

The resignation that shook the nation

B. Chowdhury

When B. Chowdhury said to The Daily Star (24.06.02) that the nation would witness one incident after another with Tareq Rahman in power, he didn't mention the half of it.

The incidents we'll see are going to include the emergence of a new coterie of businessmen and leaders connected to the Hawa Bhaban. Unlike in the past when interference was more discreet, now it will be all out in the open.

Veteran leaders who have learnt the art of compromise and patience through many years in politics are going to be increasingly sidelined and a new hardcore power hungry group will take over BNP.

The other incident that B. Chowdhury forgot to mention is the downfall of BNP. I suppose we just have to make do with AL, at least they didn't try to set up a dictatorship.

Asterix Dhaka

The President exits

BNP called for the resignation of the President? Why, is it because the President is trying to keep the highest office in the country clean and beyond any controversy?

I understand that Badruddoza Chowdhury, although a member of the ruling party was never on the bandwagon of the party. I hope the PM will appreciate the idea that a neutral President is in the greater interest of the country where the ruling as well as the opposition can go for an impartial advice. It will be prudent on the part of the political parties not to waste any more time on the question of who is the Father of the Nation or who did what during 1971. History will reveal the truth and put the right person in the right place. The nation is facing more important crisis which are needed to be attended more urgently.

The political parties must remember that this country belongs to the nation not to any family.

Akbar Hussain Toronto, Canada

Salute to Dr. Chowdhury

Once, one of my sisters told me, "Bangladesh does not lack dignified and efficient people - the irony is they are not given opportunity to serve to the best of their ability". In Bangladesh, only a few people can claim this personal trait. And Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury is one of them. BNP has surely committed an undignified act.

Unfortunately both the major parties of Bangladesh do not believe in democracy. They use election to go to power, and once in power - they are as bad as any dictator in the world.

Dr. Chowdhury graced the footprints of Sahabuddin Ahmed - a great champion of democracy and a man of his own. To him dignity is more important than bowing down to any pressure.

We feel proud to have some Chowdhurys and Ahmeds. Keep your hopes alive, Bangladesh.

Prof Dr. Nasir Ahmed Grambling State University, USA

What is the priority of the government?

I have read the news regarding resignation of the President with keen interest. The more I have read, the more I have been disappointed. I would say what has happened is not a good sign for future. When a political party form the government what should be their priority - the party or the country?

The presidency is an institution. The person who holds that office is the President of the country not of any particular group, or party, no matter what type of a government it is. The action of the President should be beyond any personal or group or party interest. In this case did the President have the opportunity to exercise these? Or has he been coerced to do otherwise? Or did he pay the price of being impartial?

One of the main duties of the government is identifying the main thing of the country and work towards it. To identify the main thing of the country they should have a clear vision, goals and commitment to reach there. In this case I think the government failed to go beyond the interest of the party.

Leo Pereira University of Portland, USA

Departure of the President... what next?

I write to express my astonishment at the sudden turn of events in Bangladeshi politics leading to the departure of AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury from the office of the President of the Republic. As someone who values democracy, I salute the ex-President for the honour, dignity and respect for democracy he has shown at a crucial time in our parliamentary history. His rare ability to put national interest above any other and swiftly step aside by gracefully accepting the ruling party's decision to oust him and thereby avoiding yet another crisis in a country riddled with many, makes him just the kind of leader Bangladesh needs. It is very sad that we had to lose a good man to prove to ourselves that such beacon of hope still exists in our nation.

As a Bangladeshi with much hope and aspirations for my country, I urge the PM and the Leader of the Opposition to take a few moments

raw emotions of the BNP young guns? If that is the case then there is only one thing left for me to do - laugh!

Rubaiyat Kibria Sydney, Australia

Welcome to the real world

Welcome back to the real world Mr. Chowdhury. Welcome back to the world where you are needed, as you are one of the prominent physicians of the country. Welcome back to the world where people will not reject you after using you in fulfilling their wishes. Welcome back to the world free from hypocrite politicians.

I believe that it is Allah's will that you are destined to bring cure to the suffering people rather than living a worthless life in Bangabhaban where so many presidents were under virtual house arrest by political parties.

Reaz Mohiuddin Outer Circular Road, Dhaka

Not good for democracy

I appreciate your bold editorial on the demand made by the ruling party, which forced the President of Bangladesh to resign. It is unfortunate that the fate of the President should be decided by the disciple level of MPs, who discussed openly the act of the President and he was the target of attack beyond any

Honourable exit



Good-bye presidency, hello patients

I hope The Daily Star will continue to provide us such in-depth articles and legal analysis. Thank you Mr. Monjurul Kabir. Please keep it up.

