has become the 'powerhouse' of

DHAKA SATURDAY NOVEMBER 30, 2002

## Fees at public universities

We support the government's suggestion to increase the fees

HE existing rate of tuition fees in the country's public universities is unbelievable to say the least. On one hand we have the private universities collecting fees in the ranges of thousands; on the other, to study at Dhaka University which was called the Oxford of the East once upon a time, it would cost you only twenty taka per month! Naturally we have no hesitation in saying that such disparity is not only ridiculous but outdated too. It's a shame that even the students of primary schools pay more tuition fees than the students of the topmost public universities of the country. No doubt the university authorities are facing a severe cash

We fully support the Finance Minister, Saifur Rahman, on his opinion of hiking tuition and other fees to offset the fund crisis. It is high time that the tradition of studying at a university for minimal fees changed. From what the Finance Minister has said to the University Grant Commission, we can gather that the government is not prepared to increase the allocation as much as in the past and bail them out from their constant cash crisis. We find it extremely difficult to comprehend that some employees of the universities were not even paid their salaries for months due to the crunch. Thanks to mismanagement, inadequate fund, unnecessary waste, budget deficits at the public universities have soared to crores of taka. We wonder why something was not done earlier to prevent it? Though late, but we commend the University Grants Commission for submitting a proposal to the Minister asking for government intervention in order to enhance the universities' own income in the form of increased tuition fees.

But we understand that doing it is not going to be as easy as it sounds. Since the universities are autonomous bodies, government can't impose any decision on them. There have been attempts in the past to increase the fees, but the authorities had to back track from their plans after strong protests from the students. We would like to tell the university authorities that it is their responsibility to talk to the students and convince them about the need to increase. Those who don't want to listen should be just ignored. In such situations the universities would have to take a firm stand on their decision. Students will also have to realise that funding by the government is likely to dry up sooner or later, so unless the authorities take a step now, the crisis will only deepen. If there is any pressure from the student political groups, we would expect the authorities to show enough courage and not pay any heed to them. Here we hope the parents would also support the universities

University authorities should also think of other alternatives, such as reducing unnecessary manpower, expenses and make it certain that allocated public money do not get wasted. Otherwise it would be impossible to justify the reasons for increased tuition fees. If there are any spare cash, that should be spent on student welfare instead. Government can't provide funds year after year, we shouldn't expect that from the government either. So the universities should develop some income generating programmes of their own as

And lastly, while increasing the fees, the authorities should also keep in mind the economic condition of the students. Because most students who go to study in the public universities come from middle class backgrounds, some even from villages. Therefore the authorities should not forget that fees would have to be within their reach. But such a decision the authorities should not take on their own. We would urge them to have discussions on the issue with the student representatives, parents, teachers and others concerned and take their opinions into account before making any final decision.

# China changes horses, but not in midstream

T was indeed a big leap forward on the part of Chinese leadership, after a long historic march over the past five decades, when Communist Party, at its recently held 16th Congress in Beijing switched over to younger leadership, giving a honourable good-bye to the 'old guards'. In the process, they have followed with full respect, the adage: "Don't change your horses in midstream." They have done it at the right moment and at right point after crossing the stream. It may be noted here that this is for the first time, since the Chinese Communist Party took over power in 1949 under that legendary leadership of Mao Zedong that leadership had changed without involving any strife. It was a straightjacket transfer, unique in communist China's history. The last of the 'old guards', President Jiang Zemin, a bold advocate of reforms who has been ruling China for the last 13 years since 1989, had also ushered in, during his regime, a new era of economic and political influence both at home and abroad, results of which are already visible, his biggest achievement being China's entry into the WTO (World Trade Organisation) that regulates the global trade, after a long struggle over the last 14 years against obstructions created by the West,

