

Adamjee Jute Mill

I was very glad to read that the government is finally going to close down Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM). It is fortunate that our Finance Minister seems to recognise the impossibility of increasing tax collection as long as the public can see how public funds are wasted on loss-making state-owned industries. In fact, the government's squandering of its scarce resources on these dinosaurs undermines financial discipline of any kind.

To ensure that the AJM shutdown happens smoothly, the government must take care that the workers' compensation is fairly distributed. To prevent violence at the site, it might also consider sending in some more troops for the time being.

Zeeshan Hasan
Dhamondi, Dhaka

Thanks to the government for the decision to shutdown Adamjee Jute Mill. The Mill has been incurring a yearly loss of 200 crore taka (2 billion taka) since many years. Usually this sort of not-so-pleasant but essential decisions are taken at the first year of a five year term, so that the directly effected voters get some time to recover and its indirect benefits become evident to the nation.

However, the government indecision about privatising the telecommunication sector (especially the BTB) is very annoying. They should take an immediate and brave decision regarding BTB.

Dalia Satter
On e-mail

T&T multi-metering: a moneymaking scheme?

What is the government trying to do - tax us at every step of our lives? T&T has finalised their scheme to impose multi-metering for local calls (from 01-Jul) under which an additional Tk1.50 will be charged after every five minutes during peak-times and after every eight minutes during off-peak times. The justifications given by the authority are ridiculous to say the least. Instead of increasing the per capita telephone-lines, the government seems to have embarked on this new money-

Terrorism in BUET

I passed from BUET in 1994 and was often a victim of terrorism during my days as an engineering student (1988 to 1994). When I started my class there, it was a calm and peaceful campus. But unfortunately, I left BUET with an extremely bad impression.

During my days in BUET, a lot of rooms were burnt and destroyed (at least four times) by the "BUET students turned terrorists" who were known to all. Approximate dates of those incidents are: 31st Dec 1991, 6th Feb 1993, 27th May 1994 and 30th June 1994. The names of the terrorists were also submitted to the BUET authority but no action was taken against them.

Along with the rooms of many students mine was also burnt. And when I to the authorities to seek redress, the response I got was astonishing. First, I went to the then Director of Students Welfare (DSW) and he said to me, "why is your room burnt? It proves that you are a terrorist!" Secondly, I met a teacher of Civil Eng. Dept and he also misbehaved with me.

Thirdly, I contacted another teacher of Mech. Dept., who later served as the VC; he tried to convince me saying, "these incidents are normal, why do you worry about it?"

I also had a meeting with the then VC and he also behaved like a UN diplomat.

I met with all the hall provosts and the head of the departments, everyone behaved like politicians.

Chittagong

In this IT age when we should prepare ourselves to keep pace with the global village, the government has taken the decision to introduce T&T multi-metering system. This is obviously a great economical presser for the middle-class people. People have already been burdened with a killer budget and now this multi-metering system. Isn't there any end to our misery?

With this new system, is T&T planning earn more revenue? Well they would be disappointed. Because from now on people will curtail their conversation and that means less bill. But one thing is sure that people won't be able to converse in a relaxed manner, because of the tension of increasing bill.

In many countries the local calls are absolutely free and our country is doing the very opposite! I hope the government would review their decision and relieve us another burden.

A citizen
On e-mail

"What is transshipment?"

I have read Mr. M Anwarul Haq's letter in response to my opinion

Kudos to Hasina and shadow cabinet

Kudos to former Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina for joining the Parliament in the greater interest of the nation. Given the bleak nature of our contemporary politics, Awami League's presence in the Parliament serves as a ray of hope for many who want the party to play a role as shadow government.

Hasina should realise that a picture illustrates thousands of words. The media pictures depicted AL MPs observing a minute of silence holding photographs of victims murdered during BNP reign, alongside images of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her sycophants laughing unwisely. For the sake of our beloved country, I hope Hasina understands that such images are more powerful to garner attention, publicity and support than even hundred hartals and thousand public meetings combined.