Chris Paton UK

Resignation of Badruddoza Chowdhury

It is a shocking news to our nation, if we are grateful to some extent. What a disregard to a man who possesses so much of distinctive and rare qualities! He combines in himself

A lot of us think that now is the best time to form a third party and strive hard to save the country from ruin. People like Dr. Kamal Hossain, Prof Yunus are urged to come forward and rescue us from this hopeless state.

Munia Lalmitia, Dhaka

Recent happenings in BNP

Clearly a plot is on to make Tareq Zia the next leader of BNP. As per the constitution, Khaleda Zia can't be the next PM (already second time) if I'm correct. So remove the possible barriers on Zia family's hold of the Prime Minister's office. I believe Tareq has already been appointed the next secretary general!

ASA USA

Tareq Zia is the Jr. Secretary General (1) of the party. -Editor

Forcing the President out

By doing what Khaleda Zia did, she only insulted her husband. She should have learnt better from her long career as a politician that no one can demand respect; it has to come spontaneously.

Mozharul Hoque Springfield, Virginia, USA

BNP and Hawa Bhaban

To claim that Tareq Zia's near miraculous accession to the post of Joint Secretary General is no dynastic succession but is a joke. As good a joke as the one about Hawa Bhaban not being involved in influence peddling.

Our country has been handed over to the crown prince and I am expected to accept that? Doesn't BNP realise that although I only have one vote, they're losing millions more like mine?

If Tareq Rahman thinks he can inherit this country like someone inherits the family business well let him at least until the next election. In the meantime make him the Home Minister he might have an easier time controlling the ruling party killers than the present incumbent.

Thor Dhaka

The year of politics

This is how I see the rest of this year coming along. Hasina will join parliament only to walk out almost immediately on some pretext or another. This should take up most of July. During that month she will also be building up the opposition's crescendo. While the Zia Dynasty will be consolidating its hold on power pushing aside any of the veterans who dare to dissent.

In August she should start her movement full swing building it up to a climax in October. In November we'll take a break for Ramadan and in December she can start again. Winter's always the best season for hartals and street violence in Bangladesh.

Round about January/February she should be able to bring the movement to a head toppling the unladen BNP.

There you have it. Until the new general elections in the middle or later half of next year we will see violence, hartals, economic disruption and misery. I wonder if there will be much left to squabble over between the two after they are done.

Pan Dhaka

Present government and mid-term election

We the people of Bangladesh have lost confidence in the present government. This government is a failure in every department. The people in the government or people related to the government are engaged in looting, corruption, killing and in every section of unsocial activities.

As the ruling party lost confidence in their elected President, we have lost confidence in the ruling party.

We request the present government to step down and hand over the power to caretaker government to arrange a new election.

Turza Lalmitia, Dhaka

Although unconstitutional on the part of the present government, I must congratulate Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury for having the boldness to leave the position of President of Bangladesh. This is more honourable than being a sycophant in a political set up.

This reminds me of the dictum of the PM that only imbecile and infants could be neutral, - yes, this is true, Dr. Chowdhury failed to uphold the standard of neutrality set out by the present ruling party.

But I also feel sorry for him for his pre-election role through the 'Shabash Bangladesh' in the ATN that definitely influenced the victory of the BNP. Such a role should act as an eye-opener for other politicians as well in both ruling and opposition parties.

Dr. K Maudood Elahi Jahangirnagar University

The President was also undemocratic

It is a bad blow to democracy in Bangladesh that in parliamentary form of government a President had been compelled to resign from his office. It is giving us the clear-cut implication that BNP does not believe in democracy as well as in the constitution.

The way the President had to resign is absolutely unconstitutional. But has the President followed the right procedure? A President could never ever resign (unless serious illness) in a parliamentary form of government until and unless a no-confidence motion is placed before the parliament against him. It is giving us another clear indication that Badruddoza Chowdhury is still a BNP man who has succumbed to internal party pressure. He was not the President of Bangladesh but the President of 4-party alliance which does not believe in the constitution as well. It is a sad day for the nation.

Tusar Ghosh Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Resignation of Dr. Chowdhury

In parliamentary democracy, a congenial and often complementary relationship between the president and the political government is

extent to which our political leadership can go if a matter does not well-cup to their partisan interest, let alone the interest of democracy.

