Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka, Wednesday, January 26, 2000

Speak with One Voice

THE Chamber leaders' initiative for a dialogue between I the opposition and the government to end their political stand-off by way of improving the country's business environment has drawn a blank. We wish it had not; but given the way it was shaping up, the inevitable seems to have happened.

Opposition Leader Begum Khaleda Zia rejected the business community's entreaties for talks with the Prime Minister on the ground that those came too late in the day. She may have implied any of the following two things: (a) the initiative came about against the backdrop of the government's desperation in drawing the opposition into talks so that it is a bit suspect there; and (b) it is too late for her party's intensified agitational programme to be rolled back into a conciliatory mould now. She has even waxed caustic to suggest that all that she now needs a dialogue for is to thrash out the details of electoral reforms and the schedules for the next general election with the caretaker government she wants immediately installed following the 'ouster' of the incumbent government.

Our instant reaction to this would be that political dialogues are held between adversaries and that these can always take place so long as the bone of contention between them remains unresolved. It is never too late to sit for talks in national interest; so, the opposition leader would have done well to adopt a 'better late than never' approach. 'Never' here could turn out to be a point of no return.

That said, when the federating body of the chambers of commerce and industries, the FBCCI, announced the move some important component units did not readily express their solidarity with it. So, it started out on a wrong creditability footing. Its second drop in credibility in the eye of the opposition leader occurred when the Prime Minister had to intervene and bail out the FBCCI initiative from a premature abortion.

The move should have been well-conceived from the very start to be in with any chance whatsoever. It is the disunity among the businessmen that has sealed the fate of an otherwise highly desirable initiative. So, we say to the business leaders, please iron out your differences first, speak with one voice, and when it comes to national interest do it unambiguously without the slightest hint of politicisation and partisanism. If you did all these, we shall stand wholeheartedly by you, pull our full weight behind any righteous cause you may have.

Not a Friendly Move

INDIA has taken steps to fence off its border along Ineighbouring Bangladesh. This has been an on-andoff affair with India. She has a plan to erect barbedwire fences along a large tract of the 1600-mile border with Bangladesh with the express purpose of stopping 'crossborder smuggling and trespassing'. Bangladesh Foreign Minister has rightly reacted to it saying that this will 'affect the relations with India'. He also wants to 'find out why it is being done'. In spite of the fact that Bangladesh has had some fruitful treaties signed with India since the coming to power of the Awami League government, India's position vis-a-vis the border-fencing seems to have remained as it was in the past. The argument put forward by the Indians sounds very naive as Bangladesh, with its meagre industrial base and costly agricultural produces, is hardly in a position to make any inroad into the Indian market. On the contrary, Indian goods are so cheap and have such a lucrative market in Bangladesh that the smugglers find it worthwhile to flood the market here with their merchandise. It is hard to believe that the

Indian government is not aware of all these realities on the ground. So there has to be some other reasons and that brings us to 'trespassing,' meaning that Bangladeshi citizens have been allegedly illegally entering into India and staying there. This apprehension has been expressed by India so many times and it was sought to be allayed as many times by Bangladesh, but evidently to no avail so far. The government in Delhi has so many times tried to push in so-called Bangladeshis but their attempts have been foiled by resistance on our side. India is asking for transhipment facility through Bangladesh, and train service between the two countries; Dhaka-Calcutta bus service has been started and a new bus service between Dhaka and Agartala is in the offing to facilitate travel to the eastern states of India through Bangladesh. When these important steps are envisioned to facilitate movement of goods and people between these two countries, it is intriguing why the Indian government is going about the business of fencing the border. Furthermore, the kidnapping and killing of innocent Bangladesh citizens by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) continue unabated and this is a serious matter that should be addressed by both the governments immediately.

We believe the government will effectively protest the inexplicable Indian action instead of expressing a mere dissatisfaction over it at a press conference like the foreign minister did.

> Restore Sanity at Shahjalal University

MONDAY'S meeting between the education minister and the authorities of Shahjalal University of Engineering & Technology highlighted a disquieting reality: the situation still remains tense at the university and the teachers, especially ones on the syndicate, are in fear of mortal danger. Evidently, nothing much has changed ever since the controversy over the naming of some academic and administrative buildings at the university took violent proportions. As it now stands, the entire town of Sylhet, not only the university campus, is held hostage by the belligerent students and political activists opposing the syndicate decision. With the pro-decision activists drumming up public support in their favour through signature campaign and erection of the Mukta Pratibad Manch (open stage for protestation), the end of bellicosity and violence looks highly unlikely. Restoration of sanity at the Shahjalal University and resumption of normal academic activities thereby remains a far cry. More importantly, future of general students in their thousands hangs in balance.

