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**Sense of responsibility**  
In consideration of the theft of valuable artefacts at Zia International Airport, the adviser concerned has resigned, taking full responsibility for the mismanagement. This is exactly what is expected of a person of his stature and position. But alas! Can we expect from anyone else the same degree of responsibility, courage and professionalism on the recent deaths of a dozen innocent workers? Never!  
Zahid Shafi  
Edison  
New Jersey

### The New Year's promise

We grew up hearing that Bangladesh was the country of gold, golden Bengal, and our future is golden too. During hard times, it was common to hear comments such as "yes, always the future, never the present". Well, things are changing. Is the future here? Or maybe it is around the corner? What does this present situation, the new situation really mean?

Where we are now, actually? The GDP in percentage has lowered in comparison to year ending 2006. The economy didn't grow throughout the year, low investments, low production with high family spending. Foreign investment is not coming as per expectations. The unstable economy is the main source of concern; as for choices, they are very limited.

But it is the end of the year. Time to rejoice and renew our hopes. Time to think positively and to look forward. Time to believe that if that promised future is not here, it could be closer, as a matter of fact, maybe even around the corner. With eyes more focused on the quality of life of people and in the health of this earth that shelters and feeds us, we must keep on hoping, without losing sight of what has yet to come.

Sirajul Islam  
Pisciculture HS  
Shyamoli, Dhaka

### Cyclone Sidr

The disaster and devastation caused by the cyclone "Sidr" in such a short span of time (in comparison to two preceding floods) show us how nature may take revenge on us when it is infuriated by the unscrupulous activities of people, particularly those of so-called highly industrialised nations. But unfortunately the havoc that nature causes in reparation is indiscriminate and may befall even those who are not responsible for the misdeeds, as we find in our case.

The intensity of miseries and misfortune of our brethren in the south-west part of the country is gradually unfolding with the dawn of each day. Many friendly countries have come forward to help us out. Now time has come for us to rise up to do our utmost in this regard.  
Abul Khairat Majumdar  
Retd. Professor, BAI  
Mirpur, Mirpur  
Dhaka

### Yet to be done...

A great many felicitations, no doubt, should go to the caretaker government and its law enforcement agencies for the steps taken against the corrupt politicians and the vested interest groups of our country. Also worth praising is the recent drive against Yaba that arouses a new sense of direction about the ills of a drug. But two more things are yet to be done: giving a proper reply to the objectionable remarks about our freedom fighters and putting an end to the fussing over the price hike. We, the commoners, respect our freedom fighters for their supreme contributions to our struggle for freedom.

So, we cannot allow the war criminals to undermine our Liberation War and its heroes.  
Parveur Rahman  
Dept. of English  
Shah Jalal University of Science and Technology  
Sylhet

### Neruda, Tagore and Iqbal

We can draw a parallel line between the three great national poets, most popular in their respective continents. Rabindranath Tagore can thus be regarded as having an effective visual perception regarding perceptual realism. One can recognise the factor that the poet had his greatest association with Hindu theology. However, if we draw a similar association with the Chilean author and poet Pablo Neruda and of course no-body can actually forget Iqbal, then one can thus obtain the idea that the functional prowess of their national poetry has not only continued to influence their respective religious ideologies, but their inclination towards their respective beliefs can also be seen.

But still Tagore, Neruda and Iqbal, all of them possessed a similar homogeneity in their styles and expressions.  
Sarah Ahmed  
One-mail

## Issues and comments

• US-China competition: "China will soon be only second to the United States in the global power games," says Prof. Xuentung of China, well and good for check and balance of superpower politics.  
• Hiroshima US pilot Tibet dies at the age of 92: Some years back when asked if he regretted dropping the atom bomb. He replied in the negative. Tibet deserves an international accolade or condemnation for his mentality or crime against humanity.  
• BNP-BNP dispute: Two cats

make quarrel for bread and the clever monkey gormandises.  
• General Musharraf declares state of emergency: How long the hot wind would blow in Pakistan?  
• Israel says UN Nuclear Chief Al-Baradi should go because he turns a blind eye to Iran's nuclear ambition. Israel possesses more than 200 nuclear weapons, why is it afraid of Iran?  
• US-India nuke deal: Indians are not so foolish to fall prey to Uncle Sam.  
• US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urges

