# The Baily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

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## Mayor Please Explain ...

MAKA, with its sardine-packed sprawl and Utraffic suffocation, has people panting for its far fewer breathing spaces than prescribed for a city of its size and population. And yet, the small number of parks we have are being criminally neglected by the DCC under Mayor Hanif's leadership.

An investigative report on The Daily Star frontpage yesterday uncovered the utterly culpable messing around with the 45 parks and open spaces the Dhaka City Corporation has been in charge of. Judging by the way these once-open spaces have been allowed to be encroached upon by street urchins, sex workers and drug addicts or simply made over to builders of shopping complexes-cummosques and community centres or indeed to club houses or political party offices, it seems that parks are the most disposable item on the saleslist of the DCC.

Mayor Hanif has to answer a barrage of questions about the dangerously reduced park spaces, loss of greenery by lack of maintenance, and letting out of land parcels to commercial projects, allegedly carrying stake for party favourites. How does the Mayor explain his having purportedly converted the part of a local children's park into a family car parking lot? For that matter, what reply does he have to the traders' allegation that they have been making regular payments to local DCC men in exchange for the business rights to what should have been retained as mandatory open spaces?

We want the government to make a survey of all the parks and open spaces in the city to determine their present acreage and compare the same with land areas originally allotted to them. Either the lost lands are restored to the parks or new parks are set up with financial penalties imposed on and realised from those responsible for the current state of affairs in this vital arboricultural sphere. While the mayor explains his role in all this; there ought to be a unified authority designated to look after the parks in place of the fragmentation of responsibility that now exists between the DCC's estate officials and engineers. This is a wake-up call the government can only ignore to the further imperilment of the city's environs.

### **BMA Polls**

THE Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) ■ elected its new office-bearers Thursday last, with the "pro-Awami League" panel, led by Dr. Mahbub-e-Rashid and Dr. Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, sweeping all but one position on the executive committee. Much as our felicitation goes to the newly-elected functionaries of that important professional body, what we find rather incongruous and thus disquieting is the strong political undertone in the elections. It seems the voters might have gone more by political, rather than professional considerations. Our question is: is it imperative to politicise an organisation of professionals? Or, does it in any way facilitate advancement of the profession? Or, more importantly, does this emphasis on political affiliation ultimately help patients? We have seen on many occasions that politicisation actually

makes way to indiscipline and works as a blanket for inefficient and corrupt professionals. Our fear is, such politicisation may ultimately see the BMA actually shielding 'delinquent doctors'. On many occasions, we have seen professionals pulling political strings to cover up their inadequacy and negligence.

The election itself was held on a major thoroughfare of the capital city and that, too, in front of the secretariat, the very seat of government. While by impeding movement of the traffic and inflicting inconvenience on the residents, the doctors themselves have shown their indifference to public interest, the government and its agencies, on the other hand, have set an example of poor governance by allowing them to do so. We understand that the bar on assembly in the vicinity of the secretariat is still on. The BMA might have pulled a few strings in the government and the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to engineer such a violation. Double standards damage the establishment's credibility. We hope the government understands that.

## Oil Slick Worry

THE most important seaport of the country -■ Chittagong — has become a safe place for anchoring ships and other smaller vessels to spill oil. The alarming thing is the impunity with which these offending vessels sail away undetected, as revealed in The Daily Star report on Saturday. Eighty per cent of country's export and import trade takes place through this port with around 1200 cargo vessels anchoring there every year. Due to lack of a proper monitoring system cases of oil spillage cannot be pursued to a point of tracking down the vessels which caused it, far less penalising them for their misdeed. Oil slicks as long as two kilometres can be seen in the port channel and outer anchorage doing tremendous harm to marine life and ecological balance. While poor logistics are partly to blame for this almost all the government agencies working at the port tend to take the job of detecting offending ships rather lightly and put the blame squarely on lack of logistics and equipment support. A senior official, however, pinpointed the responsibility on the coast guards.

