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**CCC elections**

We have read so many analyses about CCC elections. For many, the CCC elections outcome is a big surprise. In the 1994 election Mr. Mohiuddin won over Mir Nasiruddin by a margin of 17,000 votes. However, in that election the Jamaat, the Jatiyo Party (Ershad) and the NDP participated and they together got more than 50,000 votes. This year the Jamaat and the NDP supported Mir Nasiruddin while Ershad's party did not participate in the polls apparently at the request of Nasiruddin. So many expected that Mir Nasir would win the election by a big margin. However, the outcome is just the opposite.

In the CCC election analysis, we tend to forget that 1994 and 2005 are different times. After 11 years, the number of voters has increased. Judging by the 1994 voting results, one could think that inclusion of the Jamaat's votes would fill the gap between Mohiuddin and Nasir. In 1994 the Jamaat had 8% of the total votes. There was no guarantee that the Jamaat's vote would remain the same or increase in 2005. It might have decreased also. So it was not correct to predict the 2005 results using the 1994 data.

The Jamaat-BNP combination was invincible in the 2001 national elections. It may not be the same in 2007 elections since the number of voters will increase and the new voters' attitude may be different. At Gazipur in 2001, Ahsanullah Master defeated Hasan Sarker only because of the participation of rebel BNP candidate Abdul Mannan. In the same constituency in 2004, Ahsanullah Master's son defeated Abdul Mannan by a bigger margin even though there was no rebel BNP man at that time. Again the prediction was wrong!

**Jewel Ahmed**  
Basabo, Dhaka

**It could have been me...**

A young man was shot dead point blank by the cops around Agargaon that night. He was returning to his workplace by rickshaw from his aunt's home when he was caught by the muggers. Then the police arrived and held him and then shot him dead on suspicion—despite his repeated plea of innocence.

Such news is commonplace nowadays and I hardly take notice of them, but somehow I got to read this one. It struck me particularly because I frequently visit BCS Computer City in Agargaon at those hours, and I take a rickshaw ride back home. Instead of that man it could be me, Salman, an innocent guy, shot dead point blank by the cops. My father died several years ago, I study engineering, and I have the responsibility of looking after my mom and my younger sisters. Without me it'd be a disaster for them. I feel it's the same with the young man's unfortunate family.

This incident speaks volumes for the prevailing lawlessness in my dear country. Nobody is safe around here. Any moment I might be another innocent dead.

**Salman**  
Mirpur, Dhaka

**Learn from it**

I do not support any party in Bangladesh. But I am happy with thousands of people that Mr. Mohiuddin Chowdhury won the CCC mayoral election. We all know about our politicians. They never work for the development of the country.

As far as I know, there are 7-8 ministers from Chittagong. But there is lack of development effort due to internal feuds amongst the political leaders. Now, it is known to the people of Chittagong that Mohiuddin Chowdhury has been working for developing the city, especially in areas such as cleanliness.

I hope the politicians of our country will learn from the CCC elections.

