# The Baily Star

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## Do Sit Down with the Speaker

THE fact of the matter is Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury has written to the Opposition leader for the third time in a row imploring her to return to the Parliament. And the news is that a reply from the BNP chief is under process. We want the third reply from the BNP leader not to be another No like the earlier two replies to the Speaker's letters have been; for, as we have entreated with her in our yesterday's editorial comment: "Khaleda Zia, please understand that continuous No ...... will get us nowhere." Since the whole exercise is about talking the way out of the tangle, regardless of the recriminations about who had a bigger hand in creating it, anything that help's implacable adversaries to sit across the table and address differences should be welcomed. After what has happened, the opposition leaders should know better than anybody else that some kind of a dialogue with the Speaker or the ruling party has to precede before the deck is clear for them to rejoin the parliament.

So, our fervent appeal to the opposition will be: don't get caught up in the preconditions whirlpool or hold the nation hostage to your ego-trip that has crossed one critical threshold after another. We have editorially endorsed your position wherever we found it to reasonable and justified. Yes, the Speaker can be faulted for not ensuring the implementation of the four-point agreement reached twice over in order that the opposition got a full play in the parliament with due electronic media coverage accompanying the same. Yes, there are grievances against repression and false cases. Whenever the situation demanded we deprecated foul-play, unjust treatment and bias against the opposition.

But it is the same voice which is now urging the opposition to abide by what the nation wants them to do. The nation to the last man feels that it has had enough of ego-centric politics and would have no more of it. So, our counsel to the opposition leadership is: write your reply to the Speaker on a positive note, at least sit down with him for a talk, tell him what is needed to be done for your return to parliament and thereby prepare the ground for a full-scale dialogue with the ruling party to discuss the next general election.

Participation in a dialogue process does neither mean shifting of positions or acceptance of defeat in the round one, as the political novices will only have us believe. On the contrary, it shows respect to popular aspirations. Speaking of public expectation, the PM's personalised vulgar attack on the opposition leader could be made up for by a courteous expression of a regret over it. That won't mean any 'defeat' or shifting of position either.

### NU: Toying with Students?

THE National University seems set to create a I record in consistently failing to discharge its responsibilities. As if the dismal handling of admit eard distribution for the degree (pass) examinations were not a poignant enough testimony to its inadequacy, it now has made a real mess of the honours (part-3) examinations schedule. In the face of examinees' demand for a deferment, the academic council came up with a two-tier and, needless to say, doubly-confusing solution. Without disturbing the original schedule for a January 24 start, the council outlined an alternative routine for those unwilling to go by the former to take the exams on July 24. There was apparently no mention of any session dislocation. Naturally, many students went for the July 24 roster. But, now, according to a report carried by a Bangla daily, the ones going for the July 24 schedule will be bracketed in the next session and thereby will lose one academic year. The council's caprice has certainly cast a dark cloud over the future of a few thousand students. Obviously, the examinees are not too happy with the arrangement and students of four colleges in Chittagong have already hinted an at intense agitation programme to force the authorities to come up with a uniform exam date in late-March without prolonging the session.

Basically, therefore, once again we are faced with the disquieting prospect of strikes at different educational institutions across the country. Our question to the national university is: why toy with the future of so many students? Why take such decisions as leave the students in uncertainty? The university itself was created to ease the pressure on the leading universities in matters of supervising degree (pass) and honours programmes of different colleges under their wings. The idea was to get all the colleges under one umbrella, regulating and facilitating thereby their academic activities. Unfortunately, that has not happened. The education ministry needs to put the NU on an even keel to justify its existence. Immediately, however, the confusion over examination schedule needs to be dispelled before students' agitation leads to more trouble.

### Rohingya Repatriation

THE news of resumption of talks between Bangladesh and Myanmar in Yangon on repatriation of Rohingya refugees to their homeland marks a step forward in resolving a thorny issue between the two countries. The repatriation process had suddenly been stopped in

This fresh move promises to break a longstanding stalemate. It is worthwhile to mention that some 21,000 Rohingyas, living in two refugee camps - Nayapara and Kutupalong - in Cox's Bazar, have been waiting to go back to their homeland since 1991. The process of repatriation has been an on-and-off affair till it came to a virtual standstill in 1997. The trickle of fifty persons being repatriated to Myanmar per week points to a long drawn-out process encompassing nearly three years, which can complicate the process rather than facilitating it. We have to avert that prospect anyhow.

