

The resignation that shook the nation

President Chowdhury's resignation, BNP mantra and democracy

Making mountain out of a molehill on something as insubstantial as not visiting Ziaur Rahman's grave on his death anniversary or inadequately praising his role in 1971 demonstrates a sense of insecurity and absolutism in the ruling circles.

It seems that the party seniors succumbed to pressures from the so-called 'Young Turks' in ingratiate themselves to the party Chairperson. BNP should learn from the mistakes of its predecessor to see that fixation over non-issues is only self-defeating in the long run.

If there is one silver lining in this tragic episode of our country's history, it is Dr. Chowdhury's decision to relinquish his position in an honourable manner. This is indeed an extraordinary case given our nation's history of leaders irrationally clinging to power instead respectfully quitting elected office.

The resolution seeking impeachment of Dr. Chowdhury does not augur well for our hard-earned democracy. The government should realise its two-thirds majority is to provide good governance and not to establish its brand of BNP mantra.

Toricelli Arman Dhaka

Bravo! We create another precedent!

After being declared by Transparency International as the most corrupt country in the world last year, we have just created history! We have been able to throw our President from his office successfully!

His offence was... he tried to honour his post by being neutral. By the dismal departure of Prof. B. Chowdhury, it has become more obvious that the species 'Gentlemen' is now more or less are on the verge of an extinct in the domain of Bangladesh politics.

Listed terrorists, extortionists are to thrive now and to decorate our parliament by being its legislators and what not? It can be assumed that the next President will make visiting the graveyard of the founder leader of the party he is elected from a regular practice to avoid the fate of his predecessor.

Kazi Ishiaque Mirpur, Dhaka

Which BNP is this?

BNP has truly gone mad. Their demand for the resignation of the President is nothing less than a slap on our faces by the young MPs. I voted for a BNP of Saifur Rahman, Dr. Moyeen Khan, MK Anwar etc. I didn't vote for a dictatorship of Hawa Bhaban.

The only option I see is for the remaining gentlemen who still have their dignity is to form a splinter group.

Otherwise let's hope AL wins next time because, as God is my witness,

Opportunity for the Opposition

This time round BNP hasn't just shot itself in the feet, it has amputated itself. How better to show the voters with what regard the BNP MPs and leaders see us. As electoral fodder, to be forgotten because we made the mistake of handing over such a huge majority.

Sheikh Hasina should take this golden opportunity to flail the government. For once ordinary people will support her as she, ironically enough defends a BNP nominated President from his own party.

Tali Dhaka



Political timing

I'd rather prefer AL obsessed with the late Bangabandhu than be served by Hawa Bhaban.

Peter Dhaka

Lowest political point?

The news of a "smiling" Khaleda Zia announcing the resolution of the parliamentary committee to ask the President to resign has left me stunned. Those of us who thought AL government was bad are watching with sheer disbelief the foolishness of this government. Not only are they unable to take decisions that actually matters to the country, they are unthinkable out of touch with the pulse of the people.

It started with Sheikh Hasina's mindless gibberish about DNA test for Zia's dead body. This was fol-

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I would like to draw the attention of our countrymen to the recent political drama staged by the ruling BNP. According to the newspaper reports the recent past President Mr. Chowdhury resigned following a request from BNPPP. In the backdrop of the event I would like to ask the countrymen the following questions:

- The top political leaders, regardless of the party affiliation, always claim that the interest of the country must come first before that of the party. When B Chowdhury listened to BNPPP request and



Between Badruddoza, people and the party

Want to know more about Zia

Lately there have been a lot of articles and editorials critically analysing Bangabandhu's mistakes. Most of these are attempts to set up a one party socialist dictatorship. As I was too young to have remembered those times, I welcome such revisionist writing. It is a breath of fresh air after five years of Sheikh Hasina stuffing him down our throats.

However the only articles I see these days on Zia primarily deal with who did what on 26<sup>th</sup> March coupled with the usual North Korean style "Heroic Great Leader" stuff our politicians seem so fond of. I have no doubts about his crucial role in '71 and as far as I am concerned the matter can rest.

But we've just lost our President to the legacy of that man. We should take this opportunity to learn more about his roles in the turbulent times just before and after Bangabandhu's assassination and during the coups and counter coups leading up to his seizing power. I want to know the true story of the Sepoy Mutiny that gave us President Zia. I also want put to rest the persistent rumours of numerous officers killed during those violent days leading to Zia's seizure of power.

