

Tasks before the new VC Win the trust of all groups – of both students and teachers

SELDOME has any person of any significance shown any sign of learning from history in our recent past. Will Prof. Faiz? Here history that we are talking about is not something of the distant past but events of yesterday. Will the new chief of the Dhaka University learn anything from those sordid events of Shamsun Nahar Hall? Without doubt we can term the period of Dr. Anwarullah as one of the most inglorious of our most prestigious University. But why was it so? Simply because he had no sense of pride in his exalted profession. He was nothing more than a political lackey quite happy to serve the bidding of his party. His lack of any sense of dignity was obvious from the way he 'occupied' the VC's office after he was appointed to it. From the word go his partisanship, his vindictiveness, his desire to please his political masters and his total disinterest in anything academic made the Dhaka University lose whatever little of academic atmosphere it had.

Therefore the first task before the new VC is to shun partisanship and act as an honest head of an academic institution. Prof. Faiz should literally put a sign on his office door saying that Dhaka University is an academic institution whose prime task is to impart education and knowledge to students and not to be a breeding ground for *mastans* and future political godfathers. It is a place for scholars, researchers and students and anybody who love knowledge and anything to do with seeking it. As for the rest they are not welcome on its premises. The sign should also state that he will do nothing other than the affairs of the University and that he will discharge them on the basis of well laid out rules of the University, and that he would resign the moment he is asked to do anything against his conscience. Such a public position will help him win the confidence of the major factions of teachers and students that now divide the University. This will not be an easy task, but it is not an impossible one.

University teachers may have political leanings. But such political leanings have superseded the interest of the University itself. That has happened because the faculty saw that their promotions lay in not in being good teachers but being in 'white', 'pink' or 'blue' groups and ensuring that their panel wins and then 'delivering' the University to the political party in power. Thus over the years University teachers' politics became as polluted with partisanship as has been the case for the students.

The healing process could start from the campus. Can the new VC give that leadership? As the intellectual hub of the nation, Dhaka University could still show us the way. Remember that the University cannot run the way it does at the moment. We must change and there isn't much time to effect that change.

Changes in traffic management Strict enforcement holds key to success

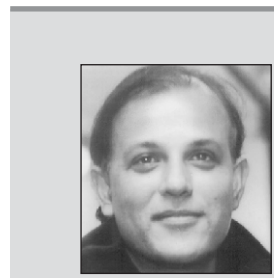
THE government certainly deserves credit for the resolve it has shown so far to bring order to the city's traffic system. More importantly, its actions have been guided by the ultimate objective of reducing air pollution. The ban on two-stroke autorickshaws and autotempos, which led to withdrawal of 12,500 black smoke-spewing three-wheelers from September 1, has already started showing positive impact on city environment. There has been chaos and confusion in the public transport system for the void it created, forcing the government to allow one thousand more two-stroke three-wheelers back on the road. However, the disorder has been mainly due to its failure to arrange adequate alternatives in time. Overall, in terms of air quality and public transport, the situation is better than what it used to be even a few months back.

Another major challenge for the government and different relevant agencies has been, and perhaps still is, to keep in check the sudden influx of illegal rickshaws to fill in the transport void and the profiteering impulses of the drivers of the remaining two-stroke three-wheelers, CNG-run four-stroke autorickshaws and taxicabs.

Encouragingly, the Ministry of Communications, the Traffic Department of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police and the Dhaka City Corporation have joined hands to make sure that commuters are not troubled by any of the two. While a drive will be launched on September 28 to rid the city roads of unlicensed motorised and non-motorised vehicles, three-wheelers and taxicabs will be brought under a strict tariff regime. Already fair meter has been made mandatory for every CNG-run autorickshaw and strict guidelines have been laid out for taxicabs. As for rickshaws, the authorities are weighing quite a few options to regulate their movement.

The success of the mooted changes in traffic management would depend on how these are enforced. Efficient measures have slipped through enforcement chinks before and so can these. Therefore, the authorities must be persistent and consistent as well in enforcement. Also, they must not rush into things. Impulsive implementation has resulted in many a failure for traffic management. Before full-scale application of the proposed changes, the authorities should think and think hard whether any particular issue has remained overlooked or not.

Guess who dunnit?



K.A.S. MURSHID

THE one-man Commission report says it all: **THEY** dunnit. Now it is the turn of every man, woman and child living in *Sonar Bangla* to be duly outraged. Who would have thought that the bomb explosions in Jessore, at the Batamul and at that church were perpetrated by THEM (rather than by OUR friends and collaborators)? And why did it take so long to guess? What matters of course is that now we know... and after all these agonizing months! Congratulations Mr. One-Man Commissioner for this brilliant piece of deduction that will have poor Sherlock turn green in his grave. It would of course be nice to know what your evidence was and how you managed to deduce such clever results. But I guess those are Top Secret and cannot be divulged. That's perfectly OK: I am not one of those doubting Thomases, and I believe you 100%. Nevertheless, with your permission Sir, may I ask a few silly questions? Since I suspect that no one will

bother answering them, may I also proceed to answer them all by myself (to the best of my ability)?