**Md Shafiqul Alam Emon**  
London South Bank University, UK

**Shouldn't we think a lot more?**

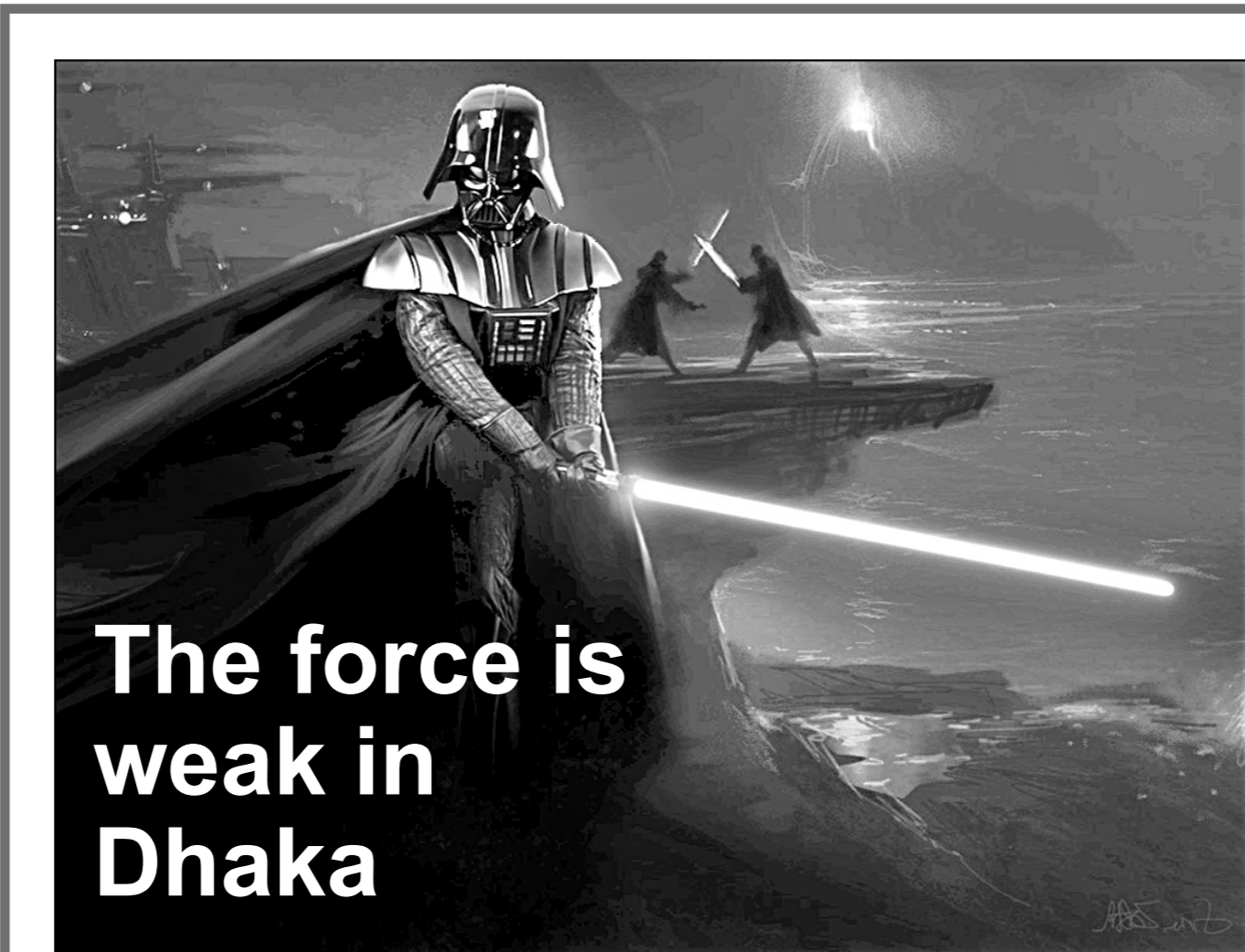
In a country that is independent since 16 December 1971, we cannot yet claim ourselves to have a broad consensus on national values and sentiments. From the books of the authors of Bangladesh as well as Kolkata we can know a great deal about 1971. But are we really enlightened by that knowledge? I am sure most people of our country cannot name the seven *Beer Sreshthos* while they know the names of all the Pakistani cricketers. This is not a question of mixing up politics with sports. This is a question of our sentiments and emotions.

We are singing songs in Urdu or Hindi at the Stadium while the Pakistani team is in the field. I don't object to supporting a country while they are playing. I don't even object to the language. But the victims of Pakistani atrocities and their near and dear ones cannot possibly accept the Pakistanis being cheered on our soil. Can they?

**Farhan**  
On e-mail

**Savar building collapse**

I would like to express my deep sorrow for the families who have lost their loved ones in the recent Savar building collapse. It is a disgrace that after the building had collapsed many people had the mood to celebrate Pahela Baishakh, rather than mourning. This building collapse is definitely a wake up call to many people that there could be disasters like this in the future. Immediately after the building collapsed, Rajuk had formed a five



