

Long on rhetoric in Johannesburg

But short on commitments

AS the ten-day World Summit on Sustainable Development, popularly known as the Earth Summit, nearer completion, prospects for a time-bound commitment to lofty targets set at the UN Millennium Summit for poverty alleviation and environment conservation look increasingly bleak.

Since the first Earth Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 catapulted environment on to the world's political agenda, the UN conferences on climate and environment issues have invariably turned out to be diplomatic sabre-rattling between the EU and the US.

Unless there is a dramatic transformation of their selfish mindset, the UN summits on sustainable development would continue to end in compromises and failures.

The developed countries must realise that spending a few million dollars here and there does not hold the solution to the problems they have created in the first place.

Pak court orders six hanged for gangrape

Landmark judgement for oppressed women

WE are heartened by and wholly supportive of a stern verdict that a special anti-terrorism court in Dera Gazi Khan handed against six men on Sunday.

Earlier, as part of the retaliatory wrath on the lower-stratum family the raped woman's juvenile brother had been sodomised.

The incident brought to a bolder relief the abuses rural women in Pakistan are subjected to (honour killings included).

We congratulate the special court, the women's rights groups and the Punjab government on their emphatic success in defending and protecting the weak and the vulnerable in Dera Gazi Khan.

One hopes though that the death sentences will be executed to herald an all-out deterrence against such abominable treatment of women in Pakistan.

In different forms, Bangladeshi women, too, have fallen prey to torture and tyrannical maltreatment by rogues among men.

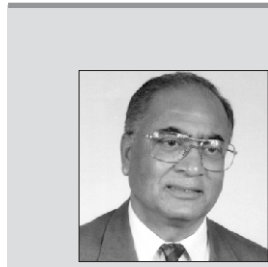
active support of well-placed political and influential figures of the then ruling elite.

Did I enjoy watching ETV program? You bet I did! But yet I am content with the outcome of the Supreme Court verdict.

There is no doubt ETV was the only Bangladeshi channel whose programming was up to par with any foreign broadcaster and many of their programs highlighted the problems and injustice faced by the people of our impoverished nation.

Only recently we have seen companies like Enron and WorldCom falter when it was uncovered that the companies used illegal accounting practices and have been manipulating their balance sheet to show inflated profits.

Samaritan professor on Bangladesh politics



M. M. REZAUL KARIM

ON my return from abroad last week I attended an interesting luncheon meeting. It was hosted by the chief of a renowned international institute.

The professor initiated discussion by making a tour d'horizon over most of the trouble spots of the world, including those of the recent past.

Everyone came out with his opinion, which was both relevant and useful. The need for democracy as a sine qua non for development was emphasized.

What the ruling party could do

Yashwant Sinha's Dhaka visit

For "a fresh momentum and dynamism" in relations

ABDUL HANNAN

IT is worthwhile to discuss the outcome of Indian foreign minister Yashwant Sinha's two-day visit to Bangladesh last week.

It is an economic problem and should not be viewed with emotion" implicitly meaning that Bangladesh with its poor economy could not think of competing with India.

Minister Khaleda Zia. The urgent need for poverty alleviation, economic and social development, educational uplift, sincerity and earnestness of political parties to redeem their electoral pledges and all such relevant issues figured into discussion.

trolling the fast deteriorating law and order situation throughout the country. Not that they have not done anything in this regard, but the situation has not significantly improved.

to know their people, their vocations and idiosyncrasies.

Secondly, the society has been infested with widespread corruption since decades. The practice has pervaded every nook and corner of the society.

What the opposition is required to do

The opposition must join the parliament and any reasons advanced by them not to do so are totally untenable.

CURRENTS AND CROSSCURRENTS

One must seek the root cause of terrorism, corruption and other crimes and strive to eliminate them. Poverty alleviation is the most crucial issue.

However, the good professor had to come in the end with a concrete proposal of identifying issues, which would bolster the on-going process of democracy in our country.

What the ruling party could do

The coalition government should be more sincere and effective in con-

party. Their allegiance lies with anyone who would support, provide and protect them. For this, they generally try to align themselves with ruling party stalwarts.

Manifestation of nepotism and favouritism will merely tarnish party image and harm its over-all interests severely.

Bangladesh at the top of the list of the most corrupt countries of the world. What a shame it is!

The ruling party must hasten to redeem the pledges of election manifesto and citizens are to be assured that the former is sincere in initiating action to this effect.

Creation of the post of Ombudsman, Human Rights Commission and independence of the state electronic media are yet to be taken in hand.

the opposition that their members would be allowed even more time to speak than members of the treasury bench.

The opposition should not go back on its words, expressed loud and clear while they were in power, to their own people and those from abroad.

between the two countries should be based on trust and not suspicion. During his visit to Savar martyrs' memorial, in a veiled reference to the Indian support and contribution to the success of Bangladesh liberation war he wrote "our predecessors have left us a construction, an architecture to build upon".

However, India has dragged its feet, even backpedaled and shown extreme intransigence to honour and act upon the international agreements it signed with Bangladesh.