Sheikh Hasina has a golden opportunity today to establish herself as an alternative to the present government. It is Awami League's luck, BNP's doom and our democracy's irony that after seven months of mis-governance and misuse, even many (former) die-hard sympathisers of BNP are looking in Sheikh Hasina's direction in search of better leadership. Please take advantage of this situation and form a shadow cabinet immediately to expose BNP's failings better.

The nation expects a lot from Hasina today. If she is able to feel the pulse of the nation accurately, she will sit in the other side of the House sooner than expected. No one could predict such a change of fortune for Awami League in less than seven months.

published in *The Daily Star*, June 15. It is unfortunate ignoring or trying to brush aside the importance of definitions of concepts. If we allow transshipment/transit, it will only allow the movement of international trade and if we allow corridor, it allows domestic trade.

One of the basic difference between us and the developed world, I find, lies in the attitude and approach. While most of our policies are prepared by retired or serving bureaucrats or people with little understanding of the subject they embark on, it has become mandatory in the developed world that all their committees responsible for making a policy must include a

A Distressed Observer

lawyer. The very first thing that they do is define the objectives and relevant concepts. The reason is obvious, how could you formulate a policy without knowing or defining the concepts?

Incidentally I would like to mention our "National Shipping Policy" - a policy that is supposed to guide our international and inland water transport and related activities. I had represented the Chartered Institute of Transport in a seminar after the draft policy was prepared and very precisely raised two issues missing in the policy. One is the liability of carriers whether international or inland, cargo or transport and secondly commercialisation. I was surprised to say the least that the policy did not incorporate the basic principle of carriage i.e. liability of a carrier. The disasters that have recently occurred in our inland waterways causing unprecedented loss of lives could have been prevented had there been a liability regime to govern the inland water transport. Until we can implement a preventive measure in the form of a liability regime, disasters will continue to recur. This is where concepts and definitions matter which has rendered the National Shipping Policy worthless.

FZ
On e-mail

"Two days weekly holiday"

This is in reference to Nur Jahan's letter (June 2) asking our government to re-introduce two-day weekly holiday. I absolutely agree with her reasoning and suggestion.

In fact, everybody I know feels that the weekly holiday of one day is insufficient.

Apart from those employees who live outside the city, this one-day holiday is difficult for women too because they have backlogged household chores to take care of. If they spend the whole Friday cooking-cleaning-shopping then forget about catching up with the lost sleep, where is the time to spend

If we cannot define our priorities, it is only likely that powerful neigh-



Ban the terrorists, please...

narrating to me over telephone about the trouble they were facing trying to convince the tenant to vacate their premises in Gulshan, Dhaka.

I hope your paper would explore the dangers of renting out independent houses to big businesses in Bangladesh who have no, whatsoever, respect for law and justice. Land grabbing through corrupt and unethical means have become a common practice in Bangladesh.

FZ
On e-mail

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whom should I vote for in the next election. I also asked a few others and most of them did not have any answer. Like me I wonder how many more are.

We voted Awami League to power, we were forced to vote Ershad to power and we voted BNP to power too. And we all know how it turned out. I am a proud Bengali but my head hangs low in shame to proclaim myself as one because of what the world sees us as today. I am also ashamed to think that in four years I'll have to vote again and that too one of these-- BNP, AL or Jatiya Party.

But this cannot go on. We need a respite. Where are the voices that are heard and trusted by the people? Where are Shahabuddin, Latifur Rahman, Habibur Rahman, Yunus...? Why are they keeping silent at this moment of need? Please do, do something to save this nation from ruin.

A bleeding heart citizen
Dhaka

Of in-laws and out-laws

I distinctly remember reading a remark of a foreign diplomat during the period of BKSAL rule. He said, "It's just a government of in-laws and outlaws." After this latest faux pas committed by the BNP leadership I can't but help this feeling of Deja vu.

Abdus Samad Sarwar
New York, USA

Dynasties

There was very interesting article in the Wall Street Journal a while ago upon the accession of Megawati; Sukarno's daughter in Indonesia.

