Introduction of a few intercity trains and computerisation of ticket system is meaningless unless the entire system is overhauled. With the increase of passengers freight etc., there is no reason why railway cannot be an efficient, modern transport system in Bangladesh.

I guess the answer is — it is nobody's baby.

Tanzia Choudhury

Where have all the women speakers

gone? Sir, This is about the seminar "New Horizon in the Tele Media", which I attended and found very interesting indeed. I would like to thank Mr Anam and other speakers: Dr Anisur Rahman, Md Jahangir, Mr Afzal Hossain and Mr Jewel Aich for coming to discuss several issues on the media. It surely has helped us share our frustration over the discussion

on our electronic media. Now, I have one great concern. While having these types of seminars it is important to see that among the speakers. there usually are some "women". But among the five speakers during this seminar, none was a woman. What was the reason behind it? Is it that we don't want women to come as speakers or is it that women usually don't show interest to come and play a dominant role

during seminars where they would face questions? Where so much is talked about "women's role", "violence against "women headed households", "women's movement", etc., I felt sorry that we did not have a single woman to be in this seminar as a speaker!

Moushumi Nasser Action Aid Bangladesh Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Power failure at hospitals

Sir, Recently I went to the Holy Family Hospital to visit a patient who has been there for some time. He was complaining that during the DESA power failure the patients suffer a lot as the hospital does not have a generator to take carerof such situations. Therefore I draw the attention of the hospital authorities to arrange for a generator to give relief to the patients who are as it is suffering from different ailments.

A Visitor Dhaka

"Unloading loadshedding?"

Sir, The aforementioned article appearing in the DS (10.9.98) drew my attention. Some remarks made in the article need to be explained fur-

First, I quote "What goes under the euphemism of loadshedding is in fact a huge theft of power. . . ". Question is: who is the thief and where is the power to be stolen? There's no adequate power around to steal The installed power of BPDB is around 3119MW and the achievable power depends on the number of units in operation. This does in no way exceed 1800MW or so. There is the deficit. Added to the misery is the recent shut down of 110MW unit in Khulna and 210MW in Raujan, one can see clearly that there's no enough power to

I quote again " .. the actual amount of the loadshedding in DESA area is about 400MW

freely, make provocative

statements openly and fre-

quently, write in newspapers

without any hindrance, say

whatever they like in Parlia-

daily" - this is completely wrong. This amount of loadshedding occurs for the whole country, which is not under the jurisdiction of DESA, not just in Dhaka alone.

Recall that DESA is Dhaka Electric Supply Authority and is responsible for only the Dhaka city and some adjoining

Quoting "Two rates of tariff for domestic consumers for peak and off-peak hours may be introduced." You see, it is the domestic users who define the peak hour. It is the numerous residents who, when they switch on millions of lights and fans, make the peak load. Isn't it a mockery to charge them with peak and off-peak rates? How can one expect that a huge number of residents will not switch their appliances on and go for a complete black-out? By the way, do those IR students know the extra cost involved in replacing the whole domestic meters with digital one that counts time to measure peak

Nevertheless the recommendations put forward by the writers are worth praising. The very name of the article is somewhat vague. Of course it is a personal choice. The definition of loadshedding given at the start of the article is a very good one.

Farseem M Mohammedy Dept of EEE, BUET

and off-peak power?

What's the point?

Sir, When Mr Shailesh Kumar traces the origins of the psyche of communalism in the subcontinent in his book "History of Communal Riots", he is totally at tune with what the common people understand by it. It is like late Mrs Gandhis' exuberance on one of Mr Md Rafi's songs when she eulogised "I am certain, the whole Indian nation has sung this song along

with the singer. But alas, shall we not try to look into something which is much deeper but lies in the shade? What sense is there of somebody's belonging to the religious majority or minority, if he does not have education, job,

confessed killers were rewarded

by being given diplomatic

postings. As recently as Feb

1996. Khaleda Zia allowed for

mer Col Rashid to contest a seat

on a BNP ticket and had that

parliament convened, he would

have played a prominent role in

the BNP. Since 1996, while the

BNP has not officially opposed

the trial, there have been

number of instances where se-

toilet, security and a house? We live in a society where more than 20 million people have no defined toilet, where about the same number goes without a job and have no access to safe drinking water. More than 10 million men and women pass their nights on berry-dams, platforms, by drains, pipes, in abandoned wagons, etc. Everyday more and more people are being beaten and exploited by the police. Millions are inhalling black smoke sitting in obsolete transports moving in ant's pace due to unimaginable traffic jam.

On a prima facie basis it appears that since there is an overwhelming majority of one religion, they may be in command and may do otherwise with the minority. But actually is that so? How many were killed in the harids of correligionists in 1971? How many have become poor due to exploitation at the hands of coreligionists? How many files in government offices have been impeded for graft money? Is it reasonable to think or is it on record that Rahman has exploited, tortured, shot, insulted or killed only Dilip and not Karim or Israfil in his role of businessman, politician, official, police or terrorist?

So what is the point in believing strongly that it is the difference in religion that is the core of communalism?

Iftekhar Hamid 29, Nawabpur

Dhaka.

Agreement, at last

Sir. The world waited with baited breath. At last after nine days of marathon session. agreement was achieved between the Israel and the Palestinian authorities in Wye River, Maryland, USA.

