The Baily Star

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Home Truths about **Politics**

WE welcome the good counsel that Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud, President of Bangladesh Economic Association, has given to the Prime Minister and to Leader of the Opposition. He has uttered some home truths: 'self-destruction of national politics' has all but render d parliamentary democracy dysfunctional barely stopping short of signalling our incompetence to run multiparty democracy. Given the way the two major political parties have been behaving bilaterally, we would almost certainly be headed for a disaster in the unlikely event that we have a ·two-party system some time in the future.

All this is virtually fostering a negative political culture in the country without any precedent whatsoever. So, in a shocking way — without realising how fast the ground is slipping under our feet — we are rewriting our political legacy; especially that which had been scripted through our democratic struggles, the last one being in 1990.

While in the opposition, Sheikh Hasina had concentrated wholly on her movement against Khaleda Zia who was then in power, refusing to sit down for talks offered by the latter with a routine regularity. Then on, there has been a reversal of roles with Begum Zia now rejecting out of hand Hasina's dialogue offers topped by a non-negotiable demand that the latter resign before time due time being only a year or so away. The two parties command more or less an equal support base so that they have prospects for a ride to power almost in alternating sequences. And, if by turn, they go on rejecting initiatives for talks despite being in deep crises then, of course, the country looks dreadfully headed for a dialogueless, perennially problematic democracy. Who has ever heard of it? The political parties are cutting the very roots of the tree they are perched on. Besides, the pressing tasks of the day, including those of poverty alleviation and managing environmental degradation, are going unaddressed. Furthermore, the breakdown of democratic institutions has indeed exacerbated criminalisation of politics feeding on musclemanry and black money. So long as the self-righteousness of the opposing

racy we have as a system of government. **BRTA's Unnecessary**

Dilemma

political parties is not replaced by their meeting at

some point, with a minimal degree of respect for

each other's views, it will be anything but democ-

MAKA'S traffic system is possibly the worst in Lethe world, with every other motorised vehicles having flawed engines and emitting black smokes; and there are many corrupt and unscrupulous inspectors to impede effective enforcement of the existing regulations. Against this backdrop, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority's (BRTA) plans to install sophisticated and, needless to say, expensive testing gadgets were bound to hit a few snags and it certainly has. If initial test results were any indicator a persistence with the new device would essentially mean barring a vast majority of the vehicles from plying the roads. So, there is apparently a brainwave to lower the test standards so as to make these more 'accommodative'! That is not the end of the story, however. Installation of the high-tech testing gadget is not something to be elated about as this could put an end to the flow of 'extra income' for quite a few inspectors. Resistance from this group is understandable. What, however, strikes us as unacceptable is the very attitude of BRTA. The regulators appear to be resigned to the fact that international standards of vehicular management are not applicable in the country's context. Also, they have seemingly taken the presence of corrupt elements in their ranks as a fixed factor. On both counts, we cannot help condemn their 'accommodative' mindset.

Air pollution in the capital city is possibly the worst in the world. Other major cities in the country have no less a grim record in this regard. Being the major source of air-pollution, the flawed vehicles should be kept off the road by any means. Towards that end, inspection and subsequent enforcement of test results are of prime importance. So, in no way, such a 'lenient' attitude should be shown to the law-breakers. If majority of the vehicles fail to pass the test, then so be it. If installation of these high-tech gadgets means corrupt officials cannot make merry, then so be it. The only way out for BRTA is to install the testing equipment as it is and stick to its results. No concession or adjustment should be made to recalcitrant peo-

Fear of Dengue

XPERTS fear that people of four major cities of the country — Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi — would be vulnerable to dengue in an epidemic form if the Aedes mosquito infestation is not curbed. They said so at a symposium on 'Disease Vector in Bangladesh and Their Management", organised by Bangladesh Zoological Society at the Dhaka University campus on Saturday. For an effective control of the Aedes mosquito, experts suggested that posts of entomologists be created in every government health institution. They also expressed their concern over the appointment of 'physicians against vacancies for entomologists'. This is a rather strange act of negligence by the government but not necessarily the first one recorded by them in terms of putting a square peg in a round hole. To top it all, 'lack of sincerity' on the part of the authority to take effective preventive measures also came under severe criticism from the experts.