The litany of grievances of Bangladesh is long and painful. But as has been truly said by Yashwant Sinha, India is a big country.

on anybody unless its challenge goes unanswered". Such remarks savour of superiority complex, and are incompatible with norms of diplomatic niceties.

However, the Indian foreign minister made pledges to take urgent measures to resolve the outstanding issues at the political level if it is impossible at the experts and institutional level and said that "no lingering or dragging of solution will be allowed".

resolving the outstanding issues for last 30 years. Bangladesh has made one concession after another without reciprocity.

Bangladeshi enclaves of Dahagram and Angorputa in India. After wishy washy dilatory tactics for more than 25 years India now has partially implemented the agreement by allowing the right of passage, not lease in perpetuity, of Bangladeshi nationals through Tinbigha at intermittent hours with interval.

The Indian foreign minister has said that the agreement to allow

duty free access to Indian market of 40 items in 16 categories of Bangladeshi exports will be implemented immediately. But in actuality Bangladesh will not be able to take advantage of more than seven items as the rest are either not produced in Bangladesh or not sufficient for export.

cally stated before the visiting former President of the United States, Jimmy Carter. The opposition not only broke its pledge but did so within a few weeks of their having lost the general election.

The opposition should respond to the offer of dialogue by the ruling party on various national and international issues.

As the discussions petered to the end, one of those who were present came out with some additional words of wisdom.

At the end one may wonder who is this Samaritan professor. But is that necessary?

M M Rezaul Karim, a former Ambassador and Secretary, is Adviser to Chairperson of BNP.

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

ETV goes off air

ETV, the first terrestrial private TV channel, a window for the independent focus on human affairs went off air on August 29.

The process may be illegitimate therefore those who masterminded this illegal issuance of license should be questioned.

People love ETV. Then why did the government switch off this popular channel? The programs this channel broadcast are not illegal.

Shamana Yasmin DU

As with most high profile projects in Bangladesh there is no doubt that ETV benefited from a biased and rigged selection process which helped this channel get the only terrestrial broadcasting license in Bangladesh.

these cases the companies are already in bankruptcy and on the verge of collapse.

However, it is high time for the government to acknowledge that the people of this country want and need independent broadcast mediums that offer entertainment, unbiased news and other programming for the masses.

A lesson has been learned that the long arm of the law would catch up with the wrongdoers at some point.

Only recently we have seen companies like Enron and WorldCom falter when it was uncovered that the companies used illegal accounting practices and have been manipulating their balance sheet to show inflated profits.

Again No. 1 in corruption!

I congratulate the present government for achieving such a noble feat for the country!

Anando Topkhana Road, Dhaka

What a coincidence! On your August 29 issues along with the news "Wheatgate scam" and "Most corrupt nation again" we also find "Prime Minister renews vow to curb corruption, crime."

Spray the patients! This is simply pathetic to see the DCC to spray insecticide in human presence.

'Letters to the Editor and the reader's right'

I am referring to the recent letters on 'Letters to the Editor and the reader's right'. A 'debate' generally refers to disagreements, contests or dispute but 'opinion' submits to views, attitude and thoughts of a reader.

The readers have the right to express their opinion or start a debate on whether or not the President's ouster was ethical, whether or not police action on Shamsunnahar hall was legal, whether or not the curriculum in the English Medium Schools should be changed for national interest or any issue concerning public awareness but never on a topic like "wrong wording in a Rabindra Shangeet".

Spray the patients! This is simply pathetic to see the DCC to spray insecticide in human presence.

students in trouble

I have been closely following the debate "English medium students in trouble" and I agree that the quality of Bangla in English medium school is not of the same level taught in Bengali medium schools.

I study in Sunbeams, one of the best English medium schools in this country and I think that the Bangla we are being taught is of a very high standard.

At the same time I would really like to know as to what sort of redress we the consumers of such services should have when power fluctuations, frequent outage etc cause us distress in the form of sophisticated electronic items going kaput.

Mahmudur Rahman Gulshan, Dhaka

Utility bills

I am frequently amused to see advertisements by the utility authorities such as DESA, T&T, Titas Gas and WASA notifying us that unless we pay our bills within a certain period of time they will disconnect these connections.

Biman

How does the ticketing system of Biman operate? I had a set of tickets to fly from Chittagong to Dhaka on the 1st of September '02.

As a hartal was declared on the 1st of September, I went to the Biman office and requested for a change of flight from the 1st to the 2nd of September.

When asked why could he not re-issue with a fresh date, he replied 'please ask the big bosses'. This is the laid down system, which he has to follow.

Sheikh Tanjeb Islam

Class: VIII, Sunbeams School

various reports published in The Daily Star and other leading newspapers, the bulk of the 'defaulters' are government ministries, corporations and even lawmakers.

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Mahmudur Rahman Gulshan, Dhaka

Announcement:

Due to huge flow of letters it has become impossible for us to accommodate the longer ones. The valued readers are therefore earnestly requested not to send letters exceeding in three hundred words.

-- Editor