Saleem Bin Saleh Chittagong

A golden opportunity for the nation

The world is not only laughing at us but pitying us at the same time for the way we have disgraced and ousted our elected President. It only shows how in competent, immature and emotional we are! BNP MPs including the Prime Minister behaved like children and showed their utter disregard to the constitution. What an example they have set before the nation and for the coming generations! The President acted very wise by stepping down and making an honourable exit befitting the position for the sake of the country and the nation.

All above would not have happened if the President so elected had been a non-party member of the ruling party. So now is the time to take our lesson and amend the constitution that all future Presidents of the country has to be a non-party member of the ruling party preferably retired Justices of the High Court or eminent personalities like Dr. Kamal Hossain, Barrister Istiaque Ahmed etc. The President has to be selected and elected

and pushing the country towards severe crisis. We have nothing to hope from them. It is the opposition parties who should build up public opinion to gear up movements in favour of having a neutral President with much wider power. This will protect the nation from being destroyed by the whimsical and dictatorial behaviour of the ruling party and that of the Prime Minister. It is the nation that comes first and nothing else.

A. B. M. Zakaria East Sheurapara, Dhaka

Exit from Bangabhaban

Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury has always been a perfect physician and a perfect President. Therefore, I believe that his forced resignation has not undermined him or his perfectness. Rather, very unfortunately, it has undermined the highest office of our republic.

As far as I know, the presidency of our republic has no power to do anything, on the one hand, and has the power to do nothing, on the other. This power to do nothing implies that the highest office would be neutral. And, this neutrality gives hope to the powerless citizens of our country to look towards the presidency in times of political crises, although the presidency can do nothing.

But we have to live with something, even if it is just a hope. Now, that hope seems to have gone forever with the exit of Dr. Chowdhury. A precedence has been set, which will forever haunt the Bangabhaban and the ordinary citizens of the republic.

I don't hold BNP responsible for this. It is our political system that needs to be looked at. So, it is no use discussing whether Dr. Chowdhury's removal from the presidency was constitutional or not.

I feel that something needs to be done at the very nucleus of our political system, so that we can be more comfortable with our "democracy". Let's dream as follows: Our lawmakers will amend the constitution to the effect that if a party gets more than a simple majority in an election, all seats beyond that simple majority will be vacated and a second round of elections or by-elections will be held, allowing all other contenders barring the single party or alliance, which has the simple majority. Thus, this party/alliance will be able to form the government, but will not have autocratic power, won't be able to amend the constitution without consensus, will look for consensus while electing the president, will be cautious while enacting/repealing laws, etc.

Dr. N. U. Khan Gulshan, Dhaka

Great expectations shattered...

All eyes were on the PM's return from USA, expecting a major reshuffle in the cabinet and a change in the overall situation of the country. But now it seems that our great expectations have been shattered, changes are taking place but not the way we, the common people wanted. The President resigns, the PM's son becomes the Joint Secretary General of BNP whereas some senior BNP leaders have no place in the cabinet. What next?

The nation faces major challenges like terrorism, poverty, unemployment, etc. but neither the ruling party nor the opposition is bothered about those. They are making mountains out of molehills, fighting each other for their personal cause to the extent that the President of the country is forced to resign. Leader of the Opposition makes bad remarks about late Ziaur Rahman and she is called a 'mad woman'. On the other side those who manipulated the resignation of Dr. B. Chowdhury have now become the 'young Turks' of BNP.

One doesn't have to be involved in politics to understand that Dr. B. Chowdhury was one of the very sincere workers of BNP. After becoming President of Bangladesh it was expected that he maintain neutrality but in doing so we all saw what happened, he had to bid goodbye to his office.

We were tired of AL rule, so opted for BNP hoping for some good governance. But alas! We are where we were. We must bear the responsibility because we have not voted them to power? BNP or AL, are they any different? They are two faces of the same coin.

Anjali Akbar Azimpur Road, Dhaka

What did you expect?

What more can you expect from the BNP? These people wanted a President who would be a puppet to Khaleda Zia's whim and they thought they found someone.

Since coming to power, this party has in the process alienated almost every section of the electorate. This party instead of focusing on the welfare and the needs of the nation has instead bogged themselves down into a quagmire of hate, vengeance, and repression. We are indeed unfortunate.

Shamim One-mail

Who is the next President

Following the resignation of President B Chowdhury it is now clear that the 'young Turks' of BNP have made a big achievement. Assuming there is nothing behind the door, the lack of obedience for Zia family cost Mr Chowdhury the presidency and the nation the service of a gentleman.

