The Baily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka, Thursday, April 20, 2000

Dent on Govt's Credibility

C ATURDAY'S attack on the GrameenPhone Outlet in Barisal, allegedly by some ruling party activists 'denied' of their 'demand for free mobile phones', minutes after the chief guest of the inauguration ceremony, none other than the home minister himself, left the venue, has had us dumbfounded. The incident, in our view, sends a few disquieting messages across the society.

First, the central leadership of the AL exercises very little control over its field-level activists; in other words, there appears no such thing as a chain of command working within the party. Otherwise, how could such an instance of hooliganism take place at a function that featured two senior AL leaders? Worse still, absence of the Chief Whip in the parliament, reportedly 'unhappy' at not being the chief guest himself and over exclusion of some local leaders from the guests' list, smacked of a 'cold war' amongst the senior members of the party.

Second, the leaders and the activists of the ruling party may have started believing that they are above the law, and can get away with bending the law here and breaking the law there. Administrative indifference whenever and wherever AL men are implicated has certainly lent

weight to their belief.
And, the last, the government's avowal towards ensuring maximum foreign direct investment is nothing more than political rhetoric. Law and order being one of the major concerns of potential foreign investors, it has not even tried to contain the law-breakers within its party ranks.

Overall, such an incident stands out as an indicator of malgovernance, decimating the government's credibility in the public mind and projecting an inauspicious image to the international community and thereby harming our FDI potential. The country, in the long run, stands a loser socially, politically and economically.

We hope that the home minister, who is also in charge of telecommunications ministry, realises the far-reaching implications of what has happened in Barisal. Immediately, we feel, he should intervene and instruct the local administration to arrest those who vandalised and looted the GrameenPhone outlet. By no means should the culprits be allowed to get away. At the same time, security and safety should be ensured for the mobile operator there, so that it can operate without the fear of retribution from the aggrieved AL men. And the ruling party leadership must devise ways to have total control over its grassroots activists; for it is ultimately responsible for their actions.

A Glimmer of Hope

OVERNMENT'S decision to convert the existing uto-rickshaws to run on compressed natural gas (CNG) is most welcome but this decision should not in any way jeopardise the earlier one to withdraw these two-stroke monsters in phases and ban their import into the country altogether. It is true that a large number of people who now depend for their livelihood on these contraptions will be thrown out of employment if these are banned overnight but the phasing out of these threewheelers has become a priority for the sake of public health.

The World Bank initiative to train around 400 mechanics in the proper maintenance of these machines is a step in the right direction which will minimise the incidences of air pollution to a great extent. The idea of educating the taxi drivers in the use of pure fuel and lubricant should be implemented with all seriousness and this will entail a lot of educative material and public relationing, specially with the drivers' and the owners' associations.

The idea of conversion needs proper logistics for successful implementation. First, there should be sufficient number of workshops to convert the fifty thousand baby taxis of Dhaka city alone and may be another equal numbers in the districts. Secondly, there should be sufficient number of filling stations with a good stock of gas cylinders to avoid any hiccup and shortage. Thirdly the drivers and technicians of these filling stations must be trained adequately so that they can run the machines safely and avoid accidents. Fourthly, a time frame for the whole exercise, the conversion and particularly the withdrawal of these threewheelers altogether from the roads of Bangladesh, has to be announced by the government and strictly followed. At the same time the import of less harmful 4-stroke engines has to be ensured so that a large number of baby taxi drivers are not thrown out of employment. And finally, unlike many other projects of the government, delayed or shelved, we want this one to be implemented in

Why Should They Suffer?

WHY should they suffer for no faults of their own? A hundred and thirty-two girl students of Motijheel Model School and College are on the verge of losing a valuable academic year and also a precious period of time from their budding lives for irresponsible and callous attitude of the college authority. Since the problem came into fore, the students (and their guardians) have been coaxing and demanding permission from the college as well as the Board authorities to sit for the exam and to allow them to fill up the necessary forms. But nothing positive has been achieved in this regard. At one stage even the education minister expressed his inability to go beyond the existing rules and regretted his helplessness in this regard.

By all accounts the college authority appears to be responsible for the whole sordid episode of not following the 1998 syllabus, keeping the students in the dark and showing indifference in the matter of filling up forms for the final exams. The Board chairman indicated consideration of the demands of the students for the future but has categorically denied that he sees any prospects for them to take the exams which are only seven days away.

