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Probe or Hoax?

THE probe committee to look into alleged police excesses at Bijoynagar during the hartal hours on Tuesday comes as nothing short of a cruel joke. With its terms of reference excluding allegations of police assault on opposition MPs and some journalists there are apprehensions that the one-man committee could end up providing a myopic view of the whole episode. What it amounts to, in our views, is a disrespect shown to the rights of the MPs and the journalists. Photographs and reports carried by the leading dailies on police excesses were enough evidence of the misdeeds to infuriate the conscious section of the society and the authors of the probe committee had to only take note of it. At best, it can be construed as the home ministry's naivete, and at worst, hypocrisy. Unless the home minister, who was prompt to regret the incident and promise investigation into the matter, immediately redresses the situation the probe body could fail to produce any useful result.

Were not the photographs of police personnel tugging at the hapless BNP activist's saree and beating up opposition MPs which were carried in the newspapers good enough leads to identify the perpetrators and proceed legally against them? The government's role in this regard smacks of a ruse to let the matter drag until the initial furore dies down and the episode heads for the oblivion. The terms of reference should be immediately revised, enlarged with the prove committee taking into account what the BNP MPs, the journalists, and the humiliated woman have to say. We suggested interviews with the victims. We expect a development in this direction sooner than later.

At the same time, we reject the self-serving and propagandist explanations given by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Wednesday. It is more of a ludicrous effort to save their skin than anything else. Do they want us to believe that a single woman could be such a threat to law and order that she had to be swooped upon in that ugly manner? We feel the police went too far and their attempt at justifying their acts only go to prove it. Apology from the police chief and also severe punishment for those who assaulted the MPs, journalists, and humiliated the lady activist can only make amends, no more no less.

An Excellent Gesture

WE are impressed. It augurs so well for the country. At the JCD organised Freshers' Reception in Sir Salimullah Medical College on Wednesday Chief Guest Begum Khaleda Zia was gracefully presented with a bouquet. By whom? By none other than the BCL unit leadership walking up the steps to the podium and doing it to the clapping appreciation of everybody present. That one gesture of courtesy extended to the leader of the opposition by the unit leaders of the ruling party's student wing not only warmed all hearts but also raised the image of those who made it. The immediate gainer is Sir Salimullah Medical College but there is so much in it for other educational institutions to benefit by. They should build on this pioneering trend in inter-party goodwill.

Much more than that, we think the BCL unit leadership at Sir Salimullah Medical College has set an example that is eminently worthy of emulation by the ruling party chief. By the same token, in an inversely proportional situation, it is expected that such a goodwill gesture by any JCD unit would receive a similar welcoming nod from the leader of the opposition. But, for the present, it is the ruling party which needs to travel the extra mile on the goodwill journey.

If even a fraction of the courtesy that the BCL leaders have exemplified at the medical college function would start being shown by the ruling party and the opposition in their respective attitudes, use of language and behaviour towards each other then perhaps the situation will be on the mend to the great relief of the electorate. Their differences are not so much on issues but it is the total lack of grace they exude to one another in their utterly embittered relationship that has been the bane of national politics today. Can a poor country like Bangladesh afford the luxury of such confrontational eye-balling of each other when burning issues need focused attention to be resolved?

Our Photojournalists

POLICE soup against the photo journalists during last Tuesday's *hartal* was a grossviolation of the right of the press. People in uniform have once again proved that our roughneck days are not yet over. Like our politicians, who apparently know the price of everything and value of nothing, the law enforcement personnel have showed their totalitarian attitude to the press. But this arrogance against the press couldn't stop the camera-carrying squad from performing their duty. Although the atmosphere was full of fear, and some of them were hurt in the process, they won the battle holding on to the right to disseminate information. The camera crew from different dailies deserve appreciation and we salute them for their professional contribution.

This, however, was not the first incident that members of the press became target of police excess. Keeping the flag of press freedom fluttering by journalists — especially the photo journalists — of Bangladesh dates back to our pre-independence period. Their contribution during our War of Liberation was nothing short of fighting the war side by side with the freedom fighters. The post-liberation period should have provided an atmosphere for the press people to carry out their obligation to the people without fear and farvour. But the people in uniform, under every regime, time to time, obstructed the journalistic endeavour in myriad ways. Unfriendly attitude to on-duty journalists during Ershad's autocracy, shameful Press Club and Matia Chowdhury episodes during Khaleda administration are well recorded. The latest hostility under Hasina government, adding salt to the injury, is simply unwelcome.