First, why did it take so long to commission this Commission?

Obvious, my dear Watson, the poor fellow took SO long to retire. We HAD to wait for the right man to be available to carry out this, ah, delicate operation.

Secondly, why form a separate commission when the matter is

clout?

Don't be daft now. What's legality got to do with it? ALL we want is to stick around forever, and all we need from you is undying loyalty.

Fifth: Err, do you think this might back fire? After all even our uneducated people are not THAT stupid, right?

Backfire, you say? WE don't think so. The best minds have advised us that this was the best

At the very least, we are constantly trying to score cheap brownie points over our opponents, not realizing that they are our exact mirror image, and that we are NO better and vice versa. This realization may lead to the conclusion that 'we cannot afford to have them come back to power, because this is exactly what they will do to us'. And there lies the rub. What then should we do to

into our consciousness should be treated with the utmost disdain, especially during our first year in Office. We will start thinking about the people when election time draws near, and that fortunately, is not imminent. In the meantime, we must undertake appropriate ideological, political and legal reforms in line with our clear objective.

The ideological level is where we

we are just beginning to look into. But most importantly, we have THEM on the run and that's exactly the way we like it. In more serious cases we prefer them inside rather than running around all over the place, and once in, well, we shall try our darned best to 'never, never let 'em go', those clever little foxes. OK so Dr. Alamgir did manage to get out eventually, but I guess it will be a while before he decides to cross swords again.

In the meantime what should we the PEOPLE do? Let's continue to do what we have always done: talk. Let us continue to discuss the situation in public and urge upon all parties to show restraint and adhere to democratic norms. Let us appeal to good sense or even to common sense, and in the meantime, let us note that we will be doing exactly what Amartya Sen (the Nobel laureate) would have us do under the circumstances, i.e. engage in public debate; generate a broad consensus in favour of more individual freedoms and the elimination of 'unfreedoms', like arbitrary arrest, jail without bail, polluted air and water, the right to march to the Shaheed Minar, and even to disagree with Commission reports. The only problem is, we have been doing exactly those very things (and more) for a long, long time... At any rate, I am quite willing to give the Sensian approach another chance. Do I have a choice?

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BETWEEN YOURSELF AND ME

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being (presumably) dealt with in the courts of law?

Well, we wanted to speed things up a bit since the people of the land were getting a little tired of waiting. Moreover, there seemed to be a distinct danger that they may even have forgotten all about it. We just wanted to jog their memory.

Thirdly: Is the Commission report likely to have any impact on the court proceedings? WE hope so. But you know these courts they are so independent minded!

Fourth: So WHAT is the point of this Commission if it has no legal

strategy keep them on the run till they drop down dead.

I am afraid I have run out of questions, for the moment, at any rate. But that does not have to prevent me from speculating out loud.

Leadership and good management are scarce commodities. Nevertheless, these scarce resources appear to be directed to the most unproductive, indeed most dangerous of pursuits (games?): to even scores and to take revenge for slights and insults perceived to have been hurled at some point in history.

make sure they never come back, at least during this century? As a reasonable person I would speculate that the 'battle for supremacy' would have to be conducted at many levels: ideological, i.e. at the realm of ideas, political, i.e. on the streets, and legal, i.e. in the courts and police stations. There is also a sneaking suspicion that perhaps it would be important to earn the trust and support of the people too after all we are a parliamentary democracy, even if the 'transition' period is taking ever so long to transcend.

Any suspicion that has to sneak

face particular difficulty. A deep belief in perpetual domination over our opponents cannot probably be passed off as 'ideology'. At the very least we need a nice, new, sexy slogan that will captivate the masses urgent need here to alert the 'slogan' department.

Politically we are doing all the right things: the streets are OURS, the universities are OURS (and those that are not, woe be on them), and even the Shaheed Minar is OURS. What else can we possibly want? Admittedly the NGOs still pose a threat, but that's an area that

Two Koreas move further towards understanding

Can they keep it up ?



ZAGLUL AHMED CHOWDHURY

TWO rival Koreas have undertaken a significant step by simultaneously launching an operation to clean the mines along their borders. Their troops marched into the demilitarized zone separating their countries to clear a path through minefields for road and rail links across the world's last cold war frontiers. The development is being viewed as another small but remarkable one in the process of reconciliation between the South and the North after a thaw was initiated in their belligerent ties. But the process was hampered on several occasions since its beginning – last time centering a clash between the naval soldiers causing a rupture in the ties. Fortunately, the incident did not cast a lasting negative effect and the damage done by it has largely been overcome. Two Koreas have once again been in touch for positive progress in the bilateral relations and the mine cleaning operation is a step in the right direction to normalize that.