Moreover, reportedly, the birth rate at the refugee camps has almost surpassed the rate of repatriation, which only means the number of the displaced on this side of the border is effectively increasing. This might aggravate the situation in future and tell upon the local economy while the humanitarian concern for the refugees grows.

We hope the meeting between high-powered delegations of the two countries will bear fruit in the shape a concrete agreement enabling the completion of the process of repatriation at the earliest, say, well within a year's time.

Russia's Presidential Election: Putin's Possible Rivals

by Harun ur Rashid

Mr. Putin appears to have at present an overwhelming edge over other possible contestants in the election because of his tough role displayed towards Chechen rebels. Furthermore he will have the full backing of the government and the state-controlled media in the campaign. The centrist coalition that eclipsed the once-dominant Communists in the Duma in the 19 December parliamentary elections could become Mr. Putin's power base.

nally scheduled in June but the dramatic resignation of Presi-(39) from the advisory position dent Boris Yeltsin on the new in the Kremlin. This has been a year's eve resulted in the early shrewd and calculated move on poll. Under Russia's Constituhis part. While protecting his tion, the election should be former master Mr. Putin is atheld within 90 days after the tempting to distance himself resignation of the President or from Yeltsin administration to when the position falls vacant. enable him to get elected in the

The office of the President ensuing Presidential election. Who is Mr. Putin? Some say in Russia has enormous powers. It is not like the office of that if loyalty is the main prethe President of the USA who requisite for a long career incan be impeached and can be side Yetsin's administration, criticised. He not only sacked Mr. Putin has passed the test. In one of his television interthree of his cabinets but quite a few Prime Ministers as well. views, he even made his own The Russian President can presidential ambition sound as dismiss the Parliament and if it had been ordered by a supecan appoint a Prime Minister rior. He said: " It would be at his will, subject to the conawkward if I said I wasn't ready firmation of the lower house of if the President said I was." the Parliament (Duma). He is Mr. Yeltsin hand picked Mr. able to control the Press in

Putin in last August. Born in Petersburg Mr. Putin is a son of a locksmith and had spent almost 20 years as an official in KGB, mostly in East Germany. He later became the first Vice-Mayor of the city and reportedly became known as the city administration's "grey cardinal", an indispensable adviser regarded with respect and a touch of fear. He also headed the St. Petersburg Chapter of " Our Home Is Russia", a party began in 1995 to support Mr. Yeltsin's allies in the parliamentary elections. Despite his work as a KGB spy, he is known to have been closely associated with the leading pro-Western market reformer, Anatoly Chubais, best known for spearheading a privatisation drive under President Yeltsin in the 90s.

Mr. Putin said that he hoped the election would build stability in Russia. However, no one clearly knows Mr. Putin's views on the issues facing Russia except Chechnya. What Mr. Putin will actually do if and when he is elected is any one's guess. Mr. Putin seems to be an unknown existence for the Russians because very few people know him except for the fact that he made a name for himself by vigorously waging a war against the Chechen rebels. If he succeeds in the war it is good for him but there is a view that if Chechnya war is bogged down with Russian casualties, then the tide of popularity for him could be reversed.

Many people close to the Kremlin became fabulously rich by controlling natural resources of the country. Some compared these oligarchs to the "robber barons" of the late 19th century in the United States. Another group in Russia is alleged to have made money by corrupt means, even through laundering money and selling off natural resources. There is a view that these oligarchs had been behind the rise of Mr. Putin and recommended Mr. Putin to former President Yeltsin for the position of the Prime Minister.

Who are Mr. Putin's possible rivals in fight for the top job? There are at least five at present. One is Mr. Gennady Zyuganov( 55), the head of the

Russian Communist Party. He was able to pick up 40 per cent of the popular vote when he ran for President against Yeltsin in 1996. Another one is Grigory Yavlinsky (47). He is an economist by training and authored "500-day plan" to rescue the Soviet economy with market reform in the Gorbachev era. He is far more popular among foreign policy makers than he is with the average Russian voter. He was able to garner 7 per cent of the vote in

1996 election

The other candidate is Aman Tuleyev (55). He is the Governor of the Central Siberian Kemerovo mining region. He also ran against Mr. Yeltsin and was able to secure 86.8 per cent vote in 1996. The other two candidates are the two former Prime Ministers, Victor Chernomyrdin and Yevgeny Primakov. The former was dismissed in May 1998 for being too slow on reforms after holding the high office for about six years and the latter was sacked after eight months in office for being too popular with the public.