The drive for mosquito control must be supervised by qualified entomologists maintained on the pay roll of Dhaka City Corporation. The DCC has been making only half-hearted efforts to eradicate mosquitoes in general from city areas which can never help wipe out any specific variety such as the Aedes.

If the so-called advanced and important places in the country cannot be saved from the attack of Aedes mosquito then one shudders to think of the fate of people living in backward areas. We draw the attention of the new health minister to this ominous prospect and implore him to take effective steps for the eradication of Aedes from the major cities.

Tampering with the Constitution

No Case for Statute Review

Praful Bidwai writes from New Delhi

Indian Constitution has survived 79 amendments (one every nine months) without losing its unique identity, character or Basic Structure. Indeed, it is our most egalitarian, forward-looking, consensually produced text. Despite the many frailties of our legal system and the discrediting of the political leadership, the Constitution's spirit has endured.

tice delivery. On January 27, Mr Vajpayee even contended that a review is necessary for faster "development": to "quickly remove regional and social imbalances" and "benefit the poorest and the weakest"

HE government seems bent

misgivings. That's why it set up

a committee comprising such

obscure, mediocre, "saffron"

academics as M.C. Sharma,

RKP Shankardass, Ghanshyam

Singh or Ms Seita Vaidialingam

to produce a "Backgrounder Pa-

document demands a wholesale

review of diverse issues like

fundamental rights, political

"stability", and judicial ac-

countability, and puts on the

agenda presidential govern-

ment and a Uniform Civil Code.

government makes out a half-

convincing case for a review.

while ignoring President

Narayanan's sagacious advice.

One can only hope that this ill-

advised move does not receive

endorsement from respected ju-

rists such as Justice M.N.

remotely approaching a man-

date for a Constitutional re-

view. Without Telugu Desam

support, it does not command

even a simple majority in the

Lok Sabha, leave alone the two-

thirds required for a Constitu-

tional amendment, much less

ambitions than a "review". And

the TDP has opposed any

"review". The government's ob-

session betrays an anti-demo-

The pro-reviewers have ad-

vanced arguments focused on

political instability, corrup-

tion, growing crime-politics

nexus, and weaknesses of jus-

THE Public Safety Act (PSA)

parliament, though vastly

decimated by chronic non-

attendance of all opposition

parties except Monju's JP and

Rab's JSD, passed the bill in un-

seemly haste. It only awaits

President's assent, which is a

mere formality, to become a

at a time when the political sit-

uation has gone very volatile,

nay, volcanic. The opposition

alliance led by BNP has taken

up a one-point agenda - resig-

nation of the government or

ousting of the government —

and put all efforts into

paralysing the country by call-

ing repeated and prolonged har-

the adversaries.

tals. The ruling party has

Unfortunately it is enacted

is about to be enacted. The

The NDA lacks anything

Venkatachelliah.

cratic attitude.

Neither the Paper nor the

Going by reports, this sloppy

on reviewing the Constitution despite widespread

> Some of these maladies are undeniable-e.g. corruption. But there is no causal connection between them and the remedy. The pro-reviewers misconstrue the Constitution's purposes, and impose upon it a role that it cannot-and should not-perform.

It is not the Constitution that has created instability. Rather, such instability has become endemic to India because of structural causes and social .processes (including politicisation of caste and regionalisation of politics). Amending the Constitution to suppress differ-ences and create artificial stability is no solution.

Nor is there a strong link between political stability and growth. All post-1984 Lok Sabhas have been hung, but average GDP growth has exceeded the earlier "Hindu" rate.

True, income and regional disparities have dangerously

that the government will vic-

timise them under this new en-

actment. Secondly, they know

worsened over two decades. But that is a function of dualistic policies, hierarchical social structures, and excessive reliance upon the market. The President himself emphasised the dangers of "vulgar... conspicuous consumption by the nouveau riche" while "the underclass" seethes "in frustration"; and called for "safe pedestrian crossings in our three-way fast lane of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation". Yet he convincingly argued against reviewing the Constitution.

The crime-politics link is growing. But the remedy is electoral reform, crime control, and democratisation of political parties-not wholesale Constitutional alterations.

One of our gravest failures in 50 years lies in justice delivery. However, it is not the Constitution, but hopelessly outmoded procedures (e.g. adjournments) and unfilled judicial vacancies, that are the culprit. The government refuses to fill over 1,000 vacancies in the subordinate judiciary and a quarter of the 618 High Court posts. So we

have a grotesque situation where 73 per cent of those lodged in jails are undertrials.