However, keeping vigil over a large and busy port like Chittagong is becoming more and more difficult as time rolls on. And unless the authorities make it a point to rise to the occasion, a disaster can strike this vital installation sooner than most people think. The agencies responsible for running such a huge establishment must be provided with adequate manpower and logistics in terms of equipment. We cannot take chances with oil slicks that bear the portents of jeopardising marine life as well as the environment in the sea-belt of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

Women, Society, and Politics in Bangladesh

The Prime Minister, by verbally doing the character assassination of the leader of the opposition has touched a raw nerve that would agitate the minds of every thinking man and woman of this country. We know that it is politics. But even politics has its limits. It must be done by keeping the national interest above everything. And we should be aware by now that women's

interest is synonymous with national interest.

cent and vilifying remarks of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina about the personal conduct of the leader of the opposition on the floor of the Parliament. Her insinuations about Begum Zia's of the country, economic depricharacter (because she spent a vation and social subjugation. night in Hotel Purbani during Their future seems uncertain as the anti-Ershad movement in any steps taken towards their uplift is arduous and extremely 1987) do not in any way fall within the operating guidelines uphill. Securing better future of a parliamentary government. for women is not women's The civil society is, thus, rightly problems alone. Rather their infuriated. The print media future participation in every have condemned such highly sphere of national development derogatory comments in unison. is inextricably linked with the Newspapers of various shades development and maintenance of opinion have termed it beof the global system individually ginning from unchaste words, and collectively. If Bangladesh dishonoring the parliament, inwants to take its rightful place decent and unacceptable bein the community of states in haviour, threats to our nascent the next millennium it must democracy, and to poisoning of have to take drastic steps inan already confrontational politcluding defining the sex roles in ical environment. One Bengali order to alleviate the situation. weekly has lamented that her This is not to say that some remarks would now encourage measures have not been taken the crude and unacceptable bethrough state interventions but haviour of our lawmakers (as the effects of those policies have demonstrated on the floor of the been insignificant. Reasons are Parliament) to such extent that theirs would now become the

taken aback by the

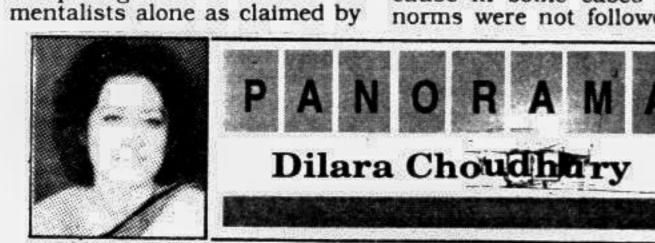
recent unfortunate, inde-

being existing cultural norms of our country. It has been pointed norms. Lack of democratic out by the sociologists that alspirit would reign over the need though a set of complex factors for it. Such development, the determine women's political, weekly feels, has been most economic, and social lives in the damaging for the country and society it is but societal values and gender ideology that are be so due to Prime Minister's deemed to be the most signifirecent remarks. On the whole cant. Since ours is a classical such analysis is correct. But patriarchal society, societal val-Equally damaging has been ues and gender ideology are crucial in determining women's the impacts of her statements on women's situation in role in national development Bangladesh. It is a common process. knowledge that women in What sex role is expected in Bangladesh, despite some government policies and gargantuan work done by the NGOs, are in deplorable condition.

a society, which has what has been termed by a prominent Bangladeshi social thinker a 'culture of discrimination?' It is endemic and widespread. Culture of discrimination impedes women's participation in every sphere of life - political, economic and social. It starts early in the family. A son is more welcomed than a daughter is. Akkika or name giving ceremony and other social and religious occasions are marked by discriminatory practices. Be-

liefs like women are less capable, less intelligent, irrational, and child-like are disseminated on regular basis through the various agencies of socialization process. Thus within the major political institutions women's active participation is looked upon with some kind of condescending attitudes. Women's aspirations and ambitions are looked as not 'lady-like' behaviour. Women engaged in economic activities are not to be respected. Social interactions and valuable networking by women alone is impossibility without being stigmatized. These chauvinistic attitudes are not the prerogatives of the funda-

the norms by keeping their movement within the parameters of rules and regulations that have been created by men without women's input in it. If they do not follow them and get into trouble it is their fault. Thus, the female rape victims of Jahangirnagar were routinely, i.e. unofficially, castigated for being out in the campus at odd hours (8 P.M. in the evening) and inviting the rapes. It was forgotten that some of the rapes took place during daytime and on campus, maintenance of whose security was the responsibility of the administration. It was their fault because in some cases societal norms were not followed. Vio-



some academia but prevalent even among the so-called progressive forces as well. Societal disapproval, thus, creates a belief system of a rigid and strict differentiation between the 'public' and 'private' domains. The 'culture of discrimination,' thus, restricts women's mobility and movement by assigning her the traditional and stereotyped

The strict differentiation between the public and private, which does not allow women to propagate that private is also political, is reinforced by misinterpreted religious beliefs. Women are often thought to be the embodiment of destruction, fitna, living symbols of disorders with their sexuality and its disruptive potentials. They have to be controlled and regulated. Society expects them to follow.

lence against women like rape thus, can be condoned, i.e. tacitly, in our cultural context without any qualm of conscious.