However, one dark horse appears to be General Alexander Lebed (49) who is the Governor of Krasnoyarsk in the East Siberian region (four times the size of France). He was a hero of Afghanistan war. He came third in the Presidential election in 1996, securing 15 per cent of the vote. He became the Security Adviser to Mr. Yeltsin

for a short period and was dismissed by the former Presi-

The ordinary people did not investigate whether bombings in the apartment in Moscow and in other places were the work of the rebels or the Russian intelligence organisation. No investigative inquiry was known to have been set up to deal with this bombings in Russia. The people in Russia were led to believe that Chechen rebels did the bombings and therefore they continued to support the war and the policy pursued by Mr. Putin against the Chechen rebels. The Russian war, in fact, reportedly killed more civilians than the rebels in Chechnya.

Mr. Putin appears to have at present an overwhelming edge over other possible contestants in the election because of his tough role displayed towards Chechen rebels. Furthermore he will have the full backing of the government and the statecontrolled media in the campaign. The centrist coalition that eclipsed the once-dominant Communists in the Duma in the 19 December parliamentary elections could become Mr. Putin's power base. The opposition parties, on the other hand, caught by the sudden resignation of Mr. Yeltsin were scrambling to select candidates and put together campaigns. Several top politicians who had been expected to run are believed to be reconsidering because of Mr. Putin's lead in the

The toughness Mr. Putin likes to project has not been applied to the black spots of Russian society: corruption. rampant tax evasion and crime. Mr. Putin's challenge is what to do after the dust settles over the Chechen war. The failure of the reforms introduced by Yeltsin administration appears to be a tragedy for the Russian people, although lately the economy is gaining strength. However the underlying problems of economy remain endemic.

Given the terrible shadow cast over the 20th century by Soviet totalitarianism, the Western world has a powerful interest in seeing Russia make a successful transition to a market -oriented democracy. The most obvious reason for that interest is that Russia still has vast stockpiles of nuclear. chemical and biological weapons. Another is that the creation of a strong Russian economy will provide a tonic for global growth.

The question remains whether Mr. Putin, when elected as President, will be , pursuing the path of democracy and accountability in the country and will be able to restore the Russian economy? Whether Mr. Putin will be able to control "the oligarchs" in Russia grown under Yeltsin's administration? No body seems to know at present. For any country other than Russia, the failure would be disheartening and dispiriting. But because it is Russia which holds the world's second largest nuclear arsenal, it could be alarming and threatening to the Western

The author, a barrister, is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

## Can Washington Improve Indo-Pakistan Ties?

The US is pressing both India and Pakistan for dialogue to resolve their differences. While taking

the credit for averting a likely conflict during Kargil crisis, it wants to pursue peace moves between

the two neighbours.

THE recent hijacking of an airlines Indian a commercial flight from Kathmandu to New Delhi has shown further downswing in the already-bitter relations between two traditional rivals in South Asia -- India and Pakistan. Their relationship. touched a nadir few months ago during the Kargil conflict. The West, particularly the United States, intervened, and backstage efforts by Washington resulted in the lessening of the tensions but Islamabad had to pay the price as it had to agree to call back militants and others supported by it from Indian side of the line of control

USSIAN politicians have

for the country's Presi-

dential election, kicking off a

campaign in which the Acting

President Vladimir Putin (47)

appears to be the clear

favourite to succeed Mr. Boris

Yeltsin. The election was origi-

There is a view that the sud-

den resignation of Boris

Yeltsin was prompted partly by the fact of his continuing ill

health and partly by the fact

that he needed immunity from

prosecution for the alleged cor-

ruption in the Kremlin prior to

his vacating the office. Mr.

Yetsin's health was known to

be so precarious that he limited

to no more than 30 minutes of

productive work a day. Mr.

Yeltsin killed "two birds in one

stone" as both the objectives

appear to have been fulfilled.