It is imperative that the establishment should not pose any threat to the inalienable right of the journalists to act freely.

Foreign Direct Investment in Bangladesh

The country, ofcourse, should, continue to attract FDI through pursuance of pragmatic policies. But lest we forget that the demand for FDI originates within the framework of our chartered socio-economic development plan. We should always, take serious note of the downside risk while hunting for FDI.

Beneath the Surface

by Abdul Bayes

LIKE many other countries of similar socio-economic characteristics, Bangladesh had been hastily hunting for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), so to say.. To this effect, the country has already opened up its economy through placing in a plethora of liberalized polices of trade and investment and also making investment related procedures simpler and attractive to investors. Inflows of FDI's import positive impacts on recipient economies in terms of technology transfer to individual firms and spill-over effects on wider economy, balance of payment (BOP) improvement through investment funds, increased savings, investment, employment etc. The negative impacts of FDIs should, nevertheless, be neglected. For example, BOP could be adversely affected following increased imports of inputs, payments of dividends and royalties abroad. Again, there could be discouragement of home-spun technical know-how, capital intensiveness of investment could cause unemployment and fear of financial and currency speculation could run high. However, proper selectivity and strategic approaches — keeping in view the chartered national policy of socio-economic interest — would go a long way in outweighing those negative impacts. *En passant*, one needs to recall that foreign private capital inflows into Bangladesh have taken three forms: FDI, portfolio investment and foreign currency loans (supplier's credit or loan). Out of these three elements only FDI could be said to be above speculative spree and relatively for long term.

The most pertinent question is: despite the hectic hunts for FDI how much have actually happened in terms of FDI inflows into Bangladesh? Statistics on FDIs have allegedly been hazy mostly lying at the hegemony of government organisations. But liberalisation of regimes have also made it difficult for the Bangladesh Bank to mop up information on capital flows. Arguably, private firms are reported to be reluctant to volunteer information in the absence of any regulations.

However, an attempt has been made by Dr Zaidi Sattar of the World Bank to make a dent to the impasse performing to FDI statistics and related issues. In the draft policy note on "Foreign Direct Investment in Bangladesh: Issues of Long-run Sustainability", the author highlighted some issues of heightened interest to planners, policy makers and academics.

As it appears from the research done by Zaidi Sattar, inflows of private FDI in Bangladesh was at the bottom of the bucket in the 1980s but from then on has not been brimming either. From a trickle in 1980s it perked at around 400 million dollars in fiscal 1997-98 and is expected to average about 780 million dollars per annum for the next five years. "Though trailing behind India — South Asia's largest recipient of private capital flows — throughout the first half of this decade, it now matches India's capital FDI inflow of 3.2 dollar." The researcher goes to argue — as we all do — that the main contributory factor to the apparent "surge" seems to be trade and exchange liberalization, current account convertibility and liberalization of investment regime. But most of the impetus sprang from opening up of infrastructure and services to the private sector. FDIs in Energy and Telecom sectors — with high import content — have very little impact on foreign exchange reserve accumulation. The concern that logically looms large is "whether the real economy would be able to generate sufficient foreign exchange to finance the remittances of profits and income originating from the foreign investment. Furthermore, the private sector has been incurring foreign debt obligations of short, medium and long-term maturity to the tune of 60-70 million dollars a year. These give rise to interest and principal payments in foreign exchange over and above the official debt obligations to bilateral and multilateral agencies."

In the realm of FDI inflows, Bangladesh is lagging behind. Cambodia and Vietnam have out performed Bangladesh not to speak of Thailand and China. For example, FDI inflows in 1996 tuned to 15 million dollars for Bangladesh compared to 294 and 1500 million dollar respectively for Cambodia and Vietnam. However, the paper misses the important analyses as to why those countries emerged as leaders and Bangladesh, a laggard.

The quantum of FDI flows is argued to be partly a function of the degree of liberalisation — of investment regime. Package of incentives — as often marshalled to attract investors — constitutes a necessary but not sufficient condition for a healthy and steady growth of FDI. Investors' interest is generally influenced by the prevalence of relative risks and opportunities for high returns. For example, foreign investors' interest to equity participation, to an extent, hinges on initial performance. "In South Asia, the size of the Indian domestic market has been an attractive element for investor consideration resulting in substantial foreign investment in manufacturing and services catering to the Indian domestic market. on the other hand, export orientation has been the principal guiding force for the rest of South Asia, until recently. All countries have their currencies convertible for current transactions but not for the capital account."