The exasperation and frustration of these unfortunate students can very well be imagined and we offer our sincerest sympathies to them. At the same time we fervently request the Board Chairman and the Education Minister to kindly look into the matter with profound compassion to avoid ruination of careers of these innocent students and also ask for a thorough investigation in the matter and punishment of those responsible for this despicable act.

South Asia's 'Unipolar Moment': The Flipside

The real import of Clinton's mission and his plan for an Indo-Pakistan dialogue, if any, will begin admonished by the latter. to be felt after sometime. The US administration which has been highlighting the dangers inherent in Kashmir dispute cannot be oblivious of the fact that it warrants an immediate resolution. There were widespread in- nouncement from Islamabad immediate resolution. Likedignation among Pakistani that it was ready to abjure its wise, India even with its eupho-

no matter how much honoured the guest may be. Pakistan did - and that too at a cost: the guest was allowed to do did - that the nations never it in public. For bare face have permanent friends, they saving. Pakistan did not find have only permanent interests. an alternative to it. Because it Today, such high prices are, could be a greater ignominy if therefore, exacted by an ally for the President of a country paltry favour of obliging her known to be Pakistan's longest with a four-hour stopover of its time ally would have wound up President on his way back his South Asian jaunt without home after almost a week's stay in India — a country both the setting his feet on its soil. General Musharraf, the US and Pakistan once despised. country's military ruler pro-It was a stark departure from vided further incentives for the normal practices followed durvisit after months of hard bar-

TO one invites a guest to be

gaining on restoration of

democracy and his obstinate re-

fusal to give a timeframe for the

purpose. On the eve of Bill

Clinton's brief stopover in Is-

lamabad he announced his plan

for holding local bodies' elec-

tion at the end of the year as a

first step for the country's

considerations in July 1961

when Ayub Khan, the first of

Pakistan's military rulers vis-

ited the United States and ad-

dressed the joint session of the

US Congress — indeed a high

point of US-Pakistan relations.

Neither was anything of this

kind demanded when in early

eighties the US pumped billions

of dollars and sophisticated

istan. Those were the times for

great congruence of interests

which it is no more. Pakistan

realised rather late — if it really

T IS a strange coincidence

that President K.R.

Narayanan gave awards for

bravery at Kargil on the day and

the time when former Pakistan

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif

was sentenced to 25 years. The

latter, too, said in a statement

before the court that he was

being 'punished' for Kargil.

Nawaz Sharif meant that he

was being tried for the

withdrawals at Kargil. He may

well be speaking the truth. But

the judgment is the worst form

of nemesis. It is a retribution of

sorts since it is well established

by now that Sharif was in the

know about the Kargil opera-

tion. The probe that India con-

ducted confirms this. So does

the statement by Pakistan

Chief Executive Pervez Mushar-

raf that "everyone was on

board." The unkindest cut is

that Sharif knew about the op-

eration when he welcomed

handed?

Prime Minister Atal Behari Va-

second judge to try Nawaz

Sharif. The first judge who took

All these were, in no way,

democratisation.

ing the visit of a foreign dignitary. In a hard hitting 15minute speech broadcast on the national radio and television network US President Bill Clinton performed the major function of his visit when he arrived at Islamabad on 25 March. He told Pakistan that there could be no military solution to the Kashmir problem and urged its military government to restore dialogue with India. He rejected Pakistan's appeal for mediation in the Kashmir dispute, lamented the return of military rule in Pakistan and wanted its government to prioritise economic development over the Kashmir dispute with India. Clinton also told Pakistan to stop "cross-border terrorism". Musharraf by President Clinton will begin to be felt after some- like Harkatul Mujahideen who not those steps would help rearms into Ziaul Huq's Pak- create conditions for resump- there was no great expectation time. The US administration were dislodged from Kargil last solve the Kashmir dispute it is tion of Indo-Pakistan dialogue that Pakistan would quickly which has been highlighting year and can hardly be leashed clear that the issue remains as and warned Islamabad of "more fall in line and stop its 'cross- the dangers inherent in Kash- by any authority in Pakistan alive as before notwithstanding isolation if it continued to sup- border terrorism', if any. None mir dispute cannot be oblivious have threatened similar vio-