The Acting President Putin de-

creed that the former President

would be immune from prose-

cution, while at the same time

he dismissed Mr. Yeltsin's

daughter Tatyana Dyachenko

set 26th March as the date

The development averted a possible war, but the sitting governments in two countries experienced contrasting impact of the Kargil crisis, as the interim government in India derived huge benefits from it. because of its handling of the conflict and ultimate resolution were seen as victory for India. The government of A. B. Vajpayee went on to win the midterm polls while an absolute majority for his BJP-led multiparty alliance was not on the cards before the Kargil issue came to the fore. By stark contrast, the Nawaz Sharif government in Pakistan despite having unassailable majority in the National Assembly bore the wrath of the army and also opposition parties as they saw government's agreeing to with-

AKISTANIS savoured a

special delight in the

L cricket team winning both

their fixtures in the first round

of the Carlton-United one-day

World Series in Brisbane, Aus-

tralia. That it happened on Eid

(and the day immediately after)

made the holidays that much

sweeter, that the victories came

against the rampaging World

Champions Australia and arch-

rival India, the latter a virtual

impossibility contrived by

Saglain Mushtag and Wagar

Yunus on the last ball, made it

much more enjoyable. Memo-

ries of Miandad's last ball six at

Sharjah came floating back. To

round off a good beginning to

the year, the century and the

millennium (give or take a

year), the much-awaited rains

finally came to Pakistan (in

place of the severe drought that

threatened our already fragile

and reeling economy), in time

to ensure a possible bumper

wheat crop. On cue, the Karachi

Stock Exchange Index went up

170-80 points in one heady day

(12 Jan 2000), the next day their

computers went bust. In the

general euphoria of nothing-

succeeds-like-success, we ig-

nored the obvious failings of

our beloved cricket team,

namely the constant failure of

our front-line batsmen in a

record six back-to-back one-

batting problems stem partly

from Aamer Sohail's non-in-

clusion (1) mainly because of

his attitude problem, (2) a mu-

tual aversion with Wasim

To put it bluntly, Pakistan's

day matches.

draw the militants as a total capitulation, for which the prime minister had to travel to Washington and meet President

Bill Clinton.

The people and the army in Pakistan were known to be unhappy over Sharif's surrender on the crisis despite initial gains by the Islamabad-backed outsiders. This caused obvious irritant between the civilian government and the army in one hand, and on the other the government-opposition ties nosedived further. The army toppled the government on October 12 last year and the Kargil issue was considered to be at the back of the development. An elected government's unconstitutional exit cannot be liked by the democratic world and the episode faced severe criticisms Opposition parties, initially appeared gleeful at the departure of the PML government of Sharif but is now looking askance at military government's moves since new ruler General Pervez Musharraf is showing little fascination for the politicians regardless of political lines. He is also taking many of them to task for "corruption and misdeeds". The military is also ambiguous on the timetable for return of democracy in Pakistan even

though it says that "real democracy" will be restored at the

A four-member powerful parliamentary delegation from the United States comprising four Democratic party Senators and led by minority leader Tom Daschie is visiting Pakistan at the moment and has held talks with Foreign Minister Abdus

crisis by exerting pressure on Pakistan for a solution, Washington possibly wants to strike a balance now by not further antagonising Islamabad. This may explain why Clinton administration was rather mute on the dismissal of the elected government by the army. It certainly disapproved the de-

velopment but not to the extent MATTERS ## AROUND US Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury

THE SHADOW THE SHADOW S Sattar. The delegation apparently has two main agenda for world's leader. Its reactions discussions -- a timetable for return to democracy in Pakistan and improvement in

Indo-Pakistan relations.

The US and the Clinton administration is pressing both India and Pakistan for dialogue to resolve their differences. While taking the credit for averting a likely conflict over the Kargil, it wants to pursue the efforts what it perceives as peace moves between two belligerent neighbours. Since the US is widely seen to have sided with New Delhi in the "Kargil"

expected from the democratic were largely ritualistic rather than meaning business. The US also ignored the recent call by the Indian prime minister to declare Pakistan a "terrorist state" in the wake of the hijacking of the Indian plane and this sounds plausible when viewed in the context that Washington may not be keen to push Pakistan further away lest such a distance affects its ties with

South Asia. The Democratic Senators -minority leader Tom Daschie of South Dakota, Christopher

Dodd of Connecticut, Hary Reid of Navada and Daneil Akaka of Hawaii -- are holding talks with the Pakistan side. Evidently. the US delegation is stressing on early return of democracy, need for dialogue with India to relax tensions, and Pakistan signs the CTBT. Islamabad's responses are not difficult to read. It says that democracy will be restored after the present administration disciplines the economy and clears politics of "corruption". As far as ties with India is concerned, Pakistan quite expectedly cites "Kashmir" as the main bone of contention. It also relates Indian nuclear strategy and actions about Islamabad signing the CTBT. Pakistan is particularly concerned at the reports that the US may recognise India as a nuclear power. But it wants the US to treat both India and Pakistan at per since both have atomic powers now.