As we have commented in an earlier editorial, the position taken against the syndicate decision is doubly disquieting. Firstly, it undermines the authority of the syndicate and secondly, and disturbingly, it smacks of antiliberation sentiments. Also, death threats issued to the syndicate members bore, in our view, a resemblance with the evil design of the marauding forces in 1971 to extinguish the spirit and ideal of the War of Liberation. By extending their support to and joining hands with the protesters, the mainstream opposition parties have not only made the situation worse but also tarnished their own image and raised a question over their political agenda.

We demand an immediate end to the standoff and request the authorities to force the violence-mongers to back off. The government should take it as a breach of law and order and political parties should refrain from adding political colour to the issue. Overall, we want sanity restored to the university and academic activities resumed.

Amend the Constitution?

NDIA celebrates January 26 The people of India have demonstrated through elections that they have the ability to run the as the Republic Day because Lit adopted on that day in institutions that the constitution has devised. The real problem is how to inculcate the values of 1950 the constitution, which democracy, especially among politicians who are interested only in grabbing power and sustaining converted the country into a it by hook or by crook. No amount of amendments will make republic. The republicisation of India is, by no means, an the constitution work if they don't change. ordinary achie-vement.

poor but the landlords are wealthy; the common man is helpless but the rulers have all the power. The country has not reconciled the contradictions even after 52 years of indepen-

But the real significance of

January 26 is that Jawaharlal

Nehru, then Congress president

declared on that day in 1930

from the bank of the Ravi that

India would only accept purna

swaraj, full independence, and

not Dominion Status, the goal

placed before the British rulers

till then. Mahatma Gandhi de-

signed for the occasion a flag.

which later became the coun-

- white, green and saffron.

White represented purity, green

the Muslims and the saffron the

Hindus. There was a drawing of

a spinning wheel on the flag be-

cause "India, as a nation, can

live and die for the spinning

wheel." When the country be-

came free on August 15, the

same flag was declared the na-

tional flag, with the Ashoka

chakra replacing the spinning

The Gandhites, who are ob-

serving a fast on January 26 at

the Raj Ghat, where the Ma-

lining the point that indepen-

dence has not given India what

the national struggle had

promised. Mahatma Gandhi

had warned that political inde-

pendence would have no mean-

more hungry, more uneducated

and more unsheltered people

than we had at the time of inde-

pendence. Neither the policy of

self-sufficiency, nor that of lib-

eralisation, has freed the coun-

try from poverty. The first

stagnated the growth rate. The

second increased the dispari-

It is a strange thing that in-

dustries are sick but the indus-

trialists are rich; the tillers are

ATELY the public have

formed a rather unchari-

I table image of the police

workforce, as its performance

is deteriorating and not coming

up to public expectation, due to

different factors and pressures

being generated in a society

which is changing fast every

have increased, and the addi-

tional processing is beyond the

current handling capacity of

the police system. The control

on crimes depends on the piv-

otal points of the criminal and

unsocial activities. If these are

generated politically, then the

police feel a little bit helpless in

saying, but the nipping point is

not visible to the public at large.

The pullers of the strings are

traceable; but how to stop these

puppet-dances? The former al-

the traps. Subtle political mis-

demeanors are not easy to con-

factors are contributing to the

poor performance of the police,

helpers when called upon for

their services. The pressure

from the external sources is

mostly political, resulting from

the field testing the newly-

regained power and influence

by the politicians, hibernating

for 16 years under autocratic

in Bangladesh today is totally

unfit, morally, mentally, logis-

tically, and technically; to

maintain the law and order sit-

uation in the fast changing so-

ciety (the tempo and the fre-

quency of occurrences have

risen exponentially). A routine,

stable, ongoing system requires

less energy (flywheel effect) to

The day to day police service

tarnishing its image as instant

Both external and internal

ways manage to keep away from

'Nip it in the bud' is a wise

chasing the masters!

trol in any country.

umbrellas.

The workload on crimes

Indeed, in numbers, we have

ing without economic indepen-

hatma was cremated, are under-

The flag was three-coloured

try's national flag.