with regard to Kashmir. They heavily banked on what Foreign Minister Abdul Satter called Clinton's 'healing touches' for a settlement in Kashmir. Now they seemed to be totally disillusioned. But the government took it in good stead and maintained its cool with no ad-

public over President Clinton's 'use of force' across the line of ria over stopping an US mediapronouncement particularly control. As a matter of fact, to tion is aware that her predicaensure Clinton's visit or ments in Kashmir is far from stopover the military govern- over. The relative quiet along ment was prompted more by its the line of control for about a eagerness for the resumption of month does not mean that the an IMF loan to Pakistan. As re- war within Jammu and Kashgards Kashmir. Musharraf was mir has abated. One plausible not much pushed by Clinton's explanation for the quiet is that warning because the issue the militants across the border would be taken care of by its



verse comment on Clinton's own peculiar dynamics. Neither speech. General Pervez Musharraf himself answered numerous questions in a press conference held soon afterwards. In response to US demand to end violence he however insisted that the step towards that goal will now camped within Pakistan. have to be 'reciprocal'.

would he have much control over it given the complex interplay of emotions, sense of betrayal and desperation as well as the moods and postures of many religious militant groups

The real import of Clinton's In spite of unambiguous mission and his plan for an message conveyed to General Indo-Pakistan dialogue, if any, Kashmir. The organisations under reference? Whether or

wanted to see just how Clinton would engage with Kashmir issue before resorting to their offensive. Meantime, the attacks on Indian military installation by the militants' suicide squads which began last year continues. What the succession of attacks on military camps have meant in practice is that Indian forces have been pushed increasingly into defensive posi-

General Musharraf who has staked his future on Pakistan securing some progress in Kashmir could now become increasingly desperate as the US has not been able to initiate a peace process and not even taking up some of the steps recsome form of dialogue on ommended by the committees port violence." Blah, blah, blah, expected any formal an- of the fact that it warrants an lence elsewhere this summer. If ton's visit.

that happens, India which has since been threatening Pakistan with a 'limited war' is likely to respond more aggressively. The resultant escalation could well invite fresh international pressure on India to begin a process for settlement in Kashmir.

The major political players in Jammu and Kashmir already seem to be positioning themselves for such a settlement

The most significant development is the decision of the Union government to call for the State Autonomy Committee (SAC) report which demands the restoration of 1953 status of J&K. A second document, the Regional Autonomy Committee (RAC) report, which calls for the state to be divided into a series of new provinces based on communal line is now being implemented by the state government. While this may not be the stated US policy, Washington's assessment also seems to be that the best course on Kashmir is to formalise the state's partition at the line of control while persuading India to accord maximum autonomy to the Kashmiris. Is India then moving in that direction by its downgradation during Clin-

Fallout from the Sharif Trial

Nawaz Sharif was the first one to try to clip the wings of the armed forces. At his request, Jehangir Karamat, Musharraf's predecessor put in his resignation. This time, Musharraf had the promise of most corps commanders that they would stand by him if he was asked to quit. Almost all of them did so when Nawaz Sharif dismissed him. The rest is history.

has been sentenced to imprisonment for two and a half decades. The fact remains that people voted them in.

Normally, the armed forces should defend the constitution, which guarantees institutions like parliament, not thwart it. But then that is the course which Pakistan has followed for the last 40 years. The experience tells us that the armed forces in the third world seldom give up their hold even when they return to the barracks after intervention.

None can predict how events will unfold themselves in Pakistan in the next few years. It can stay authoritarian for a long time. Still one can say jpayee at the Amritsar-Wagah with certainty that Sharif will border last year. Still, as far as not serve the full term of 25 the judgment is concerned, it is years. Sooner or later, Pakistan brutal and bewildering. Brutal will return to a democratic setbecause a sentence for 25 years up. Political institutions will is nearly double the period of then revive. Whichever party or life imprisonment — 14 years — combination comes to power, it the maximum given to a culprit - will-release Sharif.-He may be a in the subcontinent. Bewilder- lesser person by then. But that ing because the judge's claim too depends on the outcome of that the conspiracy has been cases of corruption against proved hangs in the air. All the him. The jail sentence in the co-conspirators have been left subcontinent often gives a halo off. Only Nawaz Sharif has been of suffering to the politicians. punished. How could he have The example of Laloo Yadav hatched the conspiracy single- former Chief Minister of Bihar is there. But if the corruption The Anti-Terrorist Court cases against Nawaz Sharif are Judge Rehmatullah Jaffari, proved beyond doubt, his image who gave the verdict, was the will indeed be shattered.