particularly America. The new leadership that is destined to take control of the fate and future of China in March next year with the exit of Jiang Zemin will be conferred on a hitherto-unknown person not only to the world at large but also to his own people, the 59 year old Vice-President Hu Jintao. He has also been appointed as the chief of the Chinese Communist Party and head of the fourth generation of leaders of China, following Chairman Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin. It may be recalled in this context, that when Vladimir Putin stepped into the shoes of his boss, Boris Yeltsin, as Russian President, he was equally unknown to the world as well as to his own people. Starting with two per cent popularity rating, Putin had to ignite Chechnyan fire to shoot up

his popularity ratings. Although in Putin's case, former President some six Jiang-allies, thus guaranmaking at least for some time to come, as China prepares to face rising unemployment problem and its ambition to make its presence felt as a world power, both politically and economically

'Open door to capitalists'

as a taboo for the Communist Party in China, although it took roots long ago in former Soviet Union when capitalism was allowed to make inroads in Russian system, perhaps gradually taking over the driving

Today some of the Chinese cities, including Shanghai, bursting with economic hub, are already set at par with western cities with their dazzling glamour. The western developed countries must be feeling the 'warmth of this economic change as they are getting ready more and more to go headlong with new trade and investment relations with China. But China had a terrible time since the communists took

spilled over into China in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong. In the Soviet Union it was a revolution brought by the working class, but in China, it was the poor peasants, the agricultural labour, that took the ead. First, it was welcomed by the impoverished peasants when land was distributed among the landless labourers. Later they found themselves 'forced' into the formation and working in cooperatives, ultimately leading to the establishment of the 'communes' when private life of the peasants was totally abolished under the total regimentation of the of the communist principle of

the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat'. Perhaps this rigidity was gradu-

ally losing its grip with introduction of

China has a dream of emerging in the global scenario, where America is the 'lone ranger', as a

political and economic force, not only in Asia. But how far it will politically succeed to show its

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already been recognised as a big potential rival of Japan. According to some analysts, within

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the 16<sup>th</sup> party congress recently that the communist party should no longer stand only for the 'working class' or the 'proletariat' but also for the 'advance production forces'. meaning the entrepreneurs or capitalists, breaking the 'wall' that was standing between the two forces for the five decades. So the Chinese 'owl' has taken the 'flight' at the right time and for the right cause.

West feels warmth of China?

This dramatic change in China's socio-political and economic system was strongly needed not only for the continuation of its upward

economic swing (current GDP

growth rate being some 8 pc), but

also for playing its due role as a

global power, being one of the five

western capitalist entrepreneurs ready for making inroads into the mainland with new investments Thus Taiwan and Hong Kong will serve as two 'windows' through which China, under the new leadership, will enjoy fresh wave of the air of prosperity from the West. And with trade definitely will come new ideas and innovations. About two years back, a Taiwanese analyst emphasised that "investors are convinced that the mainland authorities would have to fling their doors open and phase out their outdated aws once it is admitted into the WTO". It was just an echo of what the western capitalists had been visualising for China.

Fall of 'bamboo-curtain'

China will now have to open its doors to the world at large for intendng capitalist investors to get in, oreak for good the "bamboocurtain", (if not Soviet Union's "iron curtain"), and provide same facilities, to other member countries of the WTO as it has already been providing to Taiwan. The change of leadership in Beijing with the new guards coming in however with the olessings of Jiang Zemin, would certainly herald a new era.

China has a dream of emerging in the global scenario, where America is the 'lone ranger', as a political and economic force, not only in Asia. But how far it will politically succeed to show its commanding presence in world affairs, only time vill say. But economically China has already been recognised as a big potential rival of Japan. According to some analysts, within a quarter of a century, Shanghai could be at par with London or New York as a financial centre. Although it may appear to some to be a too high a 'benchmark', but it is difficult to downgrade or underestimate it simply because t looks like a day-dream to many Under the new leadership, China is bound to cross the bridge successfully to reach its destination, perhaps with marginal risk elements. As they say, "All growth, including political growth, is the result of risktaking". And China is definitely nined to overtake that