Mr Narayanan advises us to "consider whether it is the Constitution that has failed us or whether it is we who have failed the Constitution." This is sensible, as is his statement that parliamentary government is best suited to India's variety, diversity and size.

The issues NDA leaders are raising were debated in the Constituent Assembly not casually-as law minister Jethamalani wants a small panel to do-but over four years. The Assembly chose the parliamentary system because "it preferred more responsibility to stability which could slip into authoritarian exercise of power".

Empirical evidence supports this proposition. Problems of Democratic Transition And Consolidation, an international study by two outstanding political scientists (Alfred Stephan and Juan J. Linz) shows that presidential systems tend to be authoritarian and unrepresentative-e.g.

Latin America, where they don't even provide stability.

Better performing presidencies, e.g. the American, require elaborate checks through Senates, and procedures to prevent abuse and overconcentration of power. The generic case for parliamentary government is infinitely more powerful than for

a presidential system. In India, this acquires additional force because of our Constitution. The Constitution is not a "thin" statute primarily concerned with governance procedures. Rather, it is a programmatic text embedded in political and ideological values. It is like a manifesto, a vision of the India we must build.

Our Constitution is not a passive expression of existing practices, but an exhortation to create new values. As Professor Granville Austin-who wrote a definitive book on our Constitution in 1964, and has returned to it repeatedly-says, ours is one of the world's most advanced statutes. It combines national unity, democracy and progressive social change. Its vision is enlightened. Its "spirit" matters as much as its

tem and the discrediting of the political leadership, the Consti-

"letter".

tution's spirit has endured. It is positively dangerous to tamper with the Constitution. Those who wish to do so betray either communal prejudice, or a peculiar elite frustration at instability and frequent elections, wrongly seen as caused by a handful of "selfish".

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vived 79 amendments (one ev-

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"opportunist" politicians. At work here are two trends: a yearning for a two-party system, for stability at any cost including authoritarianism, itself driven by suspicions of politicians, coupled with glamorisation of the business elite: and secondly, Hindutva's hostility to our secular, egalitarian, statute.

This goes way back to Golwalkar and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya who condemned the "alien" Constitution for not recognising "Bharat Mata" or Hindu primacy. The sangh's agenda is to abridge religious freedoms and impose authoritarian, majoritarian, rule.

The BJP's 1991 manifesto explicitly called for presidential government. Today, it is trying authoritarianism through the back door. This must be opposed.

Public Safety Act: Raging Controversy

by A R Shamsul Islam

People have bitter experiences about how such laws, passed in the name of preserving people's safety, have been used by the ruling party for their political and personal ends. As for example, BNP used Anti-terrorist Act against many labour leaders. Scores of cases were instituted punishing many. AL government arrested some top BNP leaders under the Special Powers Act in the infamous Tower Case.

that they will be required to do activities like damaging vehicles, terrorising the businessmen to clamp down their shutters, terrorising vehicles to keep off the roads, bringing out the belligerent processions in support of hartals etc. which will fall within the purview of the PSA and render them liable to face quickfire charges and trials. Thirdly, being the opposition they feel it a moral duty to protest the PSA looked upon as deterrent to the principle of democracy. Fourthly, if the axe of the act falls heavily on their activists they will run short of their party working force that will gravely hinder their on-go-

quickly replied by mobilising its men and agencies to roll on In fact, the way the PSA was passed in the assembly bodes deadly clashes in future. Previously the bill was discussed in the cabinet meeting on two occasions. Yet it was kept refrained from being tabled in the ing agitational programmes. assembly believing that a Fifthly, protesting the PSA ofgreater volume of consideration fers the opposition a two-di was needed. But this time, to the mensional alternative bargain: surprise of many, its passage (a) If they can prevent enactthrough the parliament was ment of this law they can pose breathlessly rushed upon. Incias heroes having saved the peodentally, the enactment came ple from the yoke of this reup when the recently held napressive law. This will enhance tional conference of the apex their image apart from renderbusiness communities failed to ing them somewhat immune convince the leader of the opfrom being legally penalised for position to refrain from calling their excesses that their agitahartals in the interest of trade tional schedules are prone to and commerce of the country. commit; (b) In the event they Why do the opposition politfail to withhold enactment of ical parties protest the act? Let

popular agitation against the

government. Interestingly, political parties, while in power and the opposition, have exhibited quite contradictory attitudes to the so-called 'Black Laws'. Existing Special Powers Act was passed in 1974 by the then AL government. There were no opposition parties at that time. During Ershad's regime two main opposition combines - one led by AL and the other by BNP - vilified the act as "Black Laws". When BNP came to power in 1991 it used the act and the opposition AL vainly voiced for its abrogation. Further, BNP, during its rule, got an Anti-terrorist Act being enacted which, however, had gone scraped because of its time-frame. Amusingly, AL, now in power, has categorically denied to suspend the Special Powers Act contending that this is needed to function for people's security.

Nobody will deny prevalent deterioration of law and order of the country. There is also a feeling among the people that existing laws and mode of trials are not adequate to combat the situation of impaired law and order. But the pertinent question is who is responsible for this decline in law and order? Is PSA in conformity with what people desire about a modification of existing penal codes and

In a large measure the governments of different times are responsible for law and order deterioration. Can the governments acquit themselves of the charges of overlooking, giving indulgence to and harbouring terrorists and anti-social elements? Why is there a row that many of the godfathers of the terrorists, extortionists belong to the present ruling party? As for example, let us examine the case of Akhtaruzzaman Babu, former MP and former industries secretary of AL. The way he was shielded in the industrialist Humayun Zahir murder case despite his being the chief accused and the manner in which he captured, in broad daylight and before the nose of

mode of trials in the country?

goons speak volumes of government's hobnobbing with the accused. In the recent firing, hijacking incidents over Dhaka City Corporation tender biddings the accused are alleged to belong to the ruling party. Surprisingly, when police apprehended an accused the City Mayor himself (true to the role of protector of corporation inmates) obtained his release.

the police force, the United

Commercial Bank Ltd in Dhaka

with the help of his armed

There is a widespread notion that most of the accused get acquitted in their trials because the police has either prepared

the cases, having taken high bribes, providing for escape routes for the accused or the raw investigating officers have made cases so ill-knit with paucity of evidences and materials as the accused cannot be proved guilty in the trial. It is government's duty to man the police department with honest.

efficient hands and groom them

up with progressive training schemes. The government will pass the PSA. Much of its application will lie with the police. How unfair, indiscriminate. inefficient is our police in exercising its power and responsibilities need no illustration. The brutal fact is that far from becoming a people's force, the police has turned out to be a force of the ruling party. The affairs of Feni, Luxmipur, Barisal, Narayanganj etc. have made it clear that the police does not move at the command of law. Rather it follows the dictates of the ruling party. Police used politically cannot deliver the goods to the people.

The government has assured that PSA will only deal with specific offences like hijacking. extortion, tender collection, smashing cars, damaging properties, impeding movement of transports, abduction, demanding and realising ransoms, creating panic, instituting false cases etc. strictly as per an-

nexed list. The PM herself has reiterated that it will never be abused. The government is trumpeting that the PSA is meant for ensuring security of the people.

But people have bitter experiences about how such laws. passed in the name of preserying people's safety, have been used by the ruling party for their political and personal ends. As for example, BNP used Anti-terrorist Act against many labour leaders. Scores of cases were instituted punishing many. AL government arrested some top BNP leaders under the Special Powers Act in the infamous Tower Case. Upon a writ the High Court ordered for not only their release but asking the government to pay a penalty money of Taka one lac for each of the detainees.

The government's concern for ensuring people's security would have been sincerely manifested had it taken measures to clean up from its own camp terrorists, extortionists etc. who are key players to destroy law and order of the society, instead, passing posthaste the PSA betrays a latent desire of the ruling party to use the act as a lever to strike at the opposition parties, which are also no less crammed with terrorists. extortionists etc. harder and harder. This will only aggravate the game of confrontations between the ruling and opposition parties, leaving the people in utter insecurity and uncertainty. AL should note that the people did not vote it to power to draw such intolerant, undemocratic, destructive, suicidal de-

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.

AIDS Campaign Bank-rolled'

us attempt to find out the prob-

able causes. Firstly, they fear

Sir, I write to you regarding the editorial published in your daily yesterday, titled, 'AIDS Campaign Bank-rolled'. I fully agree with your viewpoint However, I feel that you have left out something that needs to be said.

We look at the World Bank as a benevolent body helping third world countries out of their miseries. It is time to take a second look. We have to see whether in the long run we lose out or not. Foreign aid has caused problems in the past. We have to make sure that the tools they are using for AIDS prevention are suitable for us. We have

There are also problems of loan repayment. A debt-crisis is something we want to stay away from. We have to remember that. We also have to consider whether we are being exploited in the name of assistance.

Anika Mehnaz Dhanmondi Dhaka

Bangla Bhashar E-mail

Sir, I am following the letters under heading "Bangla Bhashar E-mail in the internet" that are being published in your esteemed daily. Most of these letters are more emotional than practical. Whenever I look at the people of our unfortunate country, particularly the intelligentsia I cannot help but remember the following line of a very popular and old Hindi song "Chalna Jeevan ki Kahani, Rukna Maut ki Nishani" which mean "to move on is the story of life, stopping is the sign of death". We Bengalees do not like any change, rather we oppose any change tooth and nail without even giving it any chance of proving itself.

Our average people are as intelligent as those of Japan. While Japan has prospered to become one of the leading industrialised countries of the

world we have remained one of the poorest nations of the world. Basic difference in the approach of Japanese and Bengalees is that they like to experiment with almost everything where we Bengalees would oppose any change for better or for worse.

this law they can use it

(enactment) as a suitable issue,

they are long in quest of, for

You may be surprised to know that Japanese language is written in four different scripts. I once asked a Japanese gen-

tleman why they have so many different systems of writing their language and why complex Kanji has prevailed over simple Romaji and even simpler alphabets of their own. His reply was that Kanji makes very fast reading and writing possible. In order not to burden small children with learning too many characters they have selected only two thousands most commonly used Kanji (Chinese character) from among over ten thousand Kanji that a Chinese have to learn and they master these two thou-·sand Kanjis over a period of ten

Our intelligentsia must respond to the need of time and allow people to exercise their right to choose instead of them choosing it for the people.

We have lot of shortcomings with our Bengali alphabet about which most of us are ignorant. I have not come across any article about these shortcomings in any of our vernacular magazines though I have read about the object of ridicule our people had to become in foreign countries for our gross errors in pronunciation. We Bengalees write and pronounce 'J' as 'Z' and 'Z' as 'J' Even the oldest English daily of the capital city is not free from this. We also do not have any equivalent for 'V' or 'Ph' in our alphabets. We pronounce 'V' as 'Bh'. We have no equivalent for pronunciation of 'Ph'. We have alphabets for pronouncing 'S', 'Sh' and 'Shh' and for all three we only pronounce 'Sh'.

Whether we like it or not our young generation are increasingly using Romanised Bengali in their e-mail correspondences, which means that there

will be unsystematic and unplanned growth of Romanised Bangla and we have to accept this as fait accompli. So in order to avoid the emergence of concocted Roman Bangla steps must be taken now to develop an orderly and systematic Roman system of writing Bangla. There a no room to be sentimental about Bengal alphabet which possibly has outlived its utility. There are good number of advantages with Roman alphabets and those who have been quick to realise this have already switched over to Roman alphabets.

If we want a bright future for our next generation then we must experiment with new things and accept changes.

Salahuddin Ayubi 75, Indira Road Dhaka-1215

Public Safety Act

Sir. The recent unilateral passing of the Public Safety act needs no further condemnation. However the most striking aspect to observe is the conspicuous silence of the 'intellectuals' on the matter. This mum of these people on such an act of violation of basic human rights only speaks of the degree of degradation of conscience and morality, on the part of the intellectuals of the country.

Kaiser Ahmed Maryland, USA

Transhipment facility to India

Sir. Communication facility is the main source of development. Without communication, or transport, network with the neighbouring India, Bangladesh cannot develop its economy. Those who don't agree to give transhipment facility to India have forgotten the geographical position of Bangladesh.

Mizanur Rahman Terapiv. 18F. 7TR. Stockholm 14156 Huddinge Sweden

Sir, Why aren't the government bodies more transparent in explaining their steps? Do they think that the people are too dumb to understand the issues? When are they really go-

ing to be democratic, rather than mobocratic (as coined by Aristotle). Aren't there enough experts available to really let the people know their commissions? Please try to assume that there is a percentage of common people — however small that

might be - who want to know. . I would suggest that the decision makers should open up more to the public.