As days go by, the judgment against Sharif will have its the case complained that he was fallout. The Muslim League, unable to perform his duties which has endorsed his leaderwith plain-clothes security per- ship, may split. Dissidents are sonnel attending the proceed- unlikely to sit idle till the outings. He referred the case to an- come of the appeal which will other court. The sentence is, take time, first in the High however, ominous for the Court and then in the Supreme prospects of democracy in Pak- Court. On the other hand, there istan. The judgment has buried was very little protest. Only a it still deeper. In the past 25 handful of people stood outside years, two elected Prime Minis- the Anti-Terrorist Court to exters have been disgraced in pub-press their solidarity with lic and their families harassed. Sharif, although the betting on One was hanged and the other his conviction was heavy. A BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

bookie in Karachi reportedly stand in the way, knowing well made lakhs of rupees because he that the alternative is to cool was not hanged. (Of course, people gave credit to President Clinton for that).

Another fallout from the sentence is the restoration of some institutions. International pressure on Islamabad, particularly that of America, is relentless. Whichever country Musharraf visits, he is told to hold elections and restore the National Assembly. If Pakistan does not want to stay isolated. as was the warning administered by President Clinton, it will have to resurrect democracy. The economic assistance by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is dependent on Musharrafs response. And he has very little staying power. At one time the thinking of the military was reflected in the suggestion made by Musharraf, then the Chief of the Army Staff, before accompanying Sharif to Washington. Musharraf conveyed that Shahbaz Sharif, then the Punjab Chief Minister, should come to the centre to 'strengthen' the hands of his brother, Nawaz Sharif. Shahbaz was visibly unhappy over the Lahore process and Musharraf knew about it. It was Aba Ji (father of Nawaz and Shahbaz) who turned down the proposal. Oth-

have been replaced by Shahbaz. Can Musharraf pick up the thread from where he left off? Aba Ji is a chastened person now. Even Nawaz may not

his heels in the jail. But the rearrest of Shahbaz on charges of corruption gives another mes- Why will they behave differsage unless this too is an exer- ently this time? In fact, when

cise which is being gone over to asked by an Indian journalist clear the ground. Shahbaz, as how the world could reconcile was clear from the trial, was in itself to the military rule, no way a target. It came as no Musharraf's blunt reply was: surprise when he said in his "For the past many years, the statement before the judge that armed forces ruled Pakistan he did not know anything be- indirectly. Why should any cause he was sleeping when the country be so sensitive now?" coup was taking place. Signifi- However, it looks as if the mili-

removed from the jail and put in "a hospital" where he was given royal treatment.

The question is what will eral Zia-ul-Haq wanted to conhappen to Musharraf or, for stitute a similar body. But it that matter, to the military? never came to that. They did not Pakistan has itself provided the answer in the past. The armed forces have gone back to the barracks but have overlooked the shoulders of civilian rulers. People and politicians have accepted the situation in the past.

institutionalised. They have cited the example of Turkey where there is a top governance body, the National Security Council. The Council, with the three service chiefs, has a great say in deciding when to step in to "put democracy back on the

General Ayub Khan and Genneed it when they were in power. The democratic regimes which succeeded them did not find it necessary because they always felt the presence of the third man, the GHQ.

Nawaz Sharif was the first one to try to clip the wings of the armed forces. At his request, Jehangir Karamat, Musharraf's predecessor put in his resignation. This time, Musharraf had the promise of most corps commanders that they would stand by him if he was asked to quit. Almost all of them did so when Nawaz Sharif dismissed him. The rest is his-

OPINION

cantly, during the trial he was tary would like their role to be

Procedural Delay in Judicial System Engr Shahidul Islam

civil suit purely from experiences I gathered from my own partition suit of an inherited property. The question may be raised here that my personal matter may not be fit to form an opinion for consumption of general readers. But I believe my sufferings out of the litigaerwise, Nawaz Sharif might tion is not a case in isolation or of a lone person. It is common to many people in the country in thousand other similar cases. So I thought it fit to bring my personal experience into focus through the columns of newspaper for perusal of the

people at large. ings of the common man, the victim of circumstances through projection of a personal case, as a blatant example rise in many a case to a situation like "justice delayed is jusknown to many but there is a need to remind perhaps. I think it will attract the rational readers to an unwarranted situation which we become victims to.

