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Masters not friends!

A report published in a national daily by World Bank depicts that Bangladeshi expatriates will be able to remit US\$ 10.47 billion in the current fiscal. The forecast has been justified with some favourable and unfavourable analysis and arguments. The figure as predicted by World Bank seems to be inconsistent with the present increase rate per year. The nation earned about 9.86 billion in the last fiscal. Our experience says that per year increase for the last three fiscals is US\$ 2.00 billion or more and the country is expecting about US\$ 12.00 billion during the current fiscal.

Unwarranted and uncalled for forecasting by World Bank means nothing but disregarding and discouraging our plan/policies to be self-dependent. This type of forecast by World Bank does not fall within the preview of their functions.

We are aggrieved at the attitude of the World Bank. At the same time, we also feel dispirited with our ministry while observing that the forecast by World Bank is going unchallenged. The ministry must have objectives, plans and policies, accurate data, future programmes, so that an institution like World Bank cannot interfere in our approaches/efforts, honestly designed for us, not for others. **Md. Mosharaf Hossain**
Chittagong

Internet facilities

Internet is the most essential thing in our day-to-day life today. Internet is the storehouse of knowledge. It is a great source of information. All the students need to use Internet every day because the course related various materials & topics are available here. But it is a matter of great regret that students of our country do not get enough opportunity to use Internet. At the university level Internet is needed for the students as well as the teachers. In Rajshahi University there is only one computer lab open for the master's level students. But this lab does not fulfil their needs. Most of the time Internet connection is not available in the lab. Many departments do not have their own lab. So students are deprived of using computers. They have to use Internet in the cyber café which is very costly.

To make a digital country, the government should provide free broadband or other Internet connections in the dormitories of Rajshahi University as well as other university campuses as early as possible. This will help the nation go one step ahead. **Abbar & Muzahid**
University of Rajshahi

Govt mishandling Tipaimukh

According to Abdur Razzaq, a member of our parliamentary delegation, "India would not launch any projects that would harm Bangladesh". Really? How is it then almost every week some Bangladeshi citizens are murdered by India's BSF? India has been reassuring Bangladesh that such things will not happen yet they have been happening for years. Any other country

would call these acts of war.

The Tipaimukh project will affect the whole of our country. These guys didn't even see the site and they are asking us to approve the whole thing just because India says so. How ridiculous! Our delegation must have been treated really, really well by India!

This is our country and we will NOT accept any hanky-panky from our politicians. They must handle this matter properly because we are paying them to do so. It is the responsibility of our government, not of India, to allay our fears about the Tipaimukh project. So far that hasn't happened. **Azad Miah**
Oldham
UK

Paracetamol syrup

When the manufacturers of medicines use such toxic elements which ultimately take away the lives of innocent children, we cannot take the matter so easily. Reports disclose that a pharmaceutical company has used "Diethylene" in their paracetamol syrup. We have been taken aback and horrified to know the news as this very element is used in tannery and battery industries. As a result, a good many babies have died. Some children also died in 1992. As the owners of the medicine companies are well-off people they cannot be given exemplary punishment.

How long will such activities continue?

Harun-or-Rashid
Sobhanbag, Dhaka

Anti-Indianism

A write-up on above caption on the 24th July by Prof Habibul is absolutely disappointing. It shows neither academic depth nor it contains facts and essence. The concluding sentence is sarcastic. As a result, a serious matter became too simplistic in presentation.

Bangladeshis are open-minded people. In the last few decades the overall outlook of average Bangladeshis underwent a positive transformation due to mass migration into different countries. As a result most people shed off the hangover of pre 1947 taboos. Religious fanaticism was never a countable phenomenon in Bangladesh which is evident from the fact that religious parties were never a choice of people.

On the contrary, modern, secular India had religious fanatics at the helm of state several times with HINDU - JIHAD against other religious minority including Christians. So relation with India cannot be judged from the anti-Indian spectrum. Rather, the feelings of Bangladeshis against India are an expression of total