Musharraf to take off uniform: Charity begins at home. What is President Bush in civilian dress doing in Afghanistan and Iraq?  
• The Industries Adviser claimed that there was no fertiliser crisis anywhere in the country: Distribution of fertiliser is faulty. In addition to dealers' arrangements, sale of fertilisers may be started in maximum number of shops.  
OH Kabir  
Hare Street  
Wari, Dhaka

### Poor umpiring

On viewing the two one-dayers played so far between Bangladesh and NZ in the current cricket series, we are very much shocked to see the unjust decisions of the umpires going against Bangladesh only. In the first match, Bangladesh failed to get a positive nod from the umpires against their appeals on a couple of occasions when NZ batsmen were out. Even in the first match the leg umpire stopped a full shot of one Bangladeshi player by his own hand which would have been a boundary. In the second match, Ashraf was given out when the cover fielder caught a bounced ball. This is a huge injustice in any count and unfortunate for Bangladesh! If all the decisions were correct by the umpires, then NZ had really tough days. Their defeat was no far.

By seeing all these, we cannot but think that discriminations in many forms still exist against developing countries like Bangladesh by the so-called developed countries.  
Nasima Ahmed Chowdhury  
Ahmad Ahmar Chowdhury &  
Fasiha Zahra Chowdhury  
MAN Garden Officers' Quarters  
Mirpur, Dhaka

### Wake-up call

I am shocked to learn the news of the death of Ms Bhutto. She was the best hope for Pakistan to get rid of the fascist elements. We should remember the attempt to kill Sheikh Hasina on 21st August 2004. While the extremists are killing their opponents, amassing money from mid-east and taking control of different powerful government and non-govt positions, our democratic and half democratic parties are busy to meet their own selfish interests.

In Bangladesh we have been seeing almost the same things in Pakistan. If we don't isolate the extremists, we will see the real monster in the near future.

Basically, they have the same root, money source, same ideology and same mindset. It's time to take tough measures, if we want to avoid another Taliban state.  
Mortuza  
One-mail

### Our own wonders!

I am a regular reader of your newspaper's Internet and printed editions. As a leading national daily of Bangladesh "The Daily Star" has been taking part in many social activities and I believe it would make more if its readers aware of different issues. Believing this today I would like to request you to publish some articles, features, and quotes on selection of the seven natural wonders of the world and the positions of Cox's Bazar and the Sundarbans in the rating list. I believe this simple initiative of yours would help these natural wonders to maintain their positions firmly in future. Please post a regular section on the position of these natural wonders of Bangladesh on the Internet edition as well as in your regular printed edition to encourage people. It should also be provided with the link to the site directly (http://www.new7wonders.com/nature) so that people can cast their votes.  
Shakiv, On e-mail

### Cinema

Man seeks pleasure and recreation and cinema is a great source of fun. It is also one of the wonders of modern science. Cinema refers to a stage in which pictures on motion are shown on a screen. Firstly, to produce a cinema, shooting is a must. A number of actors and actresses play in a studio. In most cases they go out for shooting to hills, deserts seas or to places of scenic beauty. Some photographs against some backgrounds are then snapped. These photographs are shown on the screen with the help of cinematograph. When the show goes on, the ribbon of photographs is unrolled and thrown upon the white screen with necessary lights. This produces motion pictures on the screen. Formerly, pictures moved silently but nowadays pictures not only move but also talk and sing.

Cinema is the cheapest source of our recreation and enjoyment nowadays. It has been very popular in the whole world. Anybody getting tired or fatigued or depressed may enjoy cinema show and may be relieved of tension.