#### Yeltsin had almost gone into oblivion but in the case of Hu, Jiang will be there very much pulling the strings from behind as the new Politburo Standing Committee would include teeing him a proxy say in decision-

Jiang has also retained his vital post as head of the Central Military

Commission (CMC) which com-

mands the world's biggest armed

forces. Hence the changes that

Jiang had introduced and executed

since his assumption of office in

1989 to give China a new face to

keep pace with the change in the

global socio-economic and political

disturbed or dislocated, following

the replacing of old guards by the

new ones. In fact, Jiang had opened

the door to pull out the old Commu-

nist China from its cocoon of well-

regimented centrally-controlled

communist economy to a more

flexible, more balanced and liberal

economy to keep pace with the

other developed countries of the

West. And the western powers

would certainly welcome this new

phase in Chinese politico-economic

policy. The West must have been

well attracted by Jiang's theory of

paving the way for capitalist entre-

preneurs to become Communist

Party members, with his historic call

at the recent 16th Party Congress.

when he advised them saying:

"Open the door to the capitalists"

which had hitherto been considered

scenario, wouldn't be hampered, or

control of Beijing in 1949, driving out the Chiang Kaishek regime which took shelter in Taiwan and continued to enjoy the recognition of being representatives of China both in the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council as permanent member, of course with the blessings and patronage and under the protective umbrella of the western powers, who were then rather scared by the emergence of the second communist-ruled country, following the Soviet Union. But things changed with the passage of time and Communist China occupied its legitimate place in the UN.

The owl takes its flight...' However, since then China has seen many ups and downs, many twists and turns in its long march reaching the present phase. What began in Russia as a hard-core communist battle-cry raised by Lenin for the emancipation of the downtrodden working class, struggling against capitalist exploitation inspired by the epoch-making Communist Manifesto written by Karl Marx and Engels in 1847,

reforms with new waves of liberalization of China's policy and further accentuated by Jiang since 1989. The recent historic call by Jiang for admitting capitalists in the Communist Party as an 'open-door' policy. has not come overnight. Thus the new chapter in the long history of Chinese communist system was opened when President Jiang brought the capitalists and the working class on the same platform, not as strange 'bed-fellows' but more as grown-up 'twins.' This turned a new chapter or a new leaf is China's history definitely not a moment later than it was urgently needed to face the 'ground-reality being raised around it. The renowned political thinker and philosopher, Hegel (1770-1831) had said that "the owl of Minerva takes its flight in the evening", and this great saying of Hegal was often quoted by that great communist 'Guru' Karl Marx. The new and unprecedented change in communist philosophy of 'dictatorship of the proletariat', by inviting the capitalists in their ranks, was rightly

permanent members of the UN ecurity Council and also in the WTO (World Trade Organisation) that regulates the global trade, particularly after its admission in the organization after some 14 years of struggle against heavy odds put up by the West, particularly America. Now that both China and Taiwan had become full members of the WTO, China's economic relations with its so-far considered 'reneged' province, are bound to get a new boost signs of which had been noticed even before their admission in the WTO. With the incentives offered by China to Taiwan earlier, Taiwanese businessmen have already started bolstering their investments in mainland China, most noteworthy being the petrochemical giant, Formosa Plastic group. On the other hand, since Hong Kong's independence from British rule and its return to mainland China, on the basis of "one country, two systems", Hong Kong

AMM Shahabuddin is a retired UN official

# Too good to be true?



KULDIP NAYAR writes from New Delhi

ENERAL Pervez remembered as the worst period in Indo-Pakistan relations His other two military predecessors General Ayub Khan and General window remained ajar. Ayub even offered ioint defence which Jawaharlal Nehru rejected with the remark, "against whom?" Zia was constantly visiting India on one plea or another to sustain the impression that he wanted to improve the

But Musharraf, in his three-vear rule, has brought down the relationship to such a pass that even individual level contact has stopped. New Delhi's cussedness too has contributed its bit to help the General curl his lip. He has lived up to his reported remark at a closed-door press briefing, when he took over, that he would show India what "toughness" meant. Musharraf's first step was the army action at Kargil. That Nawaz Sharif, then the prime minister, was "on board" was correct only in a technical sense. He was aware of the action but did not know the extent to which the General had gone.