Sattar is of the view that — and I plagiarize — the nature and composition of FDI flows in Bangladesh present some advantages. Leaving aside portfolio investment, the large chunk of FDI and private debt seems to have financed imports of capital equipment and machinery. He then asks: will the FDI inflows result in substantial accumulation of reserves and put pressure on the exchange rate (Dutch disease effect?). The answer appears to be an emphatic 'No'. The net effect on reserves are expected to be marginal due to the fact that import intensity would raise current account deficit but FDI would appear in capital account showing the financing item. "That is to say, once these inflows are posited with associated imports, repatriation of profits, income, interest and amortization payments that follow, there is more likely to be a net draw-down of reserves over time unless this is offset by increase in foreign exchange earnings from exports or workers' remittances."

Whether there will be a draw-down on reserves would much depend on whether FDIs have significant direct or indirect impact on incremental exports in order to offset the rising payment liabilities over time. "With an optimistic export growth projection of 12-13 per cent per annum during 2001-10, it would need a 50 per cent contribution to incremental exports — direct or indirect — to offset a secular draw-down of reserves."

Summing up, Sattar's study reveals that FDI and foreign debt are growingly emerging as a significant source of financing investment in Bangladesh. The total capital flows are estimated to account for 2 per cent of GDP in FY99 and nearly 10 per cent of gross fixed investment. It is projected that "between FY99 and FY02, average annual inflows are expected to be around 0.9 billion dollars."

The disconcerting episode, however, is that FDI in Bangladesh (excepting those in EPZs) tend to be located in inward-oriented energy sector. This sharply contrasts Sri Lanka's experience with export oriented FDI. Bangladesh therefore needs FDI in energy/power sector to remove the constraint of power cuts FDI in gas development and power generation so that export sectors could benefit.

By and large, the country should continue to attract FDI through pursuance of pragmatic policies. But lest we forget that the demand for FDI originates within the framework of our chartered socio-economic development plan. We should always, take serious note of the downside risk while hunting for FDI.

For the Sake of Peace

by Kazi Alauddin Ahmed

It has to be admitted that it needs a good amount of large-heartedness to praise an enemy when the latter, even for a single time, does a good thing. It needs too, an introspective eye to see that 'good thing' which obviously means freeing it from the dark clouds of the otherwise perpetual mental hostility.

SIR Winston Churchill, the great Briton, wrote his mammoth War Memoirs which eventually earned him the most coveted Nobel Prize for literature. Indeed, his memoirs will retain its place in the realm of literature for centuries. Not only that. It will also be treated as an inimitable document on war strategies in as much as that it contains unimaginable details of military planning, success and failure stories of many a detente, transformation of dubious allies like United States of America and USSR under Joseph Stalin into most effective friends fighting shoulder to shoulder in the penultimate stages of the Second World War. The numerous debacles he faced in the course were contained and neutralized by subtle diplomatic manoeuvre. His prolific analysis of the events at different war fronts was even baffling to army generals who wouldn't have such masterly grip as Churchill had on the conduct of such a massive, devastating war. The lucidity of his expression in the documentation, exchanges in communication with other leaders like Franklin Delano Roosevelt of USA or the Russian Dictator Stalin shall have no comparison for many centuries to come. For friends and enemies alike Churchill was liberal in praise, harsh in deprecation. But never did he miss the right words or use uncouth remarks even on his arch foe Adolf Hitler. At one place Churchill described the over ambitious German as a tyrant, notorious infidel etc. and in the same breath he was all in praise about Hitler's patriotism for 'his Germany'. By the way, the novel idea of a consensus government dates back to early forties when Churchill, a Conservative, was the War Minister in the government headed by Clement Atlee of the Labour Party. This is a historical truth. National emergency compelled them to face the enemy together with equal patriotic zeal and fervour.

It has to be admitted that it needs a good amount of large-heartedness to praise an enemy when the latter, even for a single time, does a good thing. It needs too, an introspective eye to see that 'good thing' which obviously means freeing it from the dark clouds of the otherwise perpetual mental hostility. And when that 'notable deed' of the adversary transcends the boundaries of the performer's individual accomplishments taking the whole nation to embrace international acclaim, it invariably turns out to be an indelible part of the national pride.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina shall be in the Hague, capital city of the Netherlands to address a peace conference there today May 15, 1999. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan will be among the many internationally reputed personalities who shall attend the conference. Sheikh Hasina will receive Huft Buiney Peace Award formally here. This is one of highest awards that UNESCO — an organ of the United Nations, had formally announced in early April this year selecting Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as one of the two recipients for her great role in the signing of the historic Peace Treaty with the Shanti Bahini in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in December 1997. This saw the termination of the armed insurrection there for the last 22 years which took a huge toll of human lives and property. The world leaders, including the US President Bill Clinton, French President Jacques Chirac, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and at home the national leaders excepting Begum Zia, General Ershad and the so-called fundamentalists, congratulated Sheikh Hasina on her selection as the recipient of the UNESCO Peace Award.

