Editor's Note

AS the new year starts, we would like to wish our readers nothing but the best for 2007, and hope that this year brings good tidings for the nation as a whole. As of the day this third issue of Forum goes to the printer, things are once again balanced precariously, and it would take braver (or more foolhardy) men and women than the Forum team to predict exactly which way things will eventually turn out.

This month's issue of Forum leads with a searing analysis of the current imbroglio by Rehman Sobhan that captures this unique moment in Bangladeshi history and is a must-read for all those wishing to make sense of how we got here and what are the choices before us. In addition, we have a fascinating piece by Imtiaz Ahmed and Munim Kumar Barai, analyzing the results of a survey on what democracy means to Bangladeshis. Given the situation on the ground, we feel that nothing could be more timely or relevant.

In addition to essays and meditations on where we are going as a nation, and our arts/literature section, we are also proud to present a comprehensive in-depth report on the power sector that combines authoritative, painstakingly researched, and never before published information with a no-holds-barred critique of the last two elected governments' energy policies.

From outside Bangladesh, we include, among others, a superb essay on the Nepali transition to democracy by eminent columnist, CK Lal, and a provocative interview with Burmese dissident, Tint Swe, that serves as a stark reminder of the atrocities and abuses happening just across the border.

The *piece de resistance* of this issue is an original, exclusive article by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen reflecting on the multiplicity and openness to new ideas and cultural influences that have, he argues, been critical to forging the distinctive Bengali identity. We are proud to feature such an eminent contributor and hope that this first Forum of the new year will prove to be indispensable reading in the days ahead.

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