Social and religious norms, thus, come into interplay in inhibiting women's interest in public affairs. Consequently, it is not only the fear of 'disapproval from the organized group ties' but also fear of some of kind of social ostracism, which hold the women back in demonstrating their potentials. These are the societal values, which shape the lives of Bangladeshi women. These so-called values which are detrimental to women's development must then go through drastic transformation. Industrialized north has done so. They realize the potential of the women and there is now new thinking and new gender ideology which have helped re-

move the hindrances so that women become the full citizens and full partners in national development process. In the process their culture has changed. Culture is dynamic and it constantly changes. But ours has not done so. And whatever changes have taken place have been painstakingly slow and insufficient. Can the Bangladeshi women, who are caught with a tricky situation in which they are confined to their traditional role within the homestead sanctioned by religious and cultural traditions but are forced out into wage employ for economic survival, make their impacts on nation's political, economic, and social lives unless and until there is drastic transformation in our societal beliefs and values?

The Prime Minister's remarks in the above mentioned scenario is rather disturbing. In an age of world-wide trend towards women's empowerment and participation in all spheres of national development, her criticism of the leader of the opposition has clearly indicated the kind of sex roles she expects in our society. It seems that she envisages women's role only as mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. A vision which are considered to be the pillars of a patriarchal society and a patriarchal state whose beliefs and institutions create major impediments in women's over-all empowerment. She has reinforced beliefs like women's place is at home and their aspirations/ambitions to be in public arenas are not lady-like. Her remarks have unfortunately given impetus to those who have been advocating women's role to be confined strictly within the private domain. Her notions about women have dehumanized her own kind by implying that women are not

free to have unrestricted freedom of movement because of societal norms and expectations (of the men). It tantamounts to violation of women's human rights. If a woman of opposition leader's stature is liable to lose public respect if she stays out of her own residence, and that too for political reasons. whereas a man in her place is free to do so, what then would be fate and reputations of hundreds of Bangladeshi women who are out on the streets to make a living? How about the women in politics who would need to stay out late at night for party activities? What about the professional and single women who are trying to break into man's domain and trying to change our male-dominated cultural norms? As it is there is an acute

paucity of respect for women by the men — a stark reality that have been poignantly pointed out by late Poet Sufia Kamal. We do not need to add further fuel to that fire. There is also no need to reinforce current chauvinistic thinking that women are women's worst enemy that we perhaps are because we view life through the eyes of our fathers, husbands and brothers. We must stop looking at the world through the prism of this patriarchal belief system and make ourselves free. All in all it is to be noted that the Prime Minister, by verbally doing the character assassination of the opposition leader (which, by the way, is the easiest way to make any working and professional woman ineffective and nonfunctional and rampantly practiced in the work places all over the country) has touched a raw nerve that would agitate the minds of every thinking man and woman of this country. We know that it is politics. But even politics has its limits. It must be done by keeping the national interest above everything. We should be aware by now that women's interest is synonymous with national interest. And it is the task of the leadership to protect that interest and not trample it.

# Pakistan's Heads of State

TOW are they remem-

Poorest of the poor, women

seem to be getting the raw end

of every deal. They are mal-

nourished, die early, are easily

abandoned and ostracized, live

in isolation and are easy prey to

rampant violence. Women's

lack of opportunity is quite

opaque and reflected in their

ineffective and miniscule repre-

sentation in the power structure

Mohammad Ali Jinnah: For achieving his ambition to found a state, which he hoped (vainly as it turned out) would be modern and democratic, a home for those in need of protection, their own country in which they could live and

there is more to it.

For enunciating his creed whilst addressing the first session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11. 1947, in which he clearly set forth the direction he intended his country to take.

For doing good, for being fair, just and equitable, free of bigotry or hypocrisy, and for being scrupulously honest both morally and materially.

For stating in his speech broadcast on February 19, 1948: The great majority of us are Muslims. We follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. We are membe s of the brotherhood of Islam in which we are equal in rights, dignity and self-respect. Consequently, we have a special and deep sense of unity. But make no mistake : Pakistan is not a theocracy or anything like it. Islam demands from us the tolerance of other creeds and we welcome in close association with us all those who, of whatever creed, are themselves willing and ready to play their part as true and loyal citizens of Pakistan."