The warm felicitations of important leaders of the world and that of the country when compared with the meaningful silence of Sheikh Hasina's avowed adversaries would both, in my personal estimation, testify to one thing in common where silence of the political opponents shall be more positive than the vocal ones. Here lies the wisdom (!) of the opposition not to have criticized the award which, otherwise, would have earned them international condemnation for talking against a UN award. So, we see a unity in diversity even though it has been under strategic compulsions. On the other hand, and very rightly so, this can be treated as an unearned moral victory for Sheikh Hasina and her party. It shall be no wonder if Begum Khaleda Zia and her present allies make a rethinking about their past threats of quashing the Peace Treaty when in power. Hopefully, they would not keep on ridiculing themselves to undermine the UN Selectors. So, let them digest the apparently forced consensus and keep the sanctity of the award in its place. Let them, for a single moment, forget the recipient is Sheikh Hasina and remember that it is our dear country Bangladesh that has been the ultimate beneficiary where the entire nation can legitimately be proud of. It will also be on world record that though a very small country our contribution to regional and also to world peace is no less great.

However, it must not be forgotten that it is the sincerity, earnestness and human urge within an individual that play the catalytical role in his endeavours. And if that be for peace and peace alone there cannot be any half-hearted shy at such a noble cause. Such a plain and simple argument shall have brought us to the fact or rather, to the truth behind the failure of the previous BNP and Jatiya Party Governments of Begum Khaleda Zia and H M Ershad respectively. It can be said with impunity that in both cases the approach for a tangible solution to the problem lacked the depth of understanding of the case, let alone the pitiable absence of the human element in it. They seemed to have relied more on bureaucratic parleys and military strategies when the importance of a political intervention was totally lost sight of. Sheikh Hasina and her government, in this case, displayed extreme caution, patience and tolerance besides a genuine desire to close the blood-stained chapter once for all. There was too, an invincible will and determination on both sides to undo the awesome tangles that kept the hope for peace far away for long. The cool-headed Abul Hasnat Abdullah and his team of negotiators must be complimented for having done a wonderful job. And inspite of there being some points of disagreement emerging after the signing of the agreement, Shantu Larma didn't, even for once, doubted the sincerity of Sheikh Hasina and her government.

Now, let's turn to the law and order situation in the country. On assumption of his additional responsibilities the new Home Minister Mohammad Nasim had very loudly reaffirmed his conviction that terrorists belonged to no party and that even men claiming to be Awami Leaguers would not be spared. He did too, unequivocally declare that the whole Police Administration would have no interference from any one and that they must work with complete freedom and without fear. Side by side with the opposition activists creating law and order situation the police has been unambiguously ordered to take into task similar ones in Awami League, Juba League, Students' League also. In such a process Awami League MP from Chhatak Mohibur Rahman Manik is currently being subjected to continuous interrogation by CID as a sequel to the recent bomb blast in his own residence at Chhatak. The investigating agencies are on a serious hunt for a cue to the incident and Manik's personal involvement in it. If he is eventually implicated inspite of his frantic bid to prove his innocence, he is sure to lose the membership of the party and unless exonerated by the court, his seat in the Jatiya Sangsad as well. Even though he is yet to be formally indicted the stiff rigmarole of the interrogation can be a positive pointer to government's keenness to meet the ends of justice impartially.

Over the past couple of weeks or so there have been innumerable instances of party workers' having been hauled up and proceeded against by the police. Awami League stalwart and Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf has set yet another example by handing over a number of party workers to police at Khulna who are to be tried for different criminal offenses. But the BNP leadership is still unmoved. They are, on the other hand, asking for immediate release of Alamgir Kabir MP an FIR-based accused in the Atrai (Rajshahi) murder case. As usual so-called workers of BNP sent behind the bars on specific charges of crime, are being claimed to have been implicated in 'false cases'. Incidentally, this is one of the four-point demand that BNP has been labouring with.