and which is beyond any com-

As a layman on the subject 1 prehension, particularly of can't be expected to deliver as a layman like me. Such a system lawyer can do in this particular of continuing the process endfield. I venture to write on a lessly or for a long period of matter of procedural delay in time must not go on beyond any our country's judicial system limit. Procedures should be with particular reference to any followed as may be expedient in the conduct of cases, and deadlines be adhered to, as far as possible for expeditious disposal of cases. It is time that the Law and Justice machinery of the government look into it. Necessary reform in the system may be brought about to mitigate the sufferings of the people as far as possible so that the aggrieved persons who are generally the petitioners or complainants may get the verdict in their respective cases heard be-

I know a civil servant who served a sub-divisional town in the erstwhile East Pakistan as In fact, I ventilate the feel- an SDO. He earned name and fame for performing his duties with honesty and sincerity of purpose. Sitting at the door of villagers he speedily disposed of procedural delay in the as many as 22 various court country's justice system giving cases in a day, setting an example that where there is a will tice denied". A truth which is the wife of the same person be- to get their respective rights escomes a victim of the system in tablished by the time they all question, how one feels! This is remain alive because of the fowl exactly what I like to mention play of a fellow heir and soabout. What an irony!

fore their death.

three brothers including me above

suffered nearly five years till date in a partition suit in respect of an inherited plot of land against one of their brothers. Taking an advantage of the weakness in the system of so called procedural delay, the said brother is up in his sleeves to continue his challenge of keeping the matter hanging as long as 30 years.

Since 1995, notices were served twenty-eight times and surprisingly, no hearing was held because of prayers from his side for time extension in one pretext or another and the process if continued is apt to make a precedent for others to act in a similar way. In fact this provides the scopes for the motivated to destroy the peace and harmony in the relationships of may a family of our society today. The State must come forward to take the responsibility in this regard. The system unless reviewed and streamlined by the authority bringing in the necessary reforms, we will be deprived of our rights to get the justice at the right time. there is a way. Now suppose if The heirs of a property will fail sharer as is the case in point of She with another sister and our partition suit mentioned

"Bangladesh's Gas Reserve and the 'Dutch' Disease"

Sir, An article under the above heading was published in the DS Focus page on 6 April, 2000 advocating export of gas. The write-up narrates Dutch disease as a sudden flow of foreign currency which stimulates the economy and raise all prices. Then imports become cheap as well compared to domestic production. The nontraded goods such as house rent, transport, health facilities too become expensive. It happened in many countries including Nigeria, Venezuela etc.

However, the writer believes that Bangladesh will be "immune" to this Dutch disease. And he quotes extensively from in the non-cellular sector (DS the Shell study advocating export of gas.

But due to remittance from the Bangladeshis working abroad prices of land, rent, health services etc are already sky-high. Therefore if we contemplate export of gas then how and why Bangladesh will remain 'immune' to Dutch disease when per capita consumption of gas in this country is one of the lowest in the world?

Azher Ali Road 6, Block -I Banani, Dhaka-1213

Keep them waiting

Sir, It is unthinkable that the top leaders inside the government are not aware of the malafide intentions of some anti-people policy decisions. namely, to go slow with some 'essential' projects, to make private money on the side, by introducing false and controlled conditions to maintain supply and services lower than

Two example instantly come to mind: the severe shortage of

new telephone connections; and cuted? Bifurcation is a part sothe long delay in going faster lution, with the corruption facwith the production of electric tor remaining untouched. It is power in the country. The PDB too late for deterrent action, as and the BTTB are the culprits, the general election is round the with the full knowledge of the corner. cabinet (in the decade of the 1990). Now the power stations are coming up, but the trans- Dhaka mission lines are not enough.

Now comes the news (DS April 9) that the donor agencies are reluctant to provide the project funds for installing additional power transmission lines in the choked national network. On the other hand an American Tele company has got the award (mysteriously) of installing three lakh digital telephones in the metropolis Dhaka, in the absence of a clear government policy on the participation of the private sector

editorial of April 9) Nepotism and favouritism pervade and linger in the gray backgrounds in the fast developing countries. The favourites have to be allotted the needed bakshish (toll, commission percentage, or award of seamy contracts) 'for services ren

dered'. The problem of the rising leaders is: first to feed the followers or the people? Which comes first: party interest or national interest? The loud noises made by the politicians on either side is not bringing the solution any nearer.