However, we salute him for the dignity! They could not accuse him of acting against the nation or the constitution. They accused him of acting against party interest instead.

I feel disgraced for our political leaders like Saifur Rahman, Mannan Bhuyan

to reflect upon what we have done today. You may be political adversaries but you are both on the same team: The People's Republic of Bangladesh. I urge them not to give in to their weaker sides and allow our nation to continue to nose-dive at a time when we face ever increasingly harsher global economic reality that we must quickly learn to weather.

Shabbir A. Bashir, PhD. San Jose, California, USA

Ludicrous suicide: A trend

BNP cabinet asked President A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury to step down following the unanimous decision by the party lawmaker as the party leaders had lost confidence in the President. I am not at all surprised, as this goes to prove the ludicrous blunders BNP often commits.

A person who is often considered as the only alternative to lead BNP in Begum Khaleda Zia's absence had to resign while trying to be fair and neutral while performing his duty as the President? No matter how he is nominated and elected as the President, he should exercise his rights and display neutrality to fend off criticism on his role as the President.

The young guns of BNP accuse him of turning his back to the party who nominated him as the President. And like so many blunders, BNP lawmakers once again proved their lack of vision by asking Prof. B. Chowdhury, who has been a cornerstone of BNP for so long, to step down.

In politics, there is no room for sordid emotions. Is Prof. B. Chowdhury sacrificed to pacify the



The son in the wings

who jumped into the wagon. Final request to the PM. Make your son Tareq Zia the

President to remain in peace. MF Fakhrul Cambridge

decorum.

The power politics seemed to have played a major role than any other issues. The Prime Minister should have reined in the MPs, who have showered un-parliamentary words on the President. This is neither a good sign for growing democracy nor for good conventions.

S. A. Srinivasa Sarma Hyderabad, India

"The Constitution takes a back seat"

The brilliant legal and constitutional analysis on the recent change of the Presidency of Bangladesh ("The premature departure of a President: the Constitution takes a back seat", June 23) in your 'Law and Our Rights' page by A. H. Monjurul Kabir is substantial, informative and thought-provoking. It clearly shows the true nature of democracy and constitutionalism in a developing country like Bangladesh. The development is depressing and I'm saddened by the fact that democracy in Bangladesh has not yet matured enough to attain sustained growth.

Mr. Kabir critically examined the role of Parliamentary Party, its power and limitation, the office of President and the controversial question of neutrality, the accountability of the President in a Parliamentary democracy, the definition of impeachment, the nature of impeachment in global context, the nature of impeachable crimes and its impacts on the growth of constitutionalism in Bangladesh. The article is very timely and indeed, articulates the relevant legal issues.

the sterling qualities of honesty, intelligence, eloquence and virtuousness. The landslide victory of B.N.P. in the last election was possible largely because of Mr. Badruddoza Chowdhury's successful projection of Awami mis-rule through "Shabash Bangladesh" of ATN Bangla channel.

He did it so nicely and credibly with courage, ignoring all risk factors. It was so commendable.

It is now alleged by the BNP that Mr. Badruddoza Chowdhury did not pay proper respect to the Late President Ziaur Rahman, by not placing floral wreaths at Zia's mazar on the last death anniversary of Zia. But he was the closest associate of Late President Zia not only vocally, but also by heart and soul.

May Allah bless us with correct power of assessment and judgement for repentance and correction.

Imran Khan Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Save us from ruin

It seems like the general people of Bangladesh are totally helpless. They chose BNP with a hope that they might be a truly democratic government. But it appears to be very much the otherwise. They have lost control not only regarding law and order situation but also on their own party. Can we expect anything positive and democratic from them?

People have already started losing faith in BNP and trying to figure out whom to vote for in the next election. From the autocratic attitude of the ruling party it doesn't seem that people have much faith left in this party. It is really a frustrating situation.

Let's assume BNP cohorts used the Zia disrespect allegation as an eyewash to cover their real motives. The reader may ask, what might be the reason to remove President Chowdhury? I have a theory - a conspiracy theory.