The whole country is in the grip of an increasing hot spell. Added to it, there is the political heat being generated by the BNP-led four-party alliance. There have been big procession and small (half-day) hartal. Perhaps there would be rain and more rain to dissipate the heat to an extent.

To the Editor...

Ordeal on May Day

Sir, A report published in a leading Bangla daily on May 3, '99, is very poignant and at the same time so absurd that it is almost hilarious. It was reported that more than 25 people were seriously injured when police swooped on the procession of garment workers on May Day and beat them indiscriminately. Police said the procession was stopped to make the road clear for the PM who was going to the Paltan Maidan to address a meeting arranged by the Sramik League on the occasion of May Day.

We deeply sympathize with the garment workers who had to suffer this humiliation on the day marked for them.

Nur Jahan,
Chittagong

Dhanmondi Recreation Club

Sir, I draw your kind attention to a news published on page-11 of 8th May 1999 issue of *The Bangladesh Observer* that "Dhanmondi Recreation Club opens today".

As a citizen of the country I am surprised to note the location of the club which is in the heart of Dhanmondi Residential Area. I wonder how the competent authority could allow to establish such a Recreation Club in the Residential Area, which will not only disturb the peace-loving people of Dhanmondi but also will create different social and environmental problems as the country is already in grip of such problems.

A Salam,
Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka

OPINION

Quest for Democratic Governance?

Dr S Islam

While contemplating the feasibility of democratic governance in Bangladesh, question generally emerges as to what is really mean by 'democratic government' and what elements and principles are embodied in this system. How far the practices of the previous governments were democratic? Is democratic governance at all feasible under the present Awami League rule? Whether or not the deliberations and commitments made by the PM and her ministers, notably Tofail Ahmad, Zillur Rahman, Abu Sayeed and Mohammad Nasim, to be precise, on various national problems like rights to speak in the parliament by the opposition MPs, treatment of police against the MPs and persons in custody, law and order situation, abolishing black law like SPA, arbitrary application of SPA and Sec 54 of CrPC against the opposition members, police excesses, human rights violations, failure in market management and sky-rocketing price spiral, arrests and punishment of the culprits and terrorists belonging to the ruling party vis-a-vis opposition, capture of residential halls of all the universities in general and Dhaka University in particular by the armed plainclothesmen and hired armed terrorists, terrorism in the universities, exercise of democratic rights of the students not belonging to Chhatra League residing in residential halls of the universities, corruption by the police and government officials, so on and so forth have any relevance or consistency with the practical actions taken?

In an article "In Quest of Democratic Governance" (DS March 24) Prof Ataur Rahman has not addressed the above burning issues in depth but has made merely passing references to issues like parliament, consensus government, power supply, violence and terrorism, hartal, elections, exports, inflation rate, agreements with foreign countries, oil and gas exploration, flood and foreign investment. He has made a shallow, ordinary and superficial account of the JP, BNP and the present AL governments without any sharp analysis based on facts, figures and statistics. And whenever he has tried to provide any figures, the learned writer has left residuum of wrong information. He has not stated anything as to why the parliament has become ineffective and almost moribund to solve national issues? He has dwelt on flood but has not mentioned the most important aspects, i.e. the cruel indifference of the government for about 43 days in the beginning as the whole government machinery was engaged in observing "National Mourning Day" thereby being oblivious of party-based distribution of relief materials in a national issue, and widespread corruption, irregularities and malpractices in distribution of VGF cards.

