Editor's Note

When last month's issue of Forum went to bed on January 10, we were 12 days away from the spectre of a farcical election that would have precipitated certain violence and bloodshed. Indeed, it was fairly certain that things would have begun to spiral out of control as soon as the AL-led grand alliance began its program to resist the one-sided election long before the scheduled election date of January 22.

However, within 24 hours of the January issue's going to the printers, Bangladesh woke to a new political reality after President Iajuddin resigned as chief adviser and declared a state of emergency on the night of January 11.

Since then, we have seen the appointment of a new chief adviser and a new council of advisers, reshuffles at the EC and ACC, and a slew of high profile arrests of leading political figures. Where things will go in the next few days and weeks and where things are headed in the long-term is impossible to predict.

At such an uncertain and unprecedented moment in our nation's history, this month's Forum is indispensable reading for those wishing to make sense of the current situation and looking for insightful analysis and commentary on the events of the past month and the choices facing us as a country.

Rehman Sobhan, Rounaq Jahan, and Farid Bakht take on the momentous task of attempting to unravel the tangled web of today's politics, and you will not read more interesting and incisive writing on what the current state of affairs means for all of us anywhere.

Internationally, Larry Jagan turns in an excellent and thought-provoking piece on the military's reach in neighbouring Burma and M Shahid Alam expertly slices and dices the hubris of the Bush administration's imperial over-reach in Iraq.

In keeping with our mission to broaden the range of offerings, we have pieces by Naeem Mohaiemen and Maria Chaudhuri discussing different aspects of the non-resident Bangladeshi experience, as well as a long disquisition by Zeeshan Hasan on the roots of monotheism.

Finally, once again, we continue to provide the best literary commentary on the market, in the form of a masterful review essay on the late, great Edward Said by Fakrul Alam and a provocative, iconoclastic piece by Rubaiyat Hossain, in which she boldly takes on the father of Bengali literature.

With its in-depth analysis of current hot-button issues, exclusive investigative reporting, and thoughtful reflective essays, we hope that there is something for everyone in this month's Forum.

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