Pan Dhaka

Look before you leap

Asif Saleh Dhaka

Cronyism, homicide and rape are the hallmarks of the honeymoon period of BNP led coalition government. Yet, some sycophantic and die-hard legislators of BNP raised voice to impeach the Honorable President of the Republic.

Okay, Article 52 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is earmarked for "Impeachment of the President." Eruditely, I think the juvenile MPs of BNP have no knowledge about the Constitution, especially "impeachment."

I implore the BNP mandarins to scrutinise the AL poll debacle and take decisions sagely. Otherwise, people will jilt, if need arises.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen Dept. of English, DU

Sacking the President

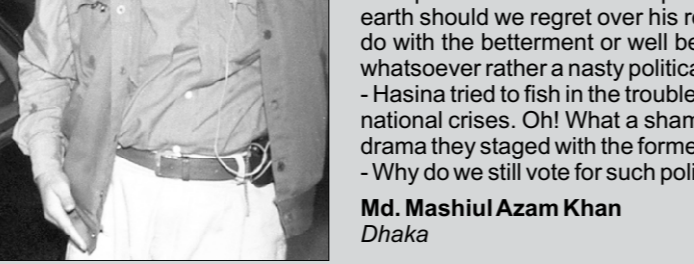
The news and the DS editorial caused a whirlwind in my mind. It seems we are living in an unreal world. Now, with hindsight I feel like kicking myself for siding against AL last October. They did not criticise the then President after he visited the grave of late President Ziaur Rahman. Not, atleast, publicly.

MAH Dhaka

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A Teacher Dhanmondi, Dhaka

National crisis avoided?

The Opposition Party, Awami League has termed the resignation of the President as a 'national crisis'. I disagree with them. On the contrary by resigning, Bodruddoza Choudhury has prevented the country from entering into a 'national crisis'.

There was no need for resignation and the BNP Parliamentary Party was wrong to demand the President's resignation. However, the fact remains, the parliamentary party of the BNP did pass a resolution asking the President to resign. If the President had ignored this call, which he could very well have done, would most certainly have led to a bitter and acrimonious relationship between the president and the government.

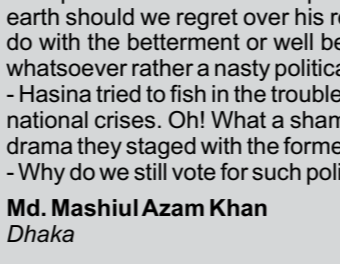
Mr. Chowdhury has done the most honourable thing. By avoiding confrontation with the government he has demonstrated his commitment and respect for democracy. By

believe that he had gone when the going is good. Now it poses a question in our mind whether there is any constitutional provision for asking a democratically elected President, as he was not charged with any treason or act which may be construed as detrimental to the security or prejudicial to the interest of the country.

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ers of BNP or breaker of unknown law Mr. Chowdhury.

Benazir Ahmed Khan Dhaka

Bye B Chowdhury

I salute B. Chowdhury for resigning. Actually, the term 'neutrality' is a myth now in our country. In every sphere, you have to take one side, otherwise, you have to bow out, humiliated. It is not necessary to mention names of those dignified personalities who are renowned for their neutrality but conscientious citizens should always respect them.

Future of democracy

Forcing a President to resign on such simple pretext of not visiting the grave of the founder of the ruling party on his death anniversary or not calling him the declarer of independence (questionable) only shows the arrogance of a brute majority, not the norms of basic democratic principles.

We should be considerate

I wanted to assure the PM of our support during this critical time. She has undergone to major surgery in one month. Number one is her knee surgery and number two is the removal of a chronic pain in her back named B. Chowdhury. She has now proved her firm and complete control over her party. Dr. Chowdhury has also proved that he is not of the same mentality and make as the rest of BNP. This split has confirmed public opinion that B. Chowdhury is too sober, too honest and too polished to be a politician in today's Bangladesh.

BNP and the "Young Turks"

I think it's time we effect a regime change in Bangladesh. Is it too soon to hope that AL will be able to cobble together another Janatar Mancha? I've had enough of BNP. Let's go back to Sheikh Hasina and her foibles. It's better than the dictatorship of BNP. I would also request the paper to stop calling the Hawa Bhaban MP's "Young Turks". That is an insult to Ataturk and his achievements, ones that this pathetic government can never emulate.