He has miserably failed to address crucial issues like: 1. Non-implementation of four point accord signed with the opposition (Mar 2, '98) for participation in the parliament that envisaged i) lifting of restrictions on street rallies on the city's two main avenues like Panthapath and Manik Mia Avenue; (ii) withdrawal of political cases against some BNP leaders; (iii) impartial coverage of the parliament proceedings by radio and TV, and (iv) impartiality of the Speaker in conducting the business of the House; 2. Implementation of the government's promise to provide TV-radio autonomy, and desisting from character assassination of opposition parties through feature programmes like "Question to the Nation's Conscience", "Why this Hartal?" and in everyday partisan news; 3. Capture of all the university dormitories by the armed plainclothesmen, police, and outside terrorists and giving them to the possession of BCL activists who, for being minority, are being sheltered and protected by outside armed terrorists, who in turn, have found campus a safe haven for regular hijacking, abduction, toll collection, murder, phensydil business and other vices; 4. Government's failure to seek apology to the nation for not arresting and prosecuting the BCL criminals and the protecting-outsiders for their rape of female students at the Jahangirnagar University; 5. PM's failure to seek apology to the countrymen for violation of her commitment (June 7, '98) to monitor the affair by herself, so no hindrance was created to the Long March to CHT (June 9), while in practice a 10 hours' barricade was laid by puncturing the tires of large number of trucks and buses at Simrail crossing near Kanchpur bridge under guidance of AL leaders Maj Gen (Rtd) Shafiullah, MP, Shamim Osman, MP and Narayanganj AL president Najma Rahman, and about 20 female general passengers were assaulted and raped on the road on the night of June 8 taking them in a nearby empty cinema hall; 6. PM's unending contradictory, irresponsible and hypocritical statements (for which the honourable Supreme Court has referred her to be 'wrong-headed' and 'contumacious' on Feb 17) for arresting and punishing the terrorists without any party affiliations on one hand, while sponsoring and masterminding worst form of state terrorism on the other; 7. Failure to arrest and punish Maqbul Husain, MP from whose convoy the hired goons came down and fired Sajal Chowdhury, 25, a BNP worker on Feb 9 from a point blank range at Dhanmondi in a state terrorist act under the canopy of "anti-hartal" procession (stories and photographs published in the DS and other newspapers on Feb 10), whereas Alamgir Kabir, BNP MP was arrested in a bid to save the real killers of AL workers in an intra-party feud at Atrai; 8. Failure to arrest AL MP Muhibur Rahman Manik for the bomb blast at his Chhatak residence in which two Juba League workers died while making bombs and discovery of large number of bombs and bomb-making materials, and trunk full of two million taka on March 15; 9. Pursing delay tactics to punish AC Akram Husain, AL leader Mukuli Begam and others for murdering Shamim Reza Rubel, a BBA student of the Independent University in police custody on July 23, 1998; 10. Silence over arresting and punishing the AL terrorist, suspected to be a "trained worker" of Haji Selim, MP, for firing on a hartal procession (Jan 26) snatching a shotgun from an on-duty policeman at Topkhana Road (stories with photographs published in DS and Inqilab: Jan 27); 11. Violation of democratic rights of the people to bring out street procession by lobbying tear gas shells, resorting to lathi and baton charge, shooting rubber bullets in the name of "preventing street jam"; 12. Stopping police barbarism and awarding punishment for their proven crimes, rapes in custody and corruption; 13. Failure to curb widespread murders (nearly seven a day), hijack, loot, arson, toll collection, rape, abduction usually perpetrated by the beneficiaries of AL, BCL, Juba League; 14. Stoppage of attacks, filing of false cases and harassment of the press and journalists for objective reporting; 15. Failure to curb power politics and politics of vengeance and confrontation; 16. Maintenance of transparency, accountability and democratic principles in letter and spirit in governance shunning lip service and false slogans. 17. Failure to seek apology to the countrymen for inflicting unbearable miseries due to disruption in supply of such basic daily necessities — electricity and water and explain candidly if it was because of "system loss" or for "increasing development activities", or "fault of the past BNP government" as vociferously claimed by the ministers, or for corruption, mismanagement, wrong-planning and utter inefficiency of the AL government. 18. Failure to reveal in clear terms what was the foreign exchange reserve at the time of taking over power by this government, and how and why this reserve vanquished only within a year, and why this government became bankrupt so as to borrow money from the banks to give salary to the government employees.

Democratic governance is a form of administration by the people either directly or through elected representatives based on the acceptance and practice of the principle of equality of rights, opportunity and treatment. Do the above repressive acts and ignominious failures on one hand, and despicably false propaganda by the PM and her very obedient ministers on the other speak of democratic governance, transparency and accountability, or are clear evidences of fascist, incompetent and autocratic governance? If Prof Ataur Rahman has not written anything about all these burning issues of governance, what has he written indeed in such a huge article and that too as a post-editorial? He has claimed that "the rate of inflation as quoted by the government was below five per cent." The learned writer appears to be a student and teacher of political science. A student of social sciences must, of necessity, study economics. But here the learned professor betrays knowledge about national and global economy. The finance minister SAMS Kibria has himself admitted that the inflation rate is 8.76 (also published in the same issue of DS: Mar 24), while according to World Bank report it is almost 12 pc although other economic indicators reveal that it is between 10 and 11 pc. During the previous regime it was 3.5 pc. This is at the backdrop of 1.5 pc in Europe and 2.5 pc in the US while global inflation rate is 2.00. In this way has he not disappointed, confused and misinformed thousands of readers?