**The force is weak in Dhaka**

Nineteenth of May was the day that the prequel of Star Wars Revenge of the Sith opened worldwide, to bring an end to the space saga, sadly it wasn't wide enough to reach Dhaka. Living in a country far far away we were deprived from witnessing this cinematic history and must wait for a long long time for the DVD to arrive. My lifelong romance with the Star Wars started at a very early age, while I grew up watching the star wars trilogy (now known

as episode I,V,VI) and the thing that in those early impressionable years drew me with such Force to Star Wars was wonderful over-the-top characters immersed in an utterly involving story. Sure, it happened to be set in the future. It happened to take place in outer space. It happened to have incredible action sequences and mind-blowing battle scenes. But beyond all that, it had tremendous heart. Luke, Leia, Han, R2,C3PO,Yoda, Vader, and Chewbacca. They are what you remember above all else. In those days we had to rent video cassettes from the local clubs (very bad quality prints!) to quench our thirsts, later we had VCD's and subsequently DVD's. Now we have a multiplex theatre which opened with much fanfare with a new hope for all of us. Sadly our hopes were crushed and I underestimated the dark side when they continued to ignore the latest blockbust-

member investigation committee and they also claimed that the building did not have their approval. Now Rajuk is an organisation of the government and is responsible for inspecting different structures on different types of land in the city. Just imagine a multi-storied building that was built and has been there for about four years without approval and Rajuk did not see it. Isn't it Rajuk's job to find out which structures are legal and which are not? Now the big question is where were they all this time. Were they sleeping? If they were it's a pity that a tragedy like the one in Savar had to wake them up.

So we do not need an investigation by Rajuk; what we need is a high powered judicial hearing. According to the Star weekend magazine a BUET graduate named Shamim was the person responsible for the vertical expansion, now I do not know if he was a civil engineer or not but I think he failed to check whether the soil could sustain the pressure from the structure or not.

I believe it is time we got answers to all such questions.  
**Areader**  
On e-mail

**Aktel post-paid**

What about Aktel post-paid subscribers? Maybe, Aktel authorities are not concerned about the post-paid subscribers. Due to lower charges of SIM of all companies, anyone can switch to a new company any time. But the problem is that the present number is known to all friends and colleagues.

We always appreciated Aktel's initiatives. Aktel's dynamic thinking generated millions of subscribers within a year or less. But currently they are not treating all customers equally. Pre-paid holders are enjoying additional amenities like 10 sec pulse, first minute free for BTBT incoming etc. On the other hand, post-paid clients have the almost same facilities, but they are paying more!

**M. Lutfor Rahman**  
Applied Statistics  
DU

**UK elections**

Tony Blair and Britain's Labour Party have accomplished a tremendous feat by winning three straight elections. In modern British history only Margaret Thatcher accomplished the same feat for the Conservatives. In the 646-seat House of Commons, Labour won 355 seats, against 197 for the Conservatives and 62 for the Liberal Democrats. The Labour Party got 35.2 percent of the cast votes while it is 32.3 percent for the Conservatives and 22.1 percent for the Liberal Democrats.

This election result is unique in the sense that all three major political parties can claim some sort of

total electoral votes. This election result is also unique in the sense that Labour, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats all can be considered as losers in this election. Tony Blair is a big loser as Labour's majority has been slashed by almost 100 seats. Blair's misguided Iraq policy is being blamed for this great debacle and so he is now being seen as a liability to his party. MPs who have lost in the polls are blaming Blair for their defeat and some of them are calling for his resignation. Tony Blair has declared beforehand that he would not seek a fourth term in office and so it was expected that he would quit 12

Blair's effectiveness as a leader has greatly been diminished. Michael Howard of the Conservative Party is a loser as he could not prevent a Labour victory in the polls. He could not take advantage of the wide spread resentments of the people for Britain's unnecessary involvement in the Iraq war and he acknowledged this failure in his post election speech. Charles Kennedy of the Liberal Democrats cannot be happy either as he failed to convert Liberal's increased share of popular vote into winning sufficient number of seats in the parliament.

Now, what can our politicians learn from this UK election? Well, while nobody expects a poster/banner/procession free Bangladesh at election times or that all the candidates in a constituency will stand in a line to hear the declaration of the Returning Officer and applaud the verdict of the electorate, still people of our country expect at least certain norms and political decencies as displayed by the British political leaders.  
**A.T.M. Murshid Alam**  
A former project consultant

**Canadian visa: a sad experience**

Canada has been a dependable old friend of Bangladesh. From early days Canada's help and assistance in various fields has been phenomenal. With many countries shutting their doors on permanent immigration, businessmen, students and citizenship hunters are crowding the Canadian embassy in Dhaka for various types of visas, as many consider Canada a wonderful haven offering excellent social service benefits. The rush of interviewees therefore, is understandable.