Otherwise, New Delhi would not have practically reached with him an agreement on Kashmir. "We were almost there," was the remark of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vaipavee when the General took over and cleaned the slate. After

Sharif was thrown out, Vajpayee's regret was that he (Nawaz Sharif) went "because of us." Whatever the understanding on Kashmir, it is obvious that it was not to the liking of the army which, despite the return of democracy in Pakistan, continues to be the arbiter.

Things could have worked out at Agra, notwithstanding Information Minister Sushma Swaraj's indiscretion or Home Minister LK Advani's rigidity, if Musharraf had only agreed to denounce terrorists in Kashmir in Khalistani leaders from among those who had gathered at the gurdwara Nankana Sahib to celebrate the 533rd birthday of Guru Nanak. Musharraf intentionally did not invite any Indian Sikh from the delegation of 50, which was in Pakistan at that time, under the leadership of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee vice-chairman. Musharraf went a step further than General Zia who had encouraged the Khalistanis to hold a meeting at Lahore in 1984.

ated the demand for Khalistan. The meeting at Nankana Saheb was no different this time, although Ganga Singh Dhillon, a Khalistan leader from America, objected to the raising of political slogans within the recincts of the gurudwara. Musharraf may have felt satisfied that he has embarrassed India. But he does not realise that he has put yet another spanner in the way of dialogue with New Delhi. His statements that he was open to talks anywhere at any time went down

The party is, otherwise, under fire after the indictment by the Concerned Citizen's Commission. State chief minister Narendra Modi. his cabinet colleagues and the Sangh parivar members have been held responsible. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal have been charged with genocide and crime against humanity. And the involvement has government's peen brought to the fore

Even a novice in diplomacy will tell Islamabad that New

are waiting for the move by the new government of Zafarullah Khan Jamali. Will it try to span the distance with India? It is too soon to say that. The statement that Jamali made after taking the oath of office was not helpful. His warning to the neighbouring country, without naming it, not to dare do anything against Pakistan was not opportune. Instead, he should have talked about taking the initiative in settling the differences with India.

However exasperated, Indians

However, Pakistan's new foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri rectified the lapse. He is a liberal, a lawyer by profession. His father went to jail during the national struggle for independence. Kasuri said he wanted to go more than half way to settle differences with India. This is a welcome statement. Even the father of Fazlur Rehman, the lamiat-e-Ulema Islam chief, who lost in the race of prime ministership, participated in the Quit India movement in 1942. The question is: how far Khurshid and Fazlur can span the distance with India. They have their domestic lobby to pla-

Musharraf has a point when he says that the Indian government which kept him away, may talk to the Jamali government. This is inevitable. Much will depend on how soon the new government can stop cross border terrorism or, more aptly, how soon can it change some of Musharraf's pet policies.

Having cornered all the power Musharraf is supreme. The hung parliament also shows his strength But he can live down the reputation of being anti-India by allowing the new government to take at least some steps towards normalisation of relations with New Delhi. But as things stand now, it sounds too good to be true.

Kuldip Navar is an eminent Indian columnist

Musharraf has a point when he says that the Indian government, which kept him away, may talk to the Jamali government. This is inevitable. Much will depend on how soon the new government can stop cross-border terrorism or, more aptly, how soon can it change some of Musharraf's pet policies...Having cornered all the power, Musharraf is supreme. The hung parliament also shows his strength. But he can live down the reputation of being anti-India by allowing the new government to take at least some steps towards normalisation of relations with New Delhi.

the joint statement which was sought to be issued. Musharraf was keen to prove his "toughness." He did so knowingly to administer a heavy blow to the Indo-Pakistan relationship under which it is still

Musharraf has the distinction of refuelling cross-border terrorism, which was declining rapidly when he stepped in. He opened many training camps and facilitated infiltration of fanatics and foreigners into India to fight in the name of iehad. Parliament House was attacked during Musharraf's presidentship.