The BJP-led government is trying to find an answer to the country's ills through amendments to the constitution. It is a wrong approach. The constitution has seldom come in the way of development or economic growth. The courts have generally interpreted the constitution in a positive and progressive way. The Supreme Court has revised its own judgments which favoured vested interests: for example the abolition of privy purses.

Dr Rajendra Prasad, who presided over the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly, had warned, that the future of the constitution would depend on its working. That warning has gone awry because some people in power have mutilated the constitution both in letter and spirit. There have been about 85 amendments to serve particular interests. And there is no sensitivity to the dignity of the constitution. For instance. the Emergency (1975-77) deliberately derailed the constitution by suspending the fundamental rights.

Even when suggestions have been made to sort out problems without amending the constitution, little attention has been paid to them. Subjects for the States and the Centre were demarcated by the Constituent Assembly. Still, the Centre has spread itself all over. The Sarkaria Commission proposed several steps whereby the states would feel more independent

the inputs are within the design

parameters (can't face an SMG

with a .303 rifle). But a chang-

ing system (any system, in fre-

quency and characteristics)

needs fast feedbacks and de-

ployment teams for instant

corrective action, to provide

satisfactory service at the

trained, professional level (just

as the doctors have to adapt

themselves to new diseases [like

AIDS/HIV], medicines and

The police, as controller of a

criminal situation, have to

change and act faster than the

changing society, to have

enough reserves for contingen-

cies (unhindered by the politi

ctans in power), to contain the

spread of new types of criminal

The deterrent measures must be

more than required to cover the

anticipated activities. Crimes

go up with the rise of circula-

tion of money. The police have

to compete at the highest level

Why the open moral degra-

dation at the proper levels was

not so high, as it is observed to-

day, when the autocrats ruled,

is an issue which the politicians

must analyse in the parliament

and at the ministerial level.

Which trends, political or

otherwise, encouraged indisci-

pline, and eroded moral values

have to be spotted by the social

scientists, for the proper en-

forcement of the law. Who are

the masterminds could be

classified as culprits by the Na-

does not exist in Dhaka).

tional Moral Tribunal (which

war crimes tribunal operating

at the international level trying

the genocide cases at the Hague,

covering more fields than a

single one of 1971 genocide. The

high-profile culprits always

We need something like the

of performance in this commu-

activities occurring every day.

techniques).

nication age.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

and more self-sufficient. No constitutional amendment was recommended by the commission. All the suggestions remain unimplemented even after 16 years of the commis-

sion's report. It shows that amendments to the constitution are not necessary. Administrative measures can be devised to get over the deficiencies. The flaws in the constitution are not real flaws. They are either a fallout from the accumulated mistakes of different governments or a levious plan to put fetters to democratic institutions.

One of the suggestions which the BJP has floated is that the Lok Sabha should have a fixed tenure of five years. This goes against the grain of democracy How can people be stopped seeking fresh elections when they find that the government in power has become dictatorial, sectarian or communal?

Jayaprakash Narain represented the country's mood against Indira Gandhi's personal and corrupt rule during the Emergency and after. The Jana Sangh, the earlier incarnation of the BJP, also rallied behind JP. How can the same party think of stalling a popular movement for fresh elections? In fact, JP's demand went even farther - a constitutional provision for the recall of MLAs and MPs to reestablish

point at others, and are above

the reach of the police. The con-

clusion is clear enough: Inter-

fogged, frustrated and lustful

politicians to power after 16

years encouraged and enlarged

different types of criminal and

unsocial activities not notice-

able before in such volume, due

to the suspicion that political

patronisations and nepotism

plays a pivotal part in lack of

prosecution. The non-political

part is that corruption has been

more or less institutionalised

flatest finding is that the Anti-

corruption Bureau itself is due

of the politicians in power

(euphemistically called the rep-

resentatives of the good and in-

nocent people) will hesitate to

support directly, strongly and

openly the immediate moral

rearmament of the police ser-

vice, as the police have to serve

their subjective ends first

(subjective security is a nui-

sance in public life—include the

sheltered and self-armoured

nimity in the assumption that

the police have been spoiled by

the successive regimes, strug-

gling ruthlessly to remain in

power. The police cadre know

about the political virus circu-

lating within the closed police

system, but cannot speak out,

stowed; it has to be cultivated

for years, before it is voluntar-

ily recognised by the followers

- the latter are certainly not

duffers, though some of them

might be crooked enough to

share the spoils of victory (as in

the case of Sikdar). The greatest

weakness facing a leader (any

leader in any field) is

temptation (for power and

Leadership cannot be be-

for obvious reasons.