The sea-change that is taking place in the political climate in the Korean peninsula since the first ever summit between the two rivals in June, 2000, continues in different forms much to the hope that this may eventually remove one of the most dangerous international flash points still afflicting global peace

and stability. Former United States secretary of state Madeleine Albright's visit to North Korea just before Clinton administration relinquished the scene and her talks with the reclusive leader of the country Kim Jong Il was the first by an American high official meeting the chief of the Stalinist nation. Such a meeting appeared remote even when Korean reconciliation process began but the developments in the

towards possible re-unification of the peninsula. This began from the summit of their leaders in Pyongyang and the trend continues despite occasional hiccups.

Relatively tough stance of the Bush administration towards the North affected the process to some extent and a comment by secretary of state Colin Powell describing the North Korean leader as a "Dictator" had also had adverse effect. The

North's armed forces minister vice marshal Kim Il Chol held "sincere talks" in their important meeting in resort island of Cheju in South Korea late last year. Both sides acknowledged that the meeting went off very well and the spirit was to lessen tensions as far as possible and work towards the eventual reconciliation and reunification of the two Koreas. Indeed, this was a remarkable development since the

Korea(DPRK) as the north likes to describe itself and the Republic of Korea(ROK) as the south is known, have remained as a source of tension and enmity since the second world war and little progress could be made towards a thaw in their ties until the glimmer of hope created by the summit. South Korean president Kim Dae-Jung and his north Korean counterpart Kim Jong-Il held the summit in North's capital Pyongyang

change has taken place and it is necessary to carry forward the trend. To expect that the 37,000 American troops stationed in South Korea to face the larger military strength of the North will leave or the belligerent postures will not be there is certainly a height of folly. Nonetheless, the first summit between the DPRK and the ROK was a great occasion and progress being made towards peace in the post-summit days is also encouraging, albeit the setbacks suffered, which were largely repaired.

Now, contacts have resumed between them at various levels and the mine cleaning operations marks the willingness of both sides to continue the reconciliation process. Till recently, doubts existed whether the process would continue because of certain dampening effects. The reclusive North has shown signs of coming out of its shell since the United States dubbed it as one in an 'axis of evil' along with Iran and Iraq after declaring a war on terror. Besides, the recent visit by Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi, first from his country to the North since the Korean war, also left a positive impact. The prime minister said North Korea is open to nuclear inspections and this will smoothen its ties with Washington, which will also have a good influence in dealings with the South. As such, after a stand-off, the reconciliation process between the North and the South is back on the right track. But the road to rapprochement is bumpy and full of complex and sensitive issues. Two sides are likely to face problems at different stages. Still, it is important that they carry forward the process despite obstacles. After all, their people want peace and friendship as was exemplified by the reunion of divided families marked with unprecedented emotion and merriment.

MATTERS AROUND US

South Korean president Kim Dae-Jung and his north Korean counterpart Kim Jong-Il held the summit in North's capital Pyongyang belying whatever skepticism that existed about the historic meeting. This had marked the most remarkable attitudinal development in the international relations in contemporary times. None was, however, under any illusion that one summit would wash away all the bitterness and rivalry between the two Koreas overnight or only peace and goodwill would be the order of the day in the Korean peninsula. Reality is that it will be a long way to finally reach a real peaceful environment in that region... After all, it took East and West Germany 20 years to reunite after the first summit between their leaders in 1970.

region in the form of the contacts between the two rival Koreas made rather very difficult things possible.

The visit had marked a turning point since America is a key player in the scene. Albright had discussed with the North Korean leader the sensitive issues that have kept two sides at poles apart over the last more than fifty years. The United States was a party in the Korean war from 1950-53 when the North was in the opposite side along with China and other socialist countries. The war did not end officially except a peace formula was reached and as a sequel to the situation, tensions and war-like conditions prevailed between the two Koreas till not long ago. American troops are also stationed in ally South Korea to help Seoul in the event of any war. Now that are discussing reconciliatory issues to ease the tensions and

positive ambience was hindered by a number of factors and the euphoria generated by the summits of their leaders was somewhat evaporated at later stage. The recent incident involving their naval guards suddenly revived some tensions, which, however, was not allowed to be blown out of proportions. Rival Koreas have moved step by step towards bettering their ties since the historic summit heralding a new era of relationship reversing the process of hostility and animosity.

Defence ministers of South and North Koreas had agreed to ease military tensions, the first time since the peninsula was divided in 1945. No specific military measures were announced to ease the tensions that have endured since the end of the 1950-53 Korean war. But what is significant is that South's defence minister Cho Sung-Tae and

meeting of the defence ministers constituted an important step forward towards that end.