The article went on to describe these leaders, as legacy leaders -- privileged, inexperienced, who win office, based more on pedigree than on policy. Naturally most have failed as politicians.

Not surprisingly, the article went on to say, these leaders show a disregard for democratic principles. Because they often see power as a birthright or destiny, family dynasties occasionally revert to autocratic rule when times get tough. Indira Gandhi, for example, declared an "emergency" in 1975, suspending India's democracy. Ms. Bhutto, educated at Harvard, collided frequently with Pakistan's opposition-led Parliament, jailing some of her opponents.

Bangladesh has just joined the ranks of countries like Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan as failed democracies that cannot elect truly democratic leaders. India at least seems to have matured enough to shrug off this burden as we can see with Congress out of power for so long. When and if Priyanka Gandhi ever makes it into South Block she will have done so far more through her own struggle and accomplishment than any of the others in this region.

Certainly Tarique Rahman will show the same disregard for democratic norms when the times get tough on BNP. He will surely try to stamp out dissent and disrespect as he perceives it, as has happened to B. Chy and will doubtless happen to more BNP veterans. The freedom of the press will also not be spared. His

Shukla Mirza
On e-mail

Where are they?

I have been asking myself as to

Terrorism in BUET is tolerated by the BUET authorities and every body knows it.

a) After each incident I saw the terrorists in the company of some teachers. In 1991 I went to the VC's office and was astonished to see the meeting of the terrorists (who burnt the rooms).

b) In 1992 some terrorists of DU burnt a couple of cars of some BUET teachers. Those terrorists also had good relations with some BUET-terrorists.

c) In 1993 prior to EUCSU election some terrorists burnt down a banner and leaflets in front of Titumir Hall provost, but the provost said nothing to those terrorists (Titumir Hall Residents). His reaction was "This is common in every election!"

d) In 1994 30th June, some terrorists burnt 30 rooms of different halls and the gang leader "Nila" (President Of Chatra Front) was trapped in Sohrawardi Hall as the guard closed the main gates; but the provost and BUET authority did not take any action against her!

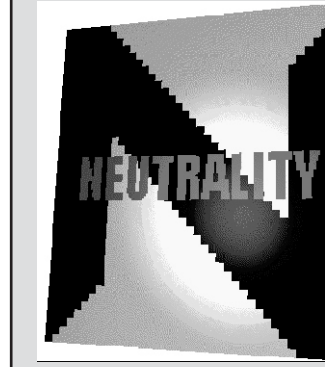
If we select the "tiger" to guard the "goats", that will be of no use.

Sheikh Akhlaque
Montreal, Canada

vengeance may be much like Hasina's behaviour when she initially came into power against all those who had forgotten her father.

Just about the only positive spin I can make on this is his apparent lack of proclivities. Megawati's favourite movie was "Beauty and the Beast" which she's watched over 50 times. Benazir Bhutto's Karachi bedroom had stacks of well-thumbed Mills & Boons, including An Affair to Forget, Stolen Heart, Sweet Imposter and no less than two copies of The Butterfly and the Baron, according to one reporter. Khaleda Zia herself is a prodigious collector of Chiffon saris and jewelry.

"The President is neutral, show him the door"



The puzzle

Thanks for your commentary on President B. Chowdhury's resignation ("The President is neutral, show him the door", June 25). But don't you think it's a cowardice for a man at the highest office to surrender to the wishes of some party cadres of BNP politics? Was

he at all courageous enough to defend the constitution he was elected to do so? Is it decency or just another display of habitual 'yes-manship' for last twenty years?