There is some sort of una-

Naturally the shady sections

for probel).

bureaucrats).

The return of the rusted,

ference with public duties.

The Pressures on the Police Workforce

by Abul M Ahmad

No system can remain in operation without public support, including the politicians. The trained

police force is not being allowed by those in power to run the show in a professional manner,

as can be seen in other stable countries.

their acceptability with the

electorate through fresh polls. Parliaments and assemblies are a means to an end, not the end itself. The end is the people, who should remain sovereign. That is the essence of democracy. The tenure of parliament and assemblies are important in the sense that members continue to enjoy support in their respective constituencies.

Our constitution states, as does the Irish constitution, that the Directive Principles are not judicially enforceable. This is quite natural, because, on account of their very nature, the implementation of these principles has to be left to the legislature. Providing free and compulsory education, for instance, cannot be achieved by a judicial decree but has to be left to legislative planning.

The farmers of our constitution specifically laid down that such principles were fundamental in the governance of the country, and that it was the duty of the state to implement them by legislation. Just because these principles are not enforceable through judicial decrees, they do not cease to be fundamental or obligatory. But no government has bothered to respect that sentiment.

If the Centre still wants to appoint a commission to revise the constitution, there should be a debate on the pluses and minuses of such an exercise.

money - both materialistic in

outlook), and the greatest en-

emy is hidden deep inside — the

ego. Then who will cleanse the

police administration? There is

a tool: internal cleansing,

whose other name is revolu-

Bangladesh is trying to cope

with two root and core evils:

moral insensitivity, and politi-

cal zulum or overbearingness.

The expanding ego is a hard

taskmaster: it will extract its

price before retreating. The ul-

timate arbitrators are the pub-

lic. No system can remain in

operation without public sup-

port, including the politicians.

The trained police force is not

being allowed by those in power

to run the show in a profes-

sional manner, as can be seen

in other stable countries. When

there are vast disparities in a

society, as in the undeveloped

countries, then the contrasts

stand out. What helplessness

cal pollution and corruption

have been deliberately and

forcefully infiltrated into the

ercion), and the honest can only

protest at peril. What is happen-

ing today is that the honest and

the dedicated professionals and

workers cannot open their

mouth or protest and criticise

openly, officially or unoffi-

it is an ominous sign (the bad

is like evil and autocratic za-

mindari (as the students of the

British Permanent Settlement

movement are aware). Most of

the unstable and insecure polit-

ical leaders are using too much

power and influence right and

left, but not at the centre, which

is the zooming point of public

posing as good). Bad governance

When bhadra mastaans rule

cially.

other professions (through co-

In Bangladesh today, politi-

before naked demonstrations!

The problem with

The Vajpayee government should hold discussions with the state chief ministers because they will face the 'brunt' of the amendments. Perhaps there can be a consensus on how to work the constitution. This way, the Centre's proposals will have the States' backing. Othcrwise, it can destroy the constitution which has stood the test of time. The new commission, loaded in favour of the BJP, may make proposals exposing the entire edifice to the

danger of sectarianism. Without meaning any disrespect to former President R. Venkataraman, it is unfair to make him the chairman. He was the top leader in the South when the emergency was imposed. One lakh people were de-tained without trial; the press was gagged and the worst crimes were committed with impunity.

There is nothing on record to show that he protested publicly against what Mrs Gandhi did or her son, Sanjay Gandhi, did when they hijacked the consti-

The people of India have demonstrated through elections that they have the ability to run the institutions that the constitution has devised. The real problem is how to inculcate the values of democracy, especially among politicians who are interested only in grabbing power and sustaining it by hook or by crook. No amount of amendments will make the constitution work if they don't change.

The nation faces many problems. The Centre should not indulge in futile exercises like the constitution amendment. Probably it is an attempt to divert the people's attention from the real issues. Let's implement the Constituent Assembly's first resolution. It said that the 'residuary powers' be given to the states. India is at present a 'Union of States.' It should be a 'federation of states'. People feel that too much power is concentrated in New Delhi.

Buchwald's COLUMN

Unsung and Unsaid OTS of things were said in the last millennium that never

got any publicity. Here are some of them: Orville Wright to his brother: "OK, we can make the plane fly, but how can we feed the passengers?" A critic reviewing Dante's "Divine Comedy": "The is one hel-

Michelangelo to his Italian benefactor: "The painting is 450 lire, but if I do it on the ceiling it's dou-

Sigmund Freud to a patient: "You're suffering from erectile dys-function, and there is no cure for it."