There was a series of positive developments since the landmark first ever summit of the two rival Koreas on the issue of relaxation of tensions and as a fallout to the positive development, the United States has formally eased sanctions against Pyongyang. There has been marked softening of the attitude in both Seoul and Pyongyang since the summit took place and both had scaled down their vicious campaign against each other. People in the divided Korean peninsula were swept by a fever of reconciliation which many of them believe will eventually lead to reunification of two Koreas after more than five decades.

Two Koreas, also known as the Democratic People's Republic of

yang belying whatever skepticism that existed about the historic meeting. This had marked the most remarkable attitudinal development in the international relations in contemporary times. None was, however, under any illusion that one summit would wash away all the bitterness and rivalry between the two Koreas overnight or only peace and goodwill would be the order of the day in the Korean peninsula. Reality is that it will be a long way to finally reach a real peaceful environment in that region where bitterness of the past is fully buried. After all, it took East and West Germany 20 years to reunite after the first summit between their leaders in 1970. The mistrust and hatred in the Korean peninsula are deeper than Germany's in many ways and none should expect that they will disappear quickly. But a qualitative

OPINION

Reintroduce ETV programmes: A popular demand

MOHAMMAD AMJAD HOSSAIN

THIS is the age of information technology. There should be unhindered flow of information to and from Bangladesh to compete with rapid transformations globally. As per part III (Fundamental Rights) of article 39 of Bangladesh Constitution, freedom of thought and conscience is guaranteed while the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression, and freedom of the press are guaranteed subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law.

This being the constitutional provision the government of Bangladesh should not stand in the way of free flow of information. Rather, the government should encourage to develop healthy information network, both print and electronic, to have the opinion ventilated by the people from all strata of the society. The people will also have the opportunity to have views from different

perspectives on issues of national and international affairs of concern to form valued opinion. Lopsided opinion in fact will cause damage to national interest.

Viewed in this context the publication of newspapers, both Bangla and English, and commissioning of television channels in the private sector in particular have opened up broader horizon to the readers and viewers.

Communication is the essential means, which draws people into conscious and active participation in the process of development on a democratic basis. Mass media in fact play very important role in moulding public opinion and correcting any distortion of government policies and flaws in its implementation.

The print media in Bangladesh has come a long way over the last one decade and has been enjoying freedom since the restoration of democratic system although the

system did not succeed in establishing as yet as an institution. That remains the tragedy of the country. In Bangladesh, however, the electronic media did not flourish like the print media. The government owned electronic media, such as, Radio

only. The activities of the opposition parties and development work carried out by NGOs are not reflected in the news bulletins of Bangladesh Radio and BTV.

During the immediate past government of Awami League three TV

channels to know more about objective development, politics or economics taking place in the country. Of the channels, ETV became the most popular channel for its presentation of news. Apart from wide range of selection of news, its pre-

of ETV. The main purpose of this programme was to imbibe in the children, who included those from poor family and physically handicapped section of the society, awareness of their rights and working knowledge for the preparation of

managed to capture the attention of the majority of Bangladesh people.

Unfortunately, the country's first private terrestrial television channel, ETV stopped telecasting its programmes from 29 August as a result of the decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, which upheld the verdict of a High Court Division declaring the licence of the ETV illegal. ETV was the first TV channel network financed jointly by Bangladeshi and foreign entrepreneurs. There is no question as to the verdict of the court but viewers should be compensated by reintroduction of the programmes of ETV. One would like to echo what renowned economist of the country Professor Muzaffar Ahmad said, "People should know, who master-minded the issuance of an illegal licence to ETV. The government should bring those influential people to the court."

The government should also look at the closure of the popular TV

ETV stood as an alternative TV channel to BTV, used to provide all kinds of news and views for the consumption of the viewers and through its imaginative presentation managed to capture the attention of the majority of Bangladesh people... The government should also look at the closure of the popular TV channel from another angle as large number of viewers are deprived form objective news and views and other good programmes which hurt the feelings of millions across the country.

and Television did not develop programmes with imagination to compete in the present day world. Radio and TV play pivotal role in providing educational programmes for the younger generation in particular. Presentation of news by our Radio and TV give the impression that the electronic media tend to project government's viewpoints

channels in the private sector were allowed to operate a) Channel I, b) ATN Bangla, c) Ekushey TV. These three channels, specially Ekushey, offered and still offer (Channel I) imaginative and educational programmes to their viewers. Being frustrated to see stereotype news bulletins of BTV the viewers, by and large, switched over to either of the

sensation of news evoked positive response from the viewers.

News programme for the children in ETV was seen as a positive development in building young children as budding journalists, so to say, which received commendation from all. Sponsored by UNICEF and Save the Children, Sweden, MuktaKhabar was one of the popular programmes

project proposal. The roundtable discussions on national and international issues conducted by ETV received appreciation from the viewers.

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