His last act before the elected government took over was open support to the demand for a Sikh sovereign state (Khalistan). He invited at tea in Islamabad the 12 was at Islamabad then. When the news of Indira Gandhi's assassination came through. Abdus Satta was the foreign secretary and Zia's confidante Mujib was information secretary.

Both of them had assured me that Pakistan wanted to bury the hatchet with India. I met them separately to tell them that they could give proof of their government's sincerity at a time when India had a traumatic experience because of Indira Gandhi's assassination. They should cancel the proposed Khalistan conference and send back the Khalistani leaders from Karachi itself. They said they would do so. But I learnt later that the two worked hard to make the conference "a success.

The meet in Lahore then reiter-

well with the gullible Americans, not Indians Musharraf probably felt miffed

over the participation of a large number of people in the recent election in Kashmir. Even the separatists did not stay distant. And the people in the state were keen on giving the Mufti government a chance to retrieve the situation. Naturally, this did not fit into Musharraf's scheme of things.

I do not know how terrorism in India helps Musharraf. If his purpose is to help fan Hindu fanaticism to justify religious parties in Paki stan, he may succeed to some extent. The latest attack by terrorists at the Raghunath temple in Jammu has heightened the chances of the BJP in the coming state election in

negotiating table if cross-border terrorism continues. It had lessened a bit earlier at Washington's behest but has increased again. The Pakistan government does not gain anything by irritating New Delhi all the time. It is counter-productive. At this juncture, the statement of

cannot be forced to come to the

former Army chief Jehangir Karamat that dialogue between Pakistan and India over Kashmir is in the offing is more of wishful thinking than a reality. Washington may be trying to bring about a meeting. But its credibility in India is not all that good. Washington is considered playing a dubious game, having

double standards to judge terrorism, one for the West and another

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

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### Arrest of foreign iournalists

The heavy-handed government action against the two foreign journalists is going to have far reaching consequences for our image abroad. The BBC has always been a reasonable voice when reporting on Bangladesh. There was a time when the BBC world service was the only news one could trust.

But alienating this organisation we will further convince one of the few friends we have in the international media that we are indeed a Taliban harbouring country. Why i we have nothing to hide did we arrest these two journalists?

Bangladesh is increasingly being portraved as a nation in the thrall of fundamentalists. Thanks to Sheikh Hasina, the fundamentalist collaborators who are now partners of BNP the attacks on minority after the last general elections and the immunity of Shibir from 'Operation Clear Heart' one of the few things we could be proud of is being lost.

The appearance of reality can create reality. Unless we get our act together and try to change the international opinion of our country, we will soon come to resemble just what they are claiming For starters release the journal-

ists and take care of the fundamentalists elements (if there is any) existing in the country.

## EC vs Government

The Government has decided to face the Election Commission head to head. It has been revealed from some comments of LGRD and Local Government Minister. It is not a very ood sign for democracy.

The Government should let EC work independently. If they don't do so, democracy would be in trouble. A democratic government should be ready to compromise for the sake of Oli Md. Abdullah Chowdhury

Abul Hasan Chowdhury sus-

pended My heart goes with Mr. Shamsher

Chowdhury and I would like to express my sincere thanks for telling the truth (The Daily Star, Nov. 28, 2002).