Past facts and episodes may be kept alive in film pictures. Great men and heroes of the past may be visible on the screen. They may be found moving talking and singing. Adventurous stories may be practically exposed on the screen-novels and fictions may be learnt through films. It is a fact that cinema is a great source of knowledge.

Cinema has a dark side too. Young people very often go astray due to watching vulgar movies. Obscene and bad films mislead general people and corrupt society very often. These affect the morality of the people to a great extent. Production of good or bad films is not the criterion to judge whether cinema itself is good or bad. We must not abuse it!  
S M Najmul Haque  
Santahar (Chabagan)  
Bogra

### Modern day barbarism

Who is the greatest killer of the world now? Undoubtedly the answer will be Mr. Bush. In the name of 'war on terror' the Bush government is torturing and killing a lot of innocent people in Afghanistan and Iraq. From immediately after 9/11 of 2001 till now the US soldiers and coalition soldiers are arresting people as suspects. They made so called prisons for the suspects at Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and so on to torture and kill people. There is no definite allegation or evidence against most of the detainees. As they are shouting for human rights and humanity, they are the first violators of all such things. They are continuously degrading humanity by their brutal inhumane behaviours. Most of the detainees are innocent and they have no connection with terrorism. But they are passing the worst months and years suffering the ruthless torture of the soldiers. When anyone dies due to their torture, they pass it off as a natural death. You will be surprised to know that the young energetic persons are always the victims of natural death in those torture cells.

How long will this go on?  
Md. Faisal Bin Karim  
Jahangirnagar University  
Savar, Dhaka

### Political drama!

A new political drama is unveiled. The health condition of two interned former prime ministers is in the limelight which has given rise to the question of going abroad for better treatment. Health and political approach to this issue is different in case of the two interned leaders. The BNP approach is more prudent, compared to the AL's.

In case of the BNP, a vice president is saying that if her leader is released from the jail, she would get a natural atmosphere to meet his well wishers, relatives and recover from her illness which is said to be aggravating for isolation from the people, and that she is the one who should decide where she would undergo treatment, if needed. A sound political move to ask for her release.

But in case of the AL leader, her four personal physicians are taking the major role in sending her for better treatment in the USA because of the complications of her illness and previous treatment records. The AL working committee is also very concerned about her health condition and recommends her treatment abroad, provided she agrees to this move.