Sitting Bull to the Nantucket Indians" "We'll trade you a running back and two wide receivers for three Redskin draft

Madam Curie to a Fotomat salesman: "Can you have these photos developed by 5 O'clock?" Abraham Lincoln: "I am not a crook."

Richard Nixon: "You can fool all of the crooks some of the time and some of the crooks all of the time, but you can't fool all of the crooks all of the time." John Gotti: "Ditto."

Adolf Hitler to Josheph Goebbels: "I don't care what they say about me as long as they spell my name right."

Winston Churchill to his people: "We will fight them on the land, we will fight them on the sea and we will fight them on the Franklin Roosevelt to the people on Dec 7, 1941: "All we have

to fear is fear itself, or a day of infamy, whichever comes first." Albert Einstein: "People don't care about the speed of light as long as they get three square meals a day."

Woodrow Wilson to his secretary of state: "At least I didn't get the country into World War II. Henry Ford to his production manager: "I don't want my

name on any car I produce in case it breaks down." Rasputin: "If Lincoln is not a crook, then I guess it must be

Bill Clinton: "Kiss me once and kiss me twice and kiss me once again. Pablo Picasso: "Every woman I've ever known is two-faced."

Duke of Windsor: "Wally, if you marry me, they'll have to make you queen. Charles de Gaulle: "France is not a great country, but we try

to do the best we can. Greta Garbo: "Let me talk."

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The TSC Saga—Millennium at its Best!

Dr Deepika, writes from Middlesex, London

No matter which part of the world we are living in, no matter which race or religion we belong to, no matter which caste or creed one is familiar with, but the 31st (December) night happens to be a moment which brings new hope, new joy, new dreams and new resolution amongst us all. And if that 31st happens to be the termination of an entire millennium, then all the hope, joy, dreams and resolution automatically multiply a million times. That is the time we think of those who are not with us anymore and pray for the departed souls. think of all the mistakes we have done so far and promise to rectify them. But when one sees the

grotesque pictures, printed in

the dailies, of a half stripped woman fleeing from the grasps of savage and barbaric men in the TSC area of the Dhaka University, as well as reads about all the horrifying incidents related to it, then one fails to comprehend the morality of this day. The western society is constantly branded as shameless and unethical when it comes to disagreeable acts. Our religious leaders are even more vocal when it comes down to the verbal abuses and all the wrath that the Lord is about to bombard the devilish West with. But have they ever wondered why Lord's abominable vengeance hasn't struck yet? Well, the answer is simple enough. Though the West has allowed a lot of freedom when it comes to the vocal, written and other forms of physical expression, yet the ugly diseases that have completely affected our society are very much absent in the western society. One hardly comes across heinous acts such as rape or molestation.

Mugging, snatching of valuables and murder is somewhat a common yet unwanted act throughout the world. But the act carried out by some students of a prestigious university upon a somewhat innocent woman who at that time was passing by hand in hand with her companion has shook the hearts and souls of all the peace loving

people of our country. When in Rome act like a Roman" - a phrase we have come across many times in life. Of course it will look strange if one dresses like an Eskimo and wanders along the Sahara desert. It would be equally funny if one dressed up as an Australian native is seen amongst the crowd in the Holy

Mecca of Saudi Arabia. Therefore one ought to behave exactly the way ones surroundings permit. Any deviation would result in unwanted effects. In our country where men are not allowed to touch another woman in a desired manner until and unless married to her. the fascination for touching a woman physically naturally remains in their mind. Thercfore, any odd chance they get, they let their passion be fulfilled. What consequence it might follow is hardly the matter then. And often the manly animosity plays a vital role in their almost barbaric nd twisted hunger. This results in rape and molestation. Each and every single day reports as such are printed in the media when thousands of incidents like these never comes to light even.

It is not that the nights of 31st December are event free, every single year we are reminded of the horrendous acts carried out by animals in men. If we can't rectify such men folks then why not take a different strategy altogether. If a dog sees a cat, the cat will be chased. But no cats, no chases. Therefore if women are taken out of the equation, then the men folks will sing and drink and dance and be merry and fall victim to each other. Why do the so-called innocent females decide to fall prey every single year? Is it a matter of prestige? If Badhan, the latest of such victims, was innocent enough to walk the dangerous stree's of TSC at that unearthly hour ret I tend to hope that no more Badhan is silly enough to repeat such a folly in the future.