Like Mr. Shamsher and many others, we are shocked but not surprised. Those who know the present day AL leadership, it is just the inevitable that happened in another case. Mr. Hasan Chowdhury's illustrious father had to resign almost in a similar fashion some three decades ago after sharp disagreement with the then leadership of the same party. Almost all the members of AL having relatively better family background, good education and taste had already left the party

After all there is a big difference between the present AL leaders' likeness, taste, choice, principles with that of Mr. Abul Hasan Chowdhury's. It is a great shame for

Nasir

I want to come back We often come across hot debates between English medium and Bangla medium students accusing each other of being a lesser patriot, criticising each other's intention in seeking higher studies abroad and settling there. But have we thought about those who went to study abroad with hopes but craves to come back as soon as possible?

There are plenty of young boys and girls like me who are dying to come back. I'm determined to come back, but surprisingly my parents have serious objection to this. They want me to settle there and as soon as I get a green card, they want to join me. Most of my friends who come from middle-class background have the same problem. Either bring your parents or other siblings after you're confirmed green card. But I have come to study here

and want to go back home to apply my knowledge there. Why do I have to act as a middleman in helping my entire family to settle abroad? Chandan Chowdhury California, USA

SSA verdict

disappoint again. By ruling against the private terminal by SSA all it has done is protected the corrupt dock unions and the politicians The whole pace of global busi-

ness has now changed. Where before we had 120 days to make a shipment and in the case of the US sometimes more, the norm is 90 days for the US and increasingly 60

days for Europe The greatest hurdle in trying to shorten our lead-time is not as is commonly supposed the backward linkage industries but rapid transport and transit. For instance, SSA's terminal would have attracted direct shipping between Shanghai and Chittagong. With the time saved by avoiding Hong Kong or Singapore and the promised 24-hour turnaround for ships at berth, our leadtimes would have been cut to between 14 to 21 days. These few days can make the difference between a sustainable RMG and other export-based industries and financial ruin.

Forgive the pun but this has been one small step for the judiciary but one giant leap for Bangladesh Well our judiciary has managed to towards our unstated goal of

becoming the Zimbabwe of Asia. Masood Rana

### 'Army and the civilian rights'

In response to Mr. Ahmed Mohiuddin (Nov 27), The Daily Star is doing an admirable job in exposing the wrongdoing of the military in the name of maintaining law and order. You say that it is wrong to criticise the military when we need its help. You want to live in a police state? Do you want to live in constant fear of what the government can do to you? Organised crime,(shontrash is such a misnomer), is a socio-political problem. It has to be solved by using legal means. Rule of law and constitutional measures are our only hope of ever building a society free of fear. The EU Parliament is right to have condemned the acts of human rights violation. You cannot claim that random arrests and torture in custody can solve the law and order

As to Mr. Sarwar Ahmed (November 27), I express my sympathy to you and your son. However, it

would be worse if the military comes to your house and takes your son away without a warrant and then tortures him in custody. I am not condoning criminal behaviour. My view is that every one should be presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Hence nobody should be arrested wrongfully or without a warrant or be subjected to torture while in custody. That is why I object to the military incursion in to civilian life. Yahya

#### 'Of unattended duties" This is in reference to the article "Of

unattended duties" (November 8). Fantastic is the only word I get to describe it. I congratulate Nawab Md. Farhan Ali for writing this superb

The article was a slap on the capitalistic approach of the powerful nations. The way in which history was interpreted in the article was worth giving a thought. It raises many questions to be answered by the leaders of yesterday. Afghanistan, Palestine and Kashmir are the biggest problems seeking a solution today and the article analyses the history of these regions wonderfully.

The best part about the article is that it's written by a student. And I also appreciate The Daily Star for encouraging such bright talents. But the article deserved a better corner in the newspaper as the bottom part of the focus page can easily be missed by many.

#### Street children One could have a glimpse at the

street children while travelling the streets of Dhaka. Some of these hapless children would be found busy playing by the roadside, others don't hesitate taking nap while the most carelessly driven bus, truck and other vehicles pass by.

How excellent it would have been if the privileged people had opted to take care of a single street child! Let's all start doing something about these kids before it's too late. Dr. Basmah M. Jasir