We do not know how bad is the

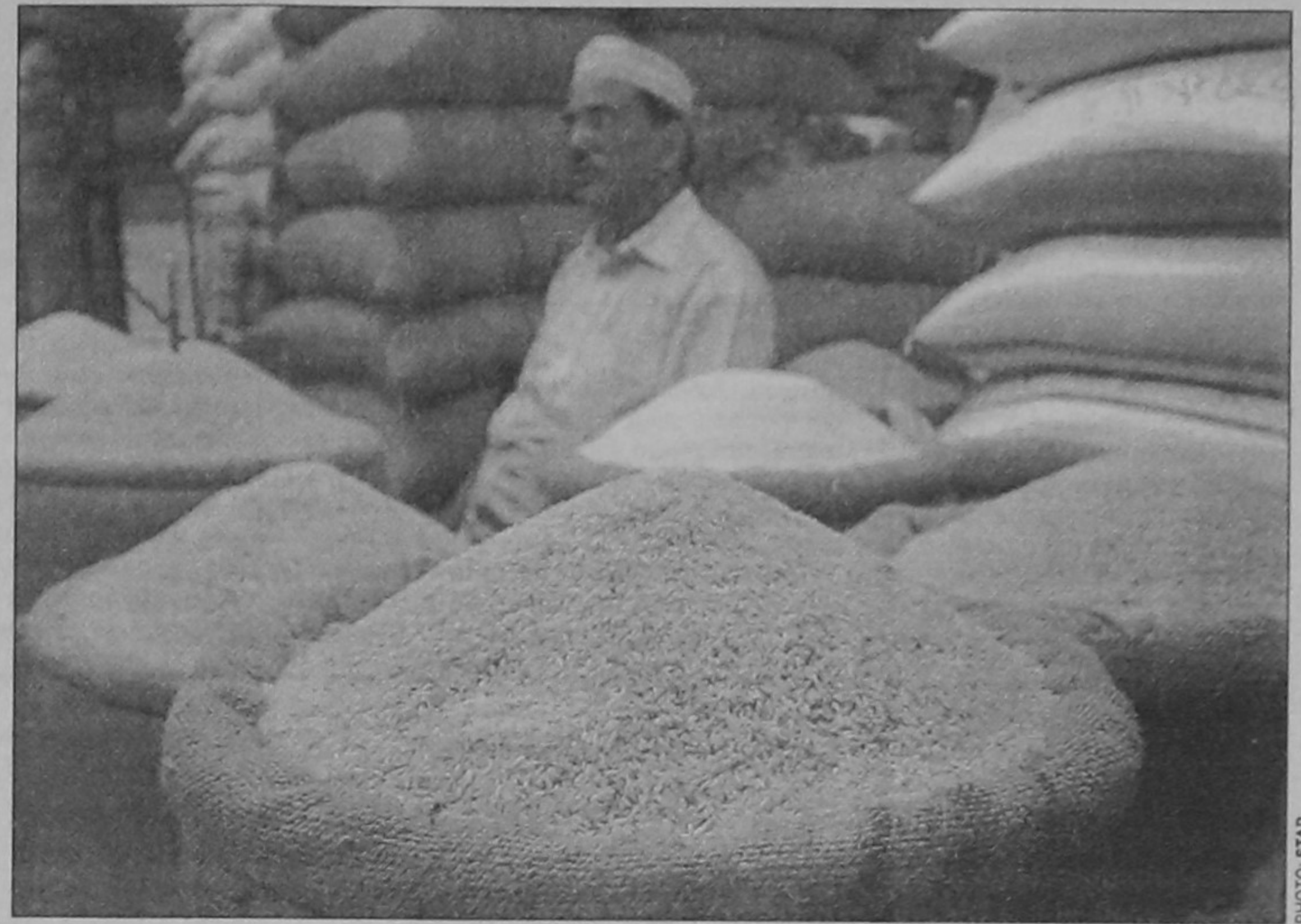
## Price of rice

The recent remark of an advisor has added fuel to the already lit inferno raging across the country on rice prices. Instead of putting all out efforts to bring down the price of food grains, the advisor passed a remark which has aggravated the already bad situation with a further rise in the price which now stands at an all time record of Tk 35 per kg even for the coarsest variety. My suggestion would be to stop import of all luxury and non-essential items, including motor vehicles, and divert the funds towards import of

rice immediately and flood the market with subsidised prices to save the country from the impending famine. Rapid action in this regard will help defuse the highly alarming situation and we demand immediate action from the government to save the teeming millions. If necessary the current foreign exchange reserve can be utilised for the import of rice. The country is on fire and water MUST be poured in to extinguish it from whatever source available immediately, before it is too late. Moreover, strict vigilance

should be there over the import, storage and distribution of rice by the importers to prevent hoarding and manipulation of prices. Enquiries should also be made to find out if the bureaucracy was responsible for deliberately creating the mess in the whole process of importing food grains with the ulterior motive of creating law and order problem in the country. Because food is an issue on which the poor countrymen would not make any compromise.

Mohammad Ataul Hoque  
One-mail



## Pakistan scene

Mr. Tariq Karim foresees Pakistan's future political development as a final battle between the forces of civil society and democracy and militant obscurantism and military jingoism. He also said lot of nice things about BB. His analysis was fine but I think he somehow fogged the identity of the real enemy of the Pakistani people though he mentioned it. Sixty years of

this and produce a new concept to define the Pakistani state.