I may, in passing narrate an experience meaning no malice. An elderly relation of mine seeking visa requested for my help to accompany him to the embassy. After a long wait under a narrow canopy without any seating arrangement even for a senior citizen, or one unwell, I had to request the guard to offer him his chair which he compassionately did. His turn came to enter with relevant documents. After a while, my relation returned

with a sullen face. Tears glistening in his eyes, he narrated his awful experience. The local girl at the receiving counter finding some inadequacy in papers treated him rudely and finally threw the bunch of papers through the window. The old man sheepishly picked them up from the floor. It was too much to bear.

No denying that the business of the desk clerk was to verify relevant documents to ascertain if they were in order, but to be rude to an applicant, far less a senior citizen, who pays visa fees in thousands, doesn't reflect well on a representing country. I was later told that a similar nightmare was shared by many. In the civilised world, embassies are mutually maintained as windows to foster friendship, trade, education and for various interaction. But highhandedness of an employee can mar a lot of goodwill. Either the visa officers are ignorant of the maltreatment meted out to applicants or they look the other way.

Will His Excellency the Canadian Ambassador to Bangladesh look into the matter?

If he does, I bet he won't be amused.  
**Mirza A. Hyatt**  
Gulshan, Dhaka

**People's power**

From the very beginning of the CCC polls the Four Party Alliance was looking forward to something positive. Alliance leaders were confident that they would win. Even a few days ago a lawmaker of the Alliance dubbed Mr. Mohiuddin as "former mayor", even when he was holding office. Even nomination papers were not submitted at that time. How could he call him "former mayor"? But people have shown that only they can decide who will win.

**Md.Forkan uddin**  
Dhaka

**Pronounce correctly**

I recently saw the write-up by Ms. Cantara Wali Ruhi regarding proper pronunciation of English. The thing is one doesn't need to know English very well or be able to pronounce it very well to hold a prestigious job in Bangladesh as long as they are educated and are able to converse and communicate properly in Bangla. The ability to read and understand English is enough. However, the matter is completely different if that person is seen on television locally or internationally.

Internationally, you will often see politicians or journalists from India or other non-English individuals representing their countries. While their accents reflect their origin their pronunciation and ability to express themselves are above reproach and often times quite admirable to observe. The

repatee they develop so quickly and easily with the interviewer often extends their interview and they are able to convey much more about their countries.

Unfortunately, we haven't seen the same thing from the majority of the politicians from our own country. This doesn't mean they are incapable of doing their jobs. But, often stunted speech and the lack of practice and communication in English are quite evident. At times like this it is important to get our thoughts and ideas across given the infrequent publicity Bangladesh already gets. And especially since these days Bangladesh is usually depicted negatively in the foreign media. If the people being interviewed take too long to simply express a mere thought due to bad pronunciation and their inability to enunciate certain words we will fail to take advantage of those small windows of opportunities to come across as a country that actually has a lot of potential.

We have individuals who are very well educated but they fail to shine in the international arena when it comes to expression. So it is not unimaginable to urge such individuals who are

at the forefront of representing our country that they take time to practise the universal language so that they can take advantage of the brief coverage by the media and work towards being succinct and smart.