By the way, don't you think it's an award long standing overdue? During the most critical time of this nation, immediately following the military coup in '75, it's he who thought a military dictator can offer democracy to a nation, (like a piece of stone can make some pudding!). It is he who never questioned the military General Zia why he took over unconstitutionally. It's he who was fraught with the panygyrics showering on an army general who destroyed the constitution single-handedly by changing it with a bloody

Md. Mahmudur Rahman
Dhaka

BNP's budget

Never before in the history of Bangladesh, the Finance Minister had presented a budget which was so blatantly in favour of the rich and the privileged people! Just see the following examples:

- (a) A person earning Tk. 75,000/- a year shall now have to pay a mini-

dle-income groups and enabling the rich to become richer. It is not surprising that the trade bodies have praised the new budget!

Abul Mohsin
Dhaka

Who were the 'Young Turks' in Turkey?

I could not help but take up my pen in correcting a mistake, which is being repeated in mentioning the younger elements in the then Kamal Ataturk's government in Turkey as "Young Turks". I refer to the letter "They are not Young Turks" (June 26) and one or two other letters published during the last two days in which reference to the "Young Turks" was given in describing the action of the younger elements of BNP "in removing" the former President B. Chowdhury.

It seems that neither *The Daily Star* nor these letter writers were familiar with the history of the Young Turks of Modern Turkey. The Young Turks-- the expression was given by the British media in describing those modern, liberal, reform minded and educated elements of Ottoman Turkey who took control of the Turkish Government at the beginning of the 20th Century remained in power till the end of the World War I. Their great leader was Anwar Pasha who was the Prime Minister of Turkey and after the defeat of Turkey in the World War I, died in exile somewhere in Central Asia. Mustafa Kamal Ataturk, who was a military man, served as Military Attaché in the Turkish Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria then led the Turkish Army in fighting Italy in Libya, perhaps in 1912-13, if I am not mistaken. He also resisted the Allied

sword replete with the tears, blood and sighs of the freedom fighters. It's he who helped quite a lot in establishing a "democratic" (?) dynasty bringing in a widow of a dictator to the political centre-stage. Don't you think it's a payment to a highly 'educated' sycophantic public-city and power craving 'yes man'?

Finally, do you find any tonal similarity of the recent coronation of a new 'prince' to that of Sanjay Gandhi during the emergency in India which made Mrs. Gandhi pay a hefty penalty? We do. We respect your editorial comments a lot. Thanks again for that.

Ahmed Hasan
New York, USA

We hope they have learnt from their own follies in the past and BNP's ceaseless blunders one after another. As for BNP, I've already given up on them.

Toricelli Arman
On e-mail



Participation is always cheering

bours will impose their wishes on us under various guises. We must understand trade and transport, the concepts and definitions in order to frame a policy and get our due share in any negotiation. There is a fundamental difference between international and domestic trades.

Khandaker R Zaman, FCIT
Dhaka

Land grabbing

I hear that *The Daily Star* plays a pioneering role in exposing both the good and bad side of the society in Bangladesh.

I am writing on behalf of a friend residing in Bangladesh who was

some quality-time with the family? Also, nowadays, because of traffic jam too much time is wasted in commuting. By reducing number of working days that waste can be reduced too.

I am wondering how could this government after winning such a landslide victory become so aloof from the public? How come they are so indifferent to people's suffering? I would like to request our government to consider changing weekly holiday to Friday and Saturday as before.

Shukla Mirza
On e-mail

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I have been asking myself as to

The other side of the story...

In your letters to the Editor page, we have been reading a lot of interesting letters for the last few days praising Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury and criticising our Honourable Prime Minister and BNP.

It is very easy to take a stand and get carried away. I wonder if anyone has given some serious thought to find out the other side of the story? Our respected Law Minister had said that there were other issues, which warranted impeachment of the President. I must say it was nice of BNP and Khaleda Zia not to disclose those issues which otherwise might have created humiliation to Mr Badruddoza Chowdhury. He knew it well and I must say he was clever enough to resign to evade a total loss of face in the society. I am sure one day the nation will be told of the issues as BNP must come out with the real issues to keep the so-called Badruddoza well wishers at bay.