Mr. Karim praises BB for her courage. Yes she was brave but foolish too. How could she trust the military who murdered her father even after ZAB saved it from the disgrace of 1971 defeat? How could she not see that military would never allow even a sham democracy to flourish with a



relentless Goebbelsian propaganda and Orwellian thought controlling programmed the Pakistani people including the weak civil society to think that the military is the saviour of their country. That it is the real demon which has devoured their souls and made them mere slaves. Not even the Stalinist brain washing on which Orwell based his 1984 society was as effective as the Pakistani military. The Pak military has the advantage of using Islam as the ideological tool which the Stalinists did not have. So if Pakistani people wish to establish democracy they have to wage a war against their own military. But in the current situation it is not going to happen, notwithstanding Mr. Karim's expectations. The Pakistani people are hopelessly divided and against them the military are solidly united as a rock as the only powerful organisation with all the weapons of brutalisation at their command. The military itself is the state in Pakistan. If the military is defeated and removed from power then the state will disintegrate. The comparable scenario is Somalia. The political scientists should ponder over

US supported politician? The US did not try to save ZAB's life. The military became the state in Pakistan right from Jinnah's rule in 1947 when he sent the army in the guise of mujahids to free Kashmir. Thereafter it was easy for the military to do whatever it wanted. Please recall that Jinnah died in utter neglect and PM Liaquat was murdered at ease.

Even if we hypothesize of a likely scenario of BB becoming the PM under Musharraf, her fate would have been the repetition of the previous event or worse. The only difference is that it happened a bit early. The military is already in control of the situation and would remain ever. Torching of trains, banks and vehicles don't perturb it. Actually such acts reinforce its authority since only it can restore order. They know only one language--guns. So if the people of Pakistan rise up and fight the demon with guns and are able to defeat it, may be they would move one step forward to change their lives for the better even on the buried coffin of the military state named Pakistan.  
Ibne Azad  
Lalmatia, Dhaka

health condition of the BNP leader, but we are hearing about the deteriorating health condition of the AL leader for some time from family sources and physicians as well. Now the question is, what would be the position of the government, and under what conditions they would be sent abroad for treatment, and who would bear the costs subject to the consent of the two leaders. These questions might be considered by the government if they agree to send them abroad for treatment on humanitarian ground.

We think it would be the most

appropriate action on the part of the government to set them free on bail so that their mental agony is relieved and they can undergo treatment as free political leaders of Bangladesh. This will enhance their personal image including that of the country. We hope they would not be sent to a foreign country to receive treatment under police custody in a prison cell as we have in the PG Hospital.

However, these are all assumptions based on media reports from the party and the doctors. We would appreciate a dignified

decision from the government in this behalf.  
A reader  
One-mail

### Poor batting

The openers started so well, but then everything went awry. That's cricket, perhaps a bit too much of it! The New Zealanders showed their class in bowling!

We have to be more consistent to fight at that level of the game. Is anybody listening?

Mansur Raja  
Dhaka



## The vicious cycle

In our beloved country natural disasters happen so often that probably these should be taken as our natural characteristics. Every year we face them and still we lose our dear ones, our livestock, crops, properties etc. The governments spend millions to build dams, cyclone centres, for irrigation, medical treatment, relief and rehabilitation. But we still bear the losses. Every year our budgets are strained, we take loans from World Bank, ADB etc, but what is the result? Have we ever thought of the vicious cycle concerning this? Projects are taken, some never end, those that end

collapse and at last it is the same again. In every country the people build their dwellings according to the nature of their climate, geology and GDP.

The Eskimos build their igloos, the Andes people build stone houses, those in Java and Borneo build high houses and so on. Most of our houses are built with bamboo and clay. In the rainy season they rot and in the face of floods and cyclones they collapse. Could we change our design and materials and use more durable materials like plastic, aluminium etc.? A small underground room probably could

be made so that at least it can be used for shelter during cyclones. We have a lot of universities which can take the initiative to do research and with the collaboration of the govt can undertake projects to build safer houses, better flood preventive measures and more effective irrigation systems which are low cost and eco-friendly.

People should be made aware through technical education. How many more lives need to be sacrificed? How many drops of tears need to be shed for our conscience to wake up?

A.U. Ahmed  
Mohammedpur, Dhaka