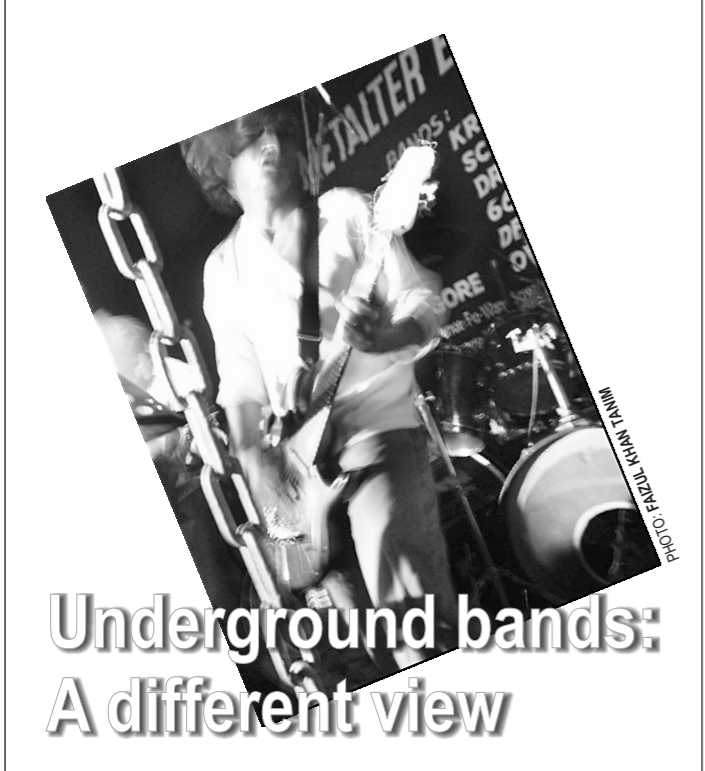
**By Zeenat Z. Syed, Business Analyst, GA, US**

**Law is not enough**

The government some months back passed a law imposing restriction on smoking in some places that are defined as public places under the law. We, the non-smokers, are extremely happy to see such an initiative taken by the government and expected enforcement of that law. But the actual scenario is totally frustrating as there is no impact of the law over the smokers of our country. Some days back I was travelling in a public bus where people were smoking without any hesitation. I requested some of them not to smoke and asked, "Why are you smoking in a bus? Don't you know that it is no longer permissible under law?" But they were not convinced by what I said.

Actually, mere enactment of a law cannot bring about the desired change. It works only when people develop the habit of going by the law. But here in our country that is rare. So we continue to suffer.

**Md.Abu Boker Siddiq (Bakul)**  
Student of Law, University of Chittagong



**Underground bands: A different view**

Thank you, Mr. Mahfuzul Haque, for your letter on "Distortion of Bangla", which was published on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2005. From that letter I came to know that you are very much concerned about Bengali music and also very much angry about what underground bands are doing. Well, I am a big fan of underground bands. I'm not from the aristocratic society and I didn't have English as medium of education. From underground, some big names come out on the stage like Warfaze, Aurthoin, Artcell, Black, Cryptic fate etc and there are a lot of bands which will dominate Bengali music in near future. Nowadays youngsters like those bands. Some underground bands may create some poor Bengali songs, but they are trying to create

new forms of Bengali music. Did you find any pronunciation problem in songs like "Pothchola" of Artcell, "Parthonad" of Black, "Protibad" of Cryptic fate? Are there too much pronunciation problems with bands like Aurthoin or Warfaze? In English and Hindi songs we also find different pronunciations, but those are not destroying their languages. We also find different pronunciations in our very own music like Polligiti, Lalongiti, Baul, Vatioli or folk music, isn't it? I think underground bands need more time to come up on stage and it's better to listen metal songs rather than songs like "jakanaka jakanaka deho dola na", "mon chaille mone pabe deho chaille deho"... etc. So give them some time. They will surely come up with some different views of Bengali music. The world is changing. So why not music? To know more about underground music, please visit [www.amadergaan.com](http://www.amadergaan.com).

**S.M. Tahidul Islam (Neon)**  
North Shahjahanpur, Dhaka-1217

**PLIGHT OF SHRIMP WORKERS**

We observe May Day every year. But the rights of workers are still ignored in most cases. Take for example, the case of shirmp project workers in Khulna. Most of them are poor women. They work hard throughout the day and return home at midnight. But the owners are totally oblivious of their security needs.