Jinnah was the first governor-general of the Dominion of Pakistan and died as such on September 11, 1948. From that day onwards, his successors in office, the presidents and prime ministers that followed, have misgoverned. A few may have to their credit some little good they may mistakenly have done, but it is not that for which they are remembered. As pronounced WS, it is mostly a case of the evil living on and the good being firmly interred.

Khwaja Nazimuddin: Governor-general from September 14, 1948, to October 17, 1951, and prime minister from the latter date to April 17, 1953. A gentleman sportsman, he was never in tune with the politicians with whom he worked.

Malik Ghulam Mohammed: Jinnah chose him as his fi-

nance minister, in which position he remained until intrigue and convenience made him the third governor-general ( October 19, 1951, to October 15. 1955). He is remembered for setting the trend, for dissolving the first constituent assembly of Pakistan in October 1954 with its speaker Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan. Tamizuddin went to the Sindh Chief Court and his petition against dissolution was upheld by its Chief Justice Sir George Constantine. Ghulam Mohammad appealed against this decision to the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mohammed Munir, and his appeal was accepted in April 1955.

From that moment it became an accepted fact that the law can be read and interpreted as the men in power desire.

Ghulam Mohammed fell ill,

and was deposed in March 1956. Major General Iskander Mirza: Born November 13. 1899, died November 13, 1969. A good career officer, a wellknown political agent of Tank. After partition he served, inter alia, as our defence secretary, minister of the interior, and governor of East Pakistan. When Ghulam Mohammad was deposed, the politicians in power appointed him as their fourth governor-general, in which post he remained from October 16, 1955, to March 22, 1956, on which date he became the first president of Pakistan. On October 27, 1958, (a date that was to be known for some years as Revolution Day, a public holiday) he was deposed by his defence minister, General Mohammad Ayub Khan. He was exiled and sent to London, where he worked for his living and died an honourable man. He is remembered with muted respect as a man to whom injustice was

Mohammad Ayub Khan: The first martial law administrator of the Republic of Pakistan which he declared himself to be on October 7, 1958, adding to it the title of president on October 27 of that year. He is remembered for being the man under which this country, for his first few years in power, was seen to be truly a developing country - developing in the right direction, economy and industry booming. He is reArdeshir Cowasjee writes from Karachi

for his disastrous 1965 war with India and his speedy de-

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: The first ever civilian martial law administrator holding conjointly the post of president of the Republic, which dual post he held from December 21, 1971, to August 14, 1973. Unforgettable. Remembered for all the wrong things, for the evil he did, and for being hanged to death. His elder son was murdered during the prime ministership of his elder daughter Benazir, and his younger son died in mysterious circumstances during the presidency of his successor and executor.

Chaudhry Fazal Elahi : Appointed August 14, 1973, on the day on which Zulfikar Ali Bhutto promulgated his constitution and converted himself to prime minister of the Republic. An unassuming man, who did nothing memorable, and who allowed himself to be kept a virtual prisoner throughout his presidency. On September 16, 1978, his resignation was accepted by Zulfikar's successor, deposer and executor. Remembered with derision and pity as the man on the walls of whose house was chalked 'Fazal Elahi ko reha karo .

Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq

membered for his innovative system of Basic Democracy, rather a flop, for his decade of development, a misnomer, and cline thereafter, until sick and tired, he handed over power to his army chief on March 25,

Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan: General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, 'Rangila Raja', a good soldier but a bad martial law administrator and head of state. He is remembered for having saved the library at the Staff College, Quetta, when an instructor at that institution. He is remembered for holding the only free and fair elections in this country in 1970. He is remembered for allowing himself to be manipulated by Bhutto, and, above all. he is remembered and blamed for having thrown away half the country. He died as he had lived, within his meagre means. An honest man, but exceedingly foolish.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, always afraid of the army, to replace the retiring army chief Tikka Khan in February 1976 chose a junior general, sixth down the line, Zia-ul-Haq. Zia was selected for the subservience he had exhibited whilst a corps commander. The fact that his confidential report declared him to be ambitious and not to be trusted was ignored. In 1977, much to the delight of the people, he deposed Bhutto and took over the country as its third martial law administrator (July 5, 1977, to December 31, 1985), announcing immediately that he would march back to his barracks in 90 days time. In September 1978 he took over the presidency, remaining president of the Republic until blown into the skies on August 17, 1988. He, likewise, is remembered for much wrong, most importantly for the misuse and abuse of religion to keep him in power. His legacy haunts

Ghulam Ishaq Khan: He

took over the presidency on August 17, 1988. He manoeuvred and manipulated elections and the goings and comings of prime ministers until on July 19, 1993 he was forced by his chief of army staff, General Waheed Kakar, to resign, taking with him his contentious prime minister Nawaz Sharif, largely responsible for his downfall. He is remembered for his own strict financial probity but for allowing his sons-in-law to run riot in the corruption field. He is also remembered for his intellectual dishonesty in bargaining with, and bowing to, politicians he himself had booted out and discredited, such as Benazir Bhutto and Asif Zardari, so that he could win for himself a second presidential term.

Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari: Elected president on November 14, 1993, by his party chief Benazir Bhutto and her men. To the manor born, much was expected of him, his record as a civil servant and a minister being whistle-clean. He, as do all, succumbed to the

heat from the seat of power and his good deeds faded into oblivion . He is now remembered for his notorious land deal with the doubly notorious Yunus Habib, for what is known as the Mehran Bank scam, for failing the nation's expectations that he would conduct a process of accountability and clean out the political sewers, and for bargaining with Nawaz Sharif, a man he disliked and distrusted, so that he too could gain a second term as president.

Rafiq Ahmad Tarar: Former judge of the Supreme Court, appointed by Nawaz Sharif to the Senate. Remembered for his clandestine trip to Quetta with a briefcase in hand, and for certain questionable judgments delivered during his time on the Bench. When his mentor and master Nawaz Sharif was given the boot on October 12, 1999, rather than putting in his resignation, he chose to remain in occupancy of the Aiwan-e-Sadar, on whose walls we expect any day a slogan to be chalked reading: Tarar ko reha karo.

# **OPINION**

## All Elections under Caretaker Government

We are apparently heading to a political-bloodshed as BNP-led opposition has virtually decided to boycott and resist all the forthcoming elections under the present Election Commission (EC) while the EC is planning to hold Upazila and City Corporation polls except Dhaka City Corporation's in December '99.

Meanwhile, we have experienced the rules of two democratically elected governments. Unfortunately, leaders of our political parties are far from practising democratic norms and values. Our bitter perception is that what BNPled opposition is doing today to reap political gain, if BNP comes to power, then the Awami League-led opposition will do the same. And we, the general people, will suffer and shed more blood in this neverending political turmoil going on and on.

True, our country has a lot of problems like illiteracy, poverty, political unrest, unemployment, malnutrition. environment pollution, etc. But I think political turmoil has superseded all other problems. If political stability is not ensured, no development will be possible in any of the sectors whatsoever

If we look back at the hitches and confrontations of last two decades we would see that most of those were concentrated on election issues. It has been observed that the political parties feel comfortable to participate in elections under caretaker government'. All the political parties spontaneously participated in February '91 and June '96 general elections held under caretaker government. However, the opposition lost their confidence in the same EC later on when they lost in a pollrace and utilised this defeat as an opportunity to launch movement against EC - virtually against the government and declared destructive programmes like hartal, siege. boycotting and resisting polls etc. As parliament election under caretaker government is already in place so there is only one door open to mobilise mass movements against government i.e. boycotting and resisting all local

government elections. Clearly

Mustafizur Rahman

the objective is to finally dislodge the government. Nevertheless, it has been observed that there had been criticisms after some of the by-polls held under the present EC. Our observation is that the EC could not play its due role in conducting those polls under a political government what it could do fairly under a caretaker gov-

ernment. Under these circumstances would like to offer a proposal to the government as well as the opposition to table a bill and pass unanimously in the parliament for holding all local government elections (except Union Parishad) under caretaker government along with the general elections. Though the local government elections are non-political by constitution, the reality is that these polls also are considered politically by all the political parties. The political parties nominate their candidates and patronise them for winning the polls. Even we identify the candidates unofficially partywise in the newspapers. The UP election can be excluded from these arrangements as it does not have

much influence of politics. The following benefits can be reaped by holding local government polls under care-

taker government: 1) All the political parties will participate in the election

race spontaneously. 2) The opposition will not get the opportunity to launch tougher programmes like hartals in the name of boycotting and resisting polls. So this will hopefully rid us of the suicidal hartal culture.

3) This will reduce polling expenditure of the EC as well since all the elections will be held under same arrangements. (India has already started finding ways for reducing election expenditure)

4) The elections will be held on different days instead of one day. This will enable the EC to deploy optimum security forces in the polling

centres. 5) Electioneering expenditure of the candidates competing in the polls will also go down as they have the opportunity to hold meetings, rallies etc. together.