India does not seem keen for a dialogue with the military government of Pakistan and more so with the person whom it views at the mastermind of the Kargil intrusion. This makes the resumption of the dialogue difficult. Prime minister Vajpayee had good personal rapport with ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif despite dif-

ferences at the state level, and he had earlier expressed concern about Sharif's life at the hand of the present government in Pakistan. The Lahore Declaration between Vajpayee and Sharif did create a positive ambience although qualitative change in their bilateral ties is a Herculean task. Two countries had "composite" talks covering different issues -- ranging from co-operation in sports and culture to settlement of Sir Creek maritime boundary disputes earlier. But now the pitch of negotiations seems to have queered to the extent that it is difficult to retrieve.

President Clinton is expected to visit South Asia within a few months. He is unlikely to visit Pakistan because of the character of governance there. Islamabad is asking US to include it in the itinerary lest the visit becomes too apparently one-sided. Washington is not likely to change its mind. However, the US wants a better political environment in the region during Clinton's visit. The assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs Karl Indurfurth is expected to make a swing in the region. He will definitely press both New Delhi and Islamabad for steps to improve the bilateral relations. It remains to be seen if the American effort and pressure bear any fruit since betterment of the Indo-Pakistan ties at this stage is unquestionably very difficult -- but not impossible.

## Horses for Courses

To quote Humayun Gauhar in a recent article, a person who bought a Rolls Royce discovered after a mile or so that the Rolls had no engine. On return to the Showroom he asked the salesman how the Rolls had managed to go a mile without an engine, he was told, "on pure reputation, sir, on pure reputation". Unfortunately, reputation will only take you so far, beyond one needs capability, not simply good wishes and hoping against hope.

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Akram and (3) the Selection Committee putting personal egos, likes and dislikes ahead of the national interest. Aamer Sohail has also to put the national interest (and his own career) ahead of his over-developed ego. in the national interest some accommodation and compromise must be made in the knowledge that prima donnas all over tend to behave in like fashion. Chairman PaRistan Cricket Board (PCB) did well convincing the ICC Chairman to have the outrageous decision to suspend Shoaib Akhtar put in abeyance. Lt Gen Tauqir Zia has now to ensure merit in selection, that only the best in Pakistan walk into any international cricket field. The tremendous pressure on Saeed Anwar to not only score every time he dons his pads but to hold down one end. has had disastrous results. If anyone expects ljaz, given his sorry scores over of the last two years, to perform more than once every 10 matches or even more, he (or she) is really optimistic. To quote Humayun Gauhar in a recent article, a person who bought a Rolls Royce discovered after a mile or

Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi asked the salesman how the Rolls had managed to go a mile without an engine, he was told, "on pure reputation, sir, on pure

far, beyond one needs capability. not simply good wishes and hoping against hope. The sincerity of intent of the present military rule notwithstanding, one only wishes they would have stayed a mile or so away from legal complications in which they have gradually been entangled by the past masters of legal manipulation. the only way such legal eagles make themselves indispensable. They should be politely shown where all indispensable people ultimately land up. Given that the selection of horses for courses, e.g. Lt Gen Moinuddin Haider as Federal Minister Interior, Shaukat Aziz for Finance, etc has been outstanding, in some crucial cases the choice has been for relative

reputation". Unfortunately.

reputation will only take you so

the easy route by avoiding healthy internal debate. Brilliant people are usually difficult to manage, that is what leadership is all about. Selections for many posts need to be taken soon. As a keen student of what Richard Nixon has been preaching and practicing e.g. never debate a point to death. take a decision quickly, the Chief Executive (CE) has curbed his natural instinct for being decisive in favour of being deliberate. He is on a fine line here, the national interest very much requires that he abandon the normal confines of a "fortress philosophy" to boldly reach out for the best and the brightest in each discipline. Despite the careful filteration process adopted, some hard-core mentors of corruption have permeated themselves into senior management positions on the basis of a false reputation of achievement. Can men live on creating favourable perceptions for themselves, they will re-

main con men throughout their lives, rank opportunists having no faith except to their own pockets. Luckily their penetration has been confined to only a handful.