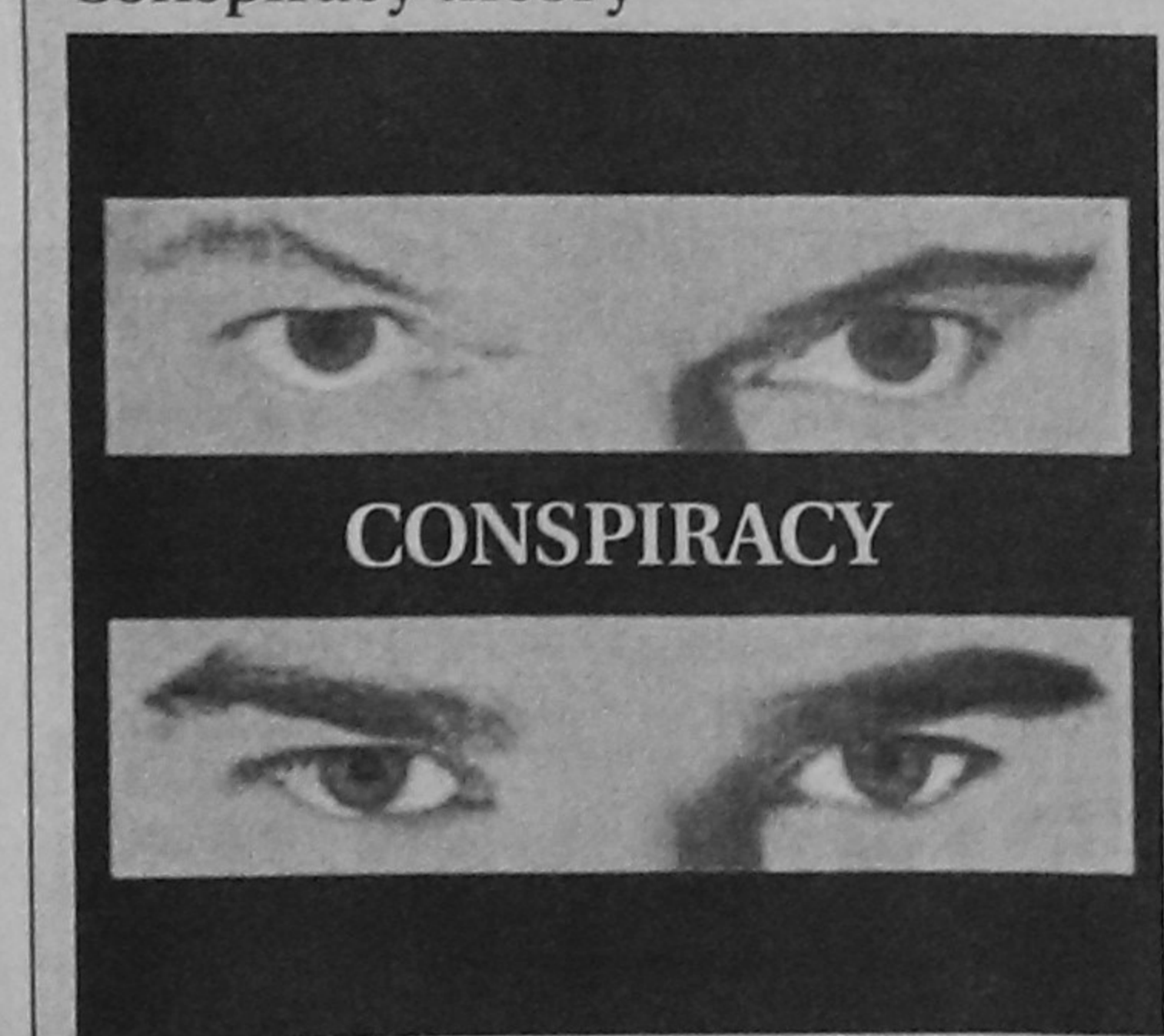
It is reported in different sections of the press that Khaleda Zia is trying to empower the presidency in Bangladesh. They will succeed in this like they succeeded in unilaterally removing the President thanks to their overwhelming representation in the parliament. The next president will no doubt be a BNP man whose tenure will run well in to the next Parliament. Now, guess what a powerful BNP President can do, should BNP fail to form the next government?

On a side note, BNP should not expect to win many votes in the next election. You can almost see a smiling Sheikh Hasina cheering on the sidelines!

I was never an AL supporter and after the recent BNP fiasco, I am not a BNP supporter either. I think now is the best time for a change - a fresh face. I would request the estranged President to join hands with Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Dr. Kamal Hossain (as another letter writer suggested) and form a new political party. Such a party will secure an unprecedented support never seen before, in the history of Bangladeshi politics.

AA California, USA

Conspiracy theory



Conspiracy against whom?