Will anybody address the issue?  
**Md Sakibur Rahman Khan, Sir Iqbal Road, Khulna**



victory in the polls. Labour obviously can take credit for winning a third straight election with a 67 seats majority, Conservatives can claim success by enhancing 40 odd seats than in the last parliament and the Liberal Democrats can be very happy as they could add a dozen seats to their tally and substantially increased their percentage of the

to 18 months earlier than the expiry of his third term so that a new leader can take over and get enough time to prepare for the next general election. But already there are speculations in political circles that he may have to pave the way for his potential successor, the powerful Treasury chief Mr. Gordon Brown, much sooner than expected, as

**BSF atrocities**

Not only us, who are living on the Bangladesh side of the frontiers, but common people across the border have also been suffering for countless BSF atrocities over the years. Tripura's major Bengali daily the "Sambad" and West Bengal's various dailies have a good track record of reporting BSF atrocities with its own people that often led to deaths of innocent Indian civilians. Just take the recent instance of a man accused by BSF of not offering side on the road while driving a truck. He was at first mercilessly beaten by BSF men for "disrespecting" them and then shot dead. Recent killing of an

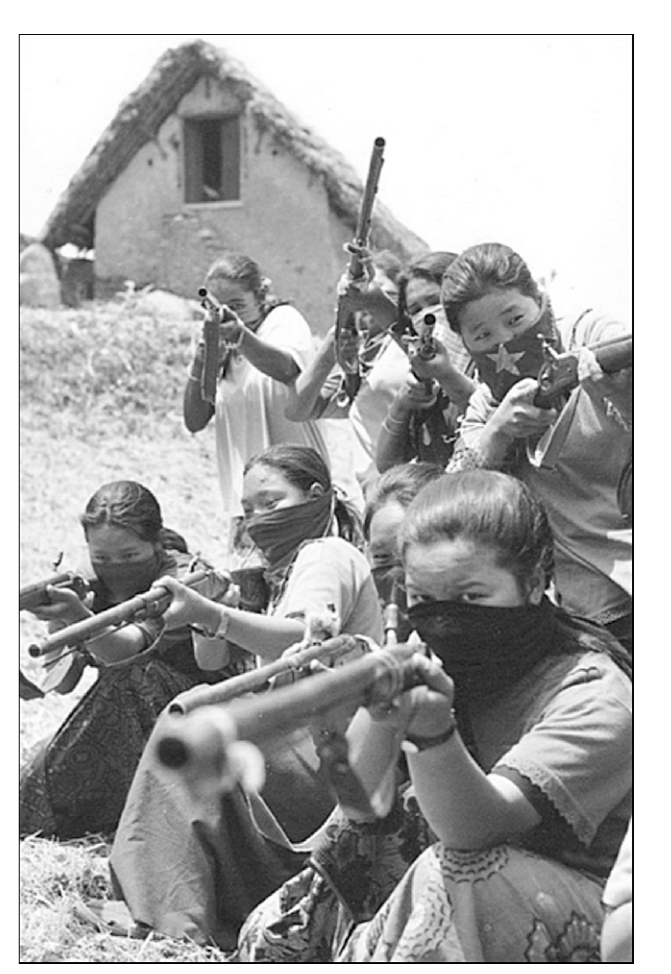


Indian village woman by BSF in front of many on the Indian side of Bashirhat border makes the point further clear.

BSF is killing Bangladeshis as part of "target practice" today. Over 400 Bangladeshis became BSF's victims in the last four years. Regrettably, major

Indian newspapers have not taken up the issues with due seriousness. BSF lack discipline which is a major problem for people living in the border areas.

The Indian authorities should look into the matter.  
**Syed Rahat Zaman**  
On Email, Phoenix, Arizona



**Nepal in deep trouble**

Nepal is an impoverished Himalayan country and also an active member of Saarc. Nepal has been experiencing a political turmoil for a decade which has pushed the country into great uncertainty. The Maoist rebels are the main trouble makers.

Nepal is a democratic country which abolished the monarchy in 1991. Lately, King Gyanendra dismissed the government of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba taking all the powers in his hand alone. But he has failed to contain the Maoist threat. The King's decision to take charge of the situation has been condemned by the international community. It has indeed been a mistake on his part.

By this time 11,000 Nepalese have been killed and the death toll is mounting day by day. The crisis can be overcome only if the King succeeds in reaching some kind of understanding with the rebels and restore democracy. He has no other options open to him.

**Md. Rezaul Karim**  
Dept. of International Relations, University of Dhaka