Looking for someone to command the cavalry on his right wing, Napoleon glumly interviewed a lot of honest, courageous, brilliant, innovative, dashing, etc generals before asking plaintively for a general who was "lucky". Destiny has been kind to Gen Pervez Mosharraf, never more so than on Oct 12, 1999. The CE helped matters along by the choice of able and loyal subordinates as his first order of business in the Army, read "POWER PLAY" (The NATION, Oct 17, 1998). who came up trumps when it really counted. He could have been more judicious in the selection of his National Security Council (NSC), the Federal Cabinet and the Provincial set-ups. Honest men (and women) of integrity for the most part, are they of the competence and brilliance this country needs to get us out of the morass that half a century of corruption and inefficiency have brought us to? The CE is on the crest of a wave of prayers and good feelings for him to succeed for the sake of the country, this honeymoon allows him to make bolder choices from a large canvas of

The common man presently feels far relieved in the absence of the stress and strain of divisive politics and opportunistic economics that he has been suffering for over the whole of Pakistan's independence, never more so than in the last 12 years of so-called democratic rule. However, he continues to be burdened by an economic equation that drives him deeper in debt every day, despite the distant trumpet of an economic revival. The same obstructionist bureaucrats sit near the controls of our economic destiny, "see no change, hear no change and speak no change". Bureaucrats will filibuster on extraneous reasons every time they feel their hold on power is

talent.

threatened, taking issue with every small nuance, calmly trying to wreck the reforms process, secure in the knowledge that at most they will be sidelined as "Officer on Special Duty" (OSD) for a short time. The CE must press into service Ministers who will rule the bureaucrats of their fieldoms instead of being ruled by them. otherwise the whole process will stall despite the best of intentions. It would not be the first time the sincere motives of military rule would have been thus frustrated, 'WHY DO MARTIAL LAWS FAIL", (The NATION June 29, 1995).

One may differ with Gen Pervez Mosharraf on a number of counts, we are all agreed on one crucial issue, he has to succeed for the sake of Pakistan, one cannot pray otherwise. We must continue to will him to succeed in the face of impossible odds in the same nail-biting way we all did for Saqlain and Waqar Yunus on two consecutive days, their determination to win very clearly etched on their faces. They may well repeat their dogged performance in the next match but how many times will we be so lucky? If our top batsmen do not start getting to the pitch of the ball. the opposing teams will keep on enjoying the slip fielding practice we are giving them. Unless we break the shackles of routine, of remaining content with life as usual, we might as well be

We stopped India in its tracks in their attempt to malign us on the Indian Airlines hijack issue only because our electronic media for a change reacted professionally. One can still afford to leave Aamer Sohail out of the cricket team and depend upon Divine Providence to ball us out but can the rulers of a nation whose very existence as an independent and sovereign entity is threatened afford to discard the likes of Aamer Sohails from contributing to the country's well being and future in a period of extreme crisis? This talent has to be recognized, to be brought in from the cold. Remember, the Rolls Royce may well travel a mile without an engine on the basis of reputation alone, for good governance of a nation we require men (and women) of substance and brilliance who will go the distance.

We are ashamed

Sir. We have stepped into the New Millennium with lots of hopes and dreams. The New Year's eve was celebrated all over the world with joy. But what have we done in Bangladesh? We have brutally assaulted a girl.

We are ashamed of what has happened at the University of Dhaka. Pradip Kumar Deb

The University of Melbourne

School of Physics

Retirement age Sir, It seems from news reports that the government is contemplating to raise the age

limit at the entry level as well as in retirement stage. We appreciate that the government is thinking over an important is-

so that the Rolls had no engine.

On return to the Showroom he

But the discussion is going on for the last 3 years. No decision has yet been taken. Many people are close to their retirement. Many people will seek LPR within a month or so, these people will be hard hit if due facilities are is not given to them on the plea of allowing LPR. It is better till no decision is taken, the employees seeking LPR should be asked to continue the work instead of availing LPR. If it is not possible the people, already on LPR or likely to go for LPR very soon, should

be called back for service as and when the decision raise age limit is taken.

mediocrity, a measure to take

Mahbubul Haque 153 Lake Circus, Kalabagan

"Price of Medicine" Sir, I appreciate your timely

editorial informing the readers of the reputation of our pharmaceutical industry in the international market. Being a retired man, I often prefer our local medicines to Indian ones because of their genuineness in matter of production. Though the smuggled Indian medicines are sold at a cheaper price, yet

the people want the Drug Administration to take an effective control over the existing situation in order to reduce the price of locally made medicines for better healthcare.

Since our government has made 40 per cent reduction in the price of the raw materials for our pharmaceutical industry, it is essential for the patients to buy locally-made medicines at a cheaper rate like that of Indian ones. It will serve the purpose to safeguard our own pharmaceutical industry.

Abul Ashraf Noor House# 09, Road #04 Uttara, Dhaka-1230