Politicisation of presidency

As I am trying to digest this blatant politicisation of the presidency by a party, I begin to wonder why they did it. I am certain that Mr. Sircar will be more than obedient in paying his due obeisance to President Zia. As a matter of fact the lesson is clear, if you want to be in the BNP, then never forget that it is first and last a personality cult.

BNP's power distribution plan

BNP's dictatorship is coming along quite well isn't it? No sooner is Badruddoza out that Tareq Rahman becomes the Joint Secretary General. Essentially he's now the number two in BNP and officially the first in line to succeed Khaleda Zia. What will Begum Zia do with all this power? Will she instill herself as President and her son as the PM? Maybe in that cabinet reshuffle we all have been waiting for Tareq Rahman will get his cabinet seat? I have an idea why not make him the

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Home Minister? Everybody I know voted for BNP in the last elections. Now all those people are kicking themselves for making such a mistake. I think I speak for the anguish of all those people who voted for a change and are now astounded by this raving madness. My sincerest apologies to Sheikh Hasina, she was relatively harmless after all.

What is the truth?

The people of Bangladesh would like the honourable Prime Minister to tell us the truth about ditching President Chowdhury. The President of a country cannot be forced to resign for getting more television coverage on BTV. We could have understood if it was CNN or the BBC. They have blamed him for trying to be neutral! Bangladesh is no BNP. And if you readers think the resignation was unconstitutional, let it stand. After all, we live in Bangladesh.

The shadow is no more...

The critics on the walls of the dailies followed by vigour of the conscience left me no room to wrangle regarding the forceful resignation of the President. It seems the road of politics as of BNP, has veered awkwardly and chosen the path to a dead end.

New development in politics

There are two developments that took place in our national level in the last few days. President Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury took a very bold, moral step and ultimately resigned. It takes more than moral courage to take such a decision. BNP did not only ditch President Chowdhury, they even threatened him with impeachment. It was really a nasty game in all respect. But, he will always remain a respected politician in the history of Bangladesh. He did not become a 'chamcha' to hang on to power.

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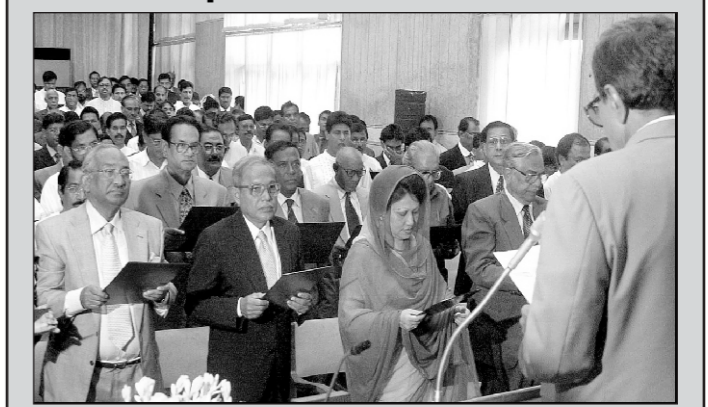
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Great expectations!



In happier days

Had we set our aspirations too high when we expected that after our PM got back from the US she would streamline the cabinet to bring some degree of normalcy in the affairs of the country, specially Law and Order? What has been done instead? The President has been ousted! His fault was he had shown "neutrality" in the office of Presidency, which demanded him to be neutral! His fault was he had shown more allegiance to the country than the "party that created him".

And what was the Leader of the Opposition doing, just before this bizarre incident took place, while we were expecting her to go back to the parliament? Out of thin air she brought about another senseless debate- this time it was about DNA testing of the late President Ziaur Rahman!

Can't we expect from any one of them to deal with the real and serious issues, which affect the lives of the common people?

A Distressed Observer Chittagong

Another undemocratic act of BNP

On October 1, 2001 people of this country voted BNP and its alliance to power to get rid of terrorism and undemocratic norms practised by the AL government. Unfortunately Khlaeda Zia appeared to have chosen to follow the undemocratic and corrupt factions of BNP. She made one of the most controversial persons as her parliamentary adviser. I am certain that Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury has more respect towards Late President Ziaur Rahman than the other BNP leaders who convinced Khaleda Zia to remove B. Chowdhury from the position of the President.

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NOTICE We have received a huge number of mails on this topic. We are publishing a selection today and another full-page tomorrow to assist the Government to gauge the public opinion on the issue. -Editor