Yet, on deep reflection and in the historical perspective of the Palestine issue, it has to be said that the Palestinian authority has been squeezed and bludgeoned into accepting less than what they expected and much less than what is legitimately theirs. Once again Israeli stubbornness has paid dividends it always did in the past. Security guarantees have been procured ironically from those who are under occupation and whose land has been forcibly taken away from them, and who are subjected to constant insecurity. Even more ironically, the ancestral owners of the land are supposed to feel grateful that they have been given another 14.2 per cent of their own land. What a great victory of justice and fairplay!

Are the displaced Palestinians expected to celebrate this victory? Is this sufficient incentive for them to remain grateful to Israel and the international community? What a strange international order has come to pass when the lone super-power finds itself helpless to extract justice and reciprocity from a tiny but intransigent State. And the collective will of the member-states of the UN is ignored with unconcealed con-

Dr M Zakir Husain 4/4/1-b, Block-A, Lalmatia, Dhaka-1207

Good work, champs!

Sir, I am very happy that the South African cricket team has won the Wills World Cup cricket. After many years the South African team has won such an international victory and as a supporter of SA, I express my profound rejoice at their victory. I hope that the team emerges as a very formidable contender in the World Cup '99.

"Democracy demands ..."

I write with reference to the article, "Democracy demands ..", in the 11 Nov issue of The Daily Star. Much as I enjoy the paper, I must disagree with the basic and contentious premise of the article that the government is to be held responsible for the opposition's calling of he 60-hour hartal. In its editorial on 10 Nov.

demned the use of hartals no matter what the reason (in fact, the time may have arrived for Bangladesh's lawmakers to consider placing legal barriers to the indiscriminate use of this ugly political weapon). In your article of 11 Nov. however, you have created grounds for justifying the calling of the hartal by the opposition BNP. The analysis of the events of 7 November leads to, what appears to me, a foregone conclusion of The Daily Star's — the government and the AL are oppressing the BNP. The DS should appreciate that this cannot be proved in a day or two and presented to the public as a

The Daily Star has rightly con-

Yes, it is possible that the AL provoked the situation, but it is also equally possible (as appears to many an observer) that the BNP engineered the crisis. as they have done on quite a few previous occasions. By trying to apportion blame for the events of 7 November so soon after the event, is The Daily Star not treading on dangerous ground? Would it not be more prudent to arrive at such serious conclusions after a more thorough examination of what happened on the 7th?

You have written that "the cause of the BNP's current hartal is the aggressive manner in which the AL has been dealing with the opposition," that the government is oppressing the opposition, and that the treatment of the opposition is "beyond the acceptable limits of democracy". I am afraid these statements are neither objective or scientific in that they cannot be categorically proved in this case. If anything, the government and the AL are per-

Sir, I was reading the commentary by Mahfuz Anam on 11th November under the heading "Democracy demands that Govt treat Opposition better". I would like to include something that Mr Mahfuz has failed to notice when he said, "Whatever President Zia's other achievements may be, he will be very harshly judged for this unconscionable compromise with killers." History repeats itself. It was

even more painful when our father of the nation compro-

ceived by many to have performed transparently and openly in government, much more so than the predecessor BNP regime.

tion has been extremely aggressive on the streets, and elements of their party workers have not missed the opportunity to behave in a violent and criminal manner, forcing the authorities, rightly, to arrest and bring charges against some of their BNP leaders move about

ment (whenever they do bother to attend) - so how does one make a sweeping statement that the opposition is being oppressed. This begins to sound like what one has been hearing for over two decades, that the AL are by nature oppressive and fascist, and I am sure that the DS does not belong to that mised with the killers of the

Liberation War. Under the shield of "shadharon khoma" I have seen the killers of '71 walk freely just as Col. Rashid or Col. Farouque did. At least Hasina could use her power to bring her father's killers to trial but there remains millions of Bangladeshis who do not have the ability to do so because of that 'shadharon khoma' (General Amnesty).

Moshtaque Yusuf

school of thought. The other matter concerns the BNP's sympathies for those Further, the BNP in opposi-

involved in the killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It is well known that the BNP has either within its own rank and file, or is allied to, individuals and parties who openly justify the brutal killings of 1975. As clearly written by the DS, no government since 1975 ever bothered to even pay lip service to a trial of those involved in the killings, in fact, the self

nior BNP leaders have made very controversial and provocative remarks. As reported by a leading En glish daily on 6 November Khaleda Zia made a statement

that it was because of Ziaur Rahman that the country gained independence (there was no mention of Sheikh Mujib, and she called AL leaders "cowards" for crossing over to India) and because of the events of 1972-75, the "changeover in 1975 became inevitable". These kinds of remarks are viewed as somehow justifying the events of August 1975 and are further perceived as proof of the BNP's aversion to the trial and verdict on Sheikh Mujib's assassination. Which is why many antic-

> to call for hartals after the verdicts of 8 November. Given these facts, it is difficult to arrive at conclusions such as those drawn up by the DS regarding the oppression of the BNP or that the present hartal has no bearing on the ver-

dicts of 8 November.

ipated that there would be trou-

ble at the BNP's meet on 7

November and it would be used

A Ahmed

Adib Reza Paribagh House Dhaka-1000.

tempt.