6) Electioneering violence will be reduced to the minimum as the party workers will be divided in many parts (for MP, Mayor, Ward Commissioner, Paurasabha Chairman, Paurasabha Member, Upazila Chairman etc.) and they will remain busy with their respective candidates' manifestos.

Of course, we will face the following problems: 1. The parliament elections

are due for holding in the year 2001 but the City Corporation and Upazila polls are due in December '99 and the Paurasabha elections, in the vear 2003. 2. Common people may be-

come puzzled with so many candidates.

3. By-elections will have to be held under political government again.

4. This may create liquidity crisis in the financial sector of the country as the candidates contest in the elections are generally wealthy industrialists and businessmen who maintain significant amount of money with banks. They will draw huge amount of money from their accounts to defray

electioneering expenditure. Problem no. 1 can be resolved by deferring City Corporation and Upazila Elections due to be held in December '99 and shifting Paurasabha polls from 2003 to year 2001 by promulgating ordinance. Radio, TV, newspapers and EC together can play a vital role in educating the common voters to solve problem no. 2. We have an effective Election Code of Conduct in place. Therefore, this is EC's prime responsibility to ensure strict adherence to the Code of Conduct to hold all the by-elections fairly. Thus we can except solution to problem no.3, and for solution to problem no. 4, the government and the Bangladesh Bank must take preventive measures to cope with the possible liquid-

The third millennium is knocking at the door. We want to see our political parties have come to a single platform to resolve these issues together to present this poor nation the new millennium as full of hopes and aspirations.

ity crisis.

### Helpless citizen and police

Sir, On Thursday 11 November, after meeting the Chairman. Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation at his Paribagh office I was coming back to our Dhaka office around 1500 hrs through Hare Road. When my office car was crossing Hare Road, we were stopped by a traffic police in front of the gate of honourable Home and other Ministers at 35. Hare Road to allow cars coming out from the Ministers' residences pass. After about 15-20 seconds we felt tremendous jolt and shock. My body was terribly shaken, the driver's seat broke down. As a result the driver felt severe pain in his waist. My left hand above elbow instantly swelled up with unbearable pain. Before we could realise what happened, we saw that a BRTC double-decker bus loaded with passengers hit our car from behind and was fleeing away. We got down from the car and frantically requested the on duty traffic constable and armed guards deployed at the main gate to catch the bus, but the traffic police just reluctantly and casually approached the car and somehow managed to get the number Dhaka-Metro-Ba-11-0428.

After that we saw that due to

tremendous impact of his by the double-decker the rear bumper, bonnet, two back lights, front bumper, bonnet, front right side light and driver's seat of the car were badly damaged. By the Grace of Allah the driver was miraculously saved, otherwise he might have sustained fatal injury if his head/ribs would have hit the steering.

By the Grace of Allah we were saved from certain death/severe injury. But inspite of our repeated requests, on duty police did not help us showing reasons that they could not leave the place as they were on duty at Ministers' locality. After half an hour, one Traffic Sergeant arrived at the place of occurrence and advised us to go to nearby Ramna P S to

file a police case. At once we went to Ramna P S and it was another horrible experience. We were not allowed to write the complaint at our own and a writer was called from outside to prepare the wilful complaint on payment of Tk 100.00. We had to purchase even the paper and carbon. Inspite of our physical and mental conditions we were kept

struck-up there for three hours. The narrative as above testifles the inhuman and unkind behaviour meted out to a law abiding citizen in extreme dis-

tress, almost at the point of death by the police who claim to be friend of the people. This is a shame to the police force nay a shame to the whole nation. May, I, hope through this

narrative, national conscience would be moved and appropriate action would be taken against delinquent members of the police force to restore people's confidence in them. Tabibul Islam

Sr. Executive Eastern Refinery Limited 67/4, Kakrail Road, Dhaka

### Phone bill payment

Sir, I give below the 'journey' time of an analog phone bill: Date of issue: 19/10/99. Date and time the bill received: 3/11/99 at 4 pm. Last date of payment: 7/11/99. The 4th of November was a

half banking day, and I was forced to pay the bill on that day by spending an hour, as 7th November was a hartal day. would request the BTTB to allow the subscribers minimum ten clear working days for the payment of bills

I would also suggest that all arrears be payable, if the claim is made within a period of twelve months. Shahabuddin Mahtab Dhaka