Shopon Rahman
California, USA

A quiet departure

I am writing this because I believe the incident that has taken place on our national political theatre only a few days ago, calls for the attention of all Bangladeshis alike. Irrespective of their political, social and ideological point of view, it's a matter of concern for all. The fact that Head of the highest institution, i.e. the Presidency of the country could be asked to leave his post in such an unceremon-

nious fashion raises profound and deeply troubling questions vis-à-vis current state of our politics. It also throws into question the very nature of our commitment to the democratic process. This action has set bad precedent. A neutral President in a democratic system ensures a check and balances that is so important for smooth running of affairs of the country. Aside from this, the fact of the matter is that, our country is very much dependent on the generosity of donor's (aid) and incidence of this nature only serves to discredit our nation in the eyes of our donor countries, let alone rest of world.

When the highest institution, office of the President of the Republic, is treated in such a jovial manner the underlying values of institutionalism are irreconcilably shaken. I too, made a humble effort in establishing the democratic system in 1991 when I had been the Chief of Army Staff. The democratic system is the order of the day almost all over the world. But the results depend upon the way one practices it. Over the past ten years, we could reap the benefits of this fine system. I sincerely believe and hope that we can make an honest attempt to help our country for once and for all to tread the path of democracy and ultimately, development. We must discard vengeance and distrust of each other, not only in political arena, but also in all spheres of life. This is because vengeance has only negated our country and ourselves from reaching our destination.

Today, we have more problems than solutions. The very fibre of our country is in tatters. At this moment, the fact that our country should go in the direction it has chosen only serves to highlight the enormity of the task that lay ahead for all of us. First and foremost

there must be a system standardised and followed, social values set and honoured, and we feel pride as a nation and earn respect of other countries. Last but not the least is the improvement of economy, alleviation of poverty and ensuring of job provisions.

Lieutenant General (retired)
Mohammad Noor Uddin Khan
Dhaka

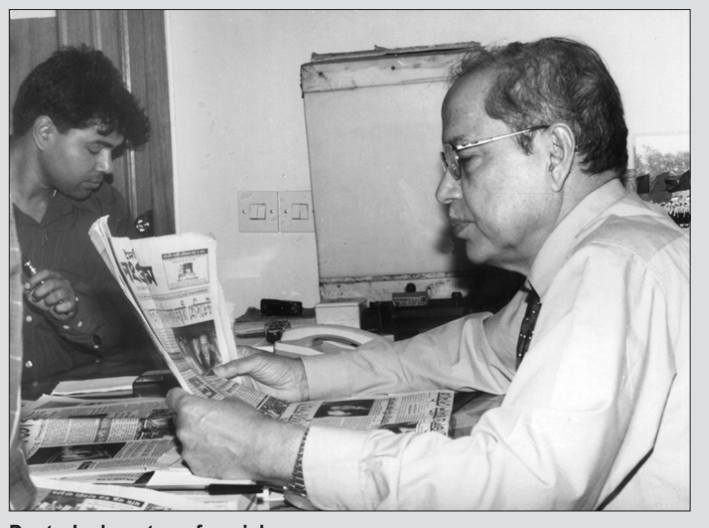
President's forced exit: whither BNP?

It is unbelievable that president Badruddoza Chowdhury has been ousted by the short-sighted BNP MPs? Dr. Chowdhury is one among the few honourable political leaders of today's Bangladesh. And after this recent incident I think even a utopian will realise that the country has no future.

The most respected, person in BNP, Dr Chowdhury was forced to leave presidency because of ridiculous complaints from the most inarticulate sections of BNP parliamentarians. It is difficult to keep faith in the leadership of our politicians after such an incident of this kind occurred with Prime Minister's acceptance.

Prof. Chowdhury, who has been with the BNP in the good days and bad days, was questioned for his loyalty. The sacrifices he made for BNP over the last quarter of a century appears to have vanished overnight just because of two omissions on May 30, 2002.

We understand that a new breed of leadership will emanate in



Doctor's departure, feverish response

BNP-- the cardinal hallmark of this leadership will be unconditional loyalty to Hawa Bhaban.

Russell Ahmed
Dhaka