Last but not least, it is our faithful law-enforcing agents. At first where were they? If they really were assigned in the TSC area then what on earth were they doing? Enjoying the spectacle no doubt. After all who wouldn't enjoy a free show, right? Instead of changing the top brass in the police department, why not charge those who were on duty on those premises at that hour? The police commissioner had nothing to do with Badhan's disrobing. Letting them go will merely provoke them more. No matter how many Special Public Acts are cropped up where culprits will be shot, the root of the evil still remains. Men will always be men, women will always be brave (?) enough to walk the streets and police will alway be dumb bribe sucking rats.

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

Plantation on road-dividers

Sir, One would notice that the government is trying to plant and raise trees on roaddividers in the city. Indeed, it is a good attempt. But the point is, how will the root of these trees expand and will the saplings get enough nutrients to grow on such small space?

In our opinion, instead of planting big trees, green grass, shrub and other small flower plants may be planted on the road-dividers which will not only increase the beauty but will also help in keeping the atmosphere clean and healthy. Hence, it is expected that the

relevant department will pay

proper attention to the issue.

Zahidul Haque Associate Professor Bangladesh Agricultural Institute Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-

Transhipment facility to India Sir, As a young Bengali

teenager, grown up in western

ways of London, I love my coun-

try of birth. I try my best to stay

in tune with the ways and wonders of the country I originate from - Bangladesh. In my vivid and admittedly ignorant opinion I would say that these forms of inter-relations, with our neighbouring countries such as India, can surely be beneficial for our country. It is a small but very effective way of slowly but surely declaring our free mind and independent nature to the rest of the continent, if not the rest of the world.

Khaleda Zia has had her time in the spotlight and in my opinion, it was a disappointing period. It's time for her to let Sheikh Hasina continue with her progress.

Ronok Ali 228 Sherrard Rd, Manor Park London E12 6uf Unted Kingdom.

Things can only get better.

Cross-eyed crossborder trade

Sir. The government has to take some firm and long-term policy decisions on cross-border trade around Bangladesh. There is more trading of smuggled goods than through the official trade channels and the total export of Bangladeshi goods

and services to the neighbours is perhaps less than five per cent of our exports.

The recent DS report on the organised high-volume smuggling of London brand of English cigarettes across the Myanmar border is no surprise to the citizens, the smugglers and the border security teams. The unpleasant fact is

Bangladesh's volume of yearly trade with the neighbours is a microscopic, percentage of the country's total volume of import and export (the figures are not properly publicised). On the other hand, the ruling regime is keen to assure the public that the relations with the neighbouring countries are friendly in all respects except trade. The total volume of smuggling at all the frontiers indicate that there is scope for normal trading, but the government is content to lose crores of taka in import-export levies. If politics is treated as a business channel, then this country cannot be governed well.

This is the problem with the SAARC member-countries the amity is all on paper, and cannot be translated into reality. The main obstacle is the animosity between India and Pakistan, and India's patronising treatment of the smaller members. India has to look outwards, not inwards.

The import restrictions in India have been severe since the Partition. Another subjective attitude is its intention to capture the neighbours' markets. This is not the way to lead the region, if that is what it intends to do. India has to show the way, and make some sacrifice.

But it appears that New Delhi is not politically stable enough for a sufficient period to take such a magnanimous stance. When self-security becomes the first priority in politics, the development of the country can wait. Dhaka does not have a better political environment, severely cramping the style of our foreign policy.

Bullying, non-cooperation, and one-way stands have to be avoided by India. For such a vast heterogeneous cour ry, firm foreign policies are of hicult to arrive at, and then implement the same transpar-

At the Myanmar border, the artificial barrier is the Rohingya refugee problem, which, it appears, is being maintained 'at a somewhat artificial, level, for unknown reasons (perhaps it is the official ideology on one side). Also in the Eastern front. there is hardly any trade between Bangladesh and Northeastern India - the latter would not allow the market to be "captured" by Bangladesh; while at the same time transhipment facilities are being sought. Where is the give-and-take formula? Dhaka is playing hushhush over our eastern external policy.

There should be less politics and more transparent business, but not through smuggling. Any demand will create a supply line (anywhere, any time), regardless of man-made reg. la-

Why not utilise it?

A Husnain Dhaka

operate and maintain, provided