Khurshid S Al Meher 3-7-1-301 Hikonari Misato 341-0003

Education — a new business?

Sir, Gone are the days when the teachers used to look upon their profession as a sacred job. During those days, the teachers would consider the students like their own offspring and the students respected the teachers as their parents. The question of remuneration was considered to be an awkward idea. The honour and respect was itself a

rich remuneration. All these made the teaching profession sublime and the stu- run they always defeated the dents, the literate section of the society in particular, was generally free from corruption. prejudice and bad manners. While we have a much higher percentage of the population that is literate now, the quality of education and the performance of the educated youth is not as appreciable. In fact, corruption, malpractice and bribery which have thoroughly infected the whole society now are seen as the indications of poor education bereft of moral values and ethical standards. Anyone can easily realise this by just having a look at many of the so-called universities offering nothing but bright signboards and advertisements. We now come across dozens of such colleges and even universities. Except for one or two, all these, especially the private colleges and universities are virtually business enterprises established with the sole objective of earning profit. Although the relevant legal provisions deter them from being profit-ori-

ented, all they do is bypass the

laws and take almost all the

money collected through expen-

sive tuition fees etc. Only a

small amount is spent to rent

private houses (which never

look like any academic institu-

tion) and pay part-time teach-

ers. Teachers with little quali-

lications and experience are appointed as regular faculty members.

Just like people who go abroad for health services. those who can afford are now sending off their wards to foreign universities. We wonder how the University Grants Commission and the Education Department extend recognition to such sub-standard institutions.

It would appear to anyone that education has now become a water pool where anyone can fish with success. We guess it is time the authorities concerned give a second look at all these malpractice in the name of higher education..

F Ahmed Dhaka

Russia-Chechnya war

Sir. A fierce fighting is going on between Russia and Chechnya. Never in the history of mankind freedom fighters have lost the war to the marauders. Undoubtedly they underwent heavy sufferings but in the long enemies and emerged as gallons. This has been proved again and again throughout the history including in 1940's when Germany attempted to conquer Russia but met with a humiliating defeat. The Russians (former Soviet Union) invaded Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 but the people of Hungary and Czechoslovakia taught the Russians a befitting lesson. The Bangladeshis crushed the Pakistani marauders in 1971. The US occupation of Vietnam ended in a total fiasco, the Iraqi aggressors were vanquished in Kuwait in 1991. And above all the former USSR was dissolved and torn apart by the Russians themselves in December 1991.

We wonder why are the Russian leaders now shamelessly trying to conquer Chechnya instead of invading and annexing breakaway Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan etc.

We strongly and wholeheartedly support the freedom struggle of the brave Chechens and wish them all success. We also call upon all the OIC and UN members to protest and resist the Russian aggression on Chechnya.

O.H. Kabir 6. Hare Street Wari, Dhaka-1203

Allowance for autonomous staff

Sir, A few days back, I made an appeal through this daily to create provision of leave and recreation allowance for the autonomous staff as well. It may be mentioned here that the government staff and officers have already been availed of the facility as per the government order issued recently.

May I once again appeal to the government to take a positive decision on the above matter at the earl est to encourage the autonomous staff and officers to discharge their responsibilities with more enthusiasm and dedication.

Zahidul Haque Associate professor BAI. Sher-e-Bangla Nagar,

Dhaka-1207

President's remark and our politicians

Sir. Very often President Shahabuddin Ahmed expresses his concern over the social and educational problems of our country. Recently he blamed our politicians saying that most of them don't read books regularly and instead spend their time criticising each

Our Prime Minister took the president's remark personally and claimed that not all the politicians are like that, However, we differ with her.

Our politicians, whose first and foremost aim is to stay in power is always busy backbiting and criticising the opposition. Despite being the leaders of the country, they don't mind using derogatory and vulgar language. When in opposition, they collaborate with the autocratic and anti-liberation parties but as soon as they are in power, they declare such collaboration as "anti-people." Same goes for hartal. When in opposition, hartal is their favourite form of agitation but when in power, this so-called "democratic right" for agitation becomes the means of violence and destruction.

Well, contradiction is the middle name of our politics.

Hasan Sharif Ahmed Department of Physics Dhaka University