Basically, the malaise is well recognised; the inability to resist temptation, at the top, middle, and lower levels. Discipline starts from the top, and indiscipline does not start first in the opposition!

Modern governments are market-oriented, with one basic objective: the supply (of goods and services) must exceed the anticipated demands, now, does nothing but resort to and in the near future. Control- movements for rescheduling ling supply results in blackmarketing; and PDB and BTTB should be judged on this crite. Sakur ria. How many have been prose- BUET

BUET bungle

Sir, Session jam at BUET now takes a deadly turn and poses a serious mayhem in the academic system. The political unrest, lack of interest of a section of students to appear on exams in time and lack of administrative prudence of the authority predominate the causes of prolonged session

BUET offers four years of undergraduate engineering course consisting of eight terms each of which is supposed to be completed in less than six months. But it is very frustrating that these days every term, proceeds at a dawdling pace and takes at least nine to ten months to be completed. Whenever any exam approaches, a number of students resort to the movement of rescheduling exams according to their preference. Recently the term final exam has been postponed in the same manner as the teachers failed to show proper judgement and to come to terms with the claim of the students. According to many students, taking exams under respective faculties and banning of the EUCSU may result in session jam free BUET. If exams are taken under the respective faculties, there would then be competition among the students to pass out early. And the EUCSU should immediately be banned as it

"Nasim Suspects"

ter Nasim suspected that BNP in India went as scheduled. chief Khaleda Zia and her "Razakar associates" kept US President Bill Clinton from visiting the National Mausoleum

common thing in the political arena of Bangladesh. But here the allegation is serious and based on suspicions that may or may not be true. Moreover, suspicion is a state of mind that

can hardly be addressed. From Bangladesh's point of view. Mr. Clinton's behaviour might have appeared discriminatory because despite the fact that the government took all the possible precautionary measures to ensure his safety, the US authorities were not convinced; hence the visit to some of the designated places were cancelled. In a marked booklet). contrast, the President visited different places in India for five days, sometimes even very informally, although there were similar elements of threat and risk there too. The assassinations of two Prime Ministers — Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her son

The Daily Star on 3.4.2000. curity hazards for the American

How does the fact that Clinton cancelled his scheduled visits in Bangladesh make the opposition blameworthy? There might have been some other Accusing rivals is not an un- factors that influenced the decision of the US President's security squad.

> It may be pointed out that a booklet published by the Department of Films and Publication of the Government was widely circulated around the time of the US President's visit. Among other things the booklet said. "Many people also believe that the opposition party BNP and its fundamentalist allies have close contacts with Islamic radicals including 'Talibans' of Afghanistan and militant religious fanatics of Pakistan." (para-2, page 15 of the

The booklet primarily might have been intended to serve a part of the government propa ganda machinery highlighting its much-vaunted policy of secularism and its so-called antifundamentalist position, probably to appease the US Presi-Rajiv Gandhi, and the very re- dent on the one hand and to vil-

My attention has been cent killings of around forty ify the opposition parties, spedrawn to the news item under Sikhs in Kashmir are instances cially the BNP, on the other. the above heading published in that could constitute grave se- This overzealous venture of the There, among other things, it President. But in spite of all boomeranged since the inforwas reported that Home Minis- that his visits to various places mation contained in the booklet might have led the Americans to suspect the presence of or the opposition's connection with Bin Laden's group in Bangladesh. So, before pointing accusing fingers at the Opposition, the Government should perhaps think twice as it can't entirely absolve itself from the onus. It was not fair on the part of the Honorable Home Minister to make such a sweeping statement blaming the opposition for cancellation of Mr. Clinton's visit to some places, basing his allegations simply on guess work and suspicion

It is no good crying over spilt milk. The damage has already been done. It is high time that restraint be observed both by the Government and the Opposition and the issue centering lapses that occurred during Mr Clinton's visit be dropped. The first ever visit to Bangladesh by a US President, however short it may have been, should be regarded as a success for Bangladesh

Abdullah

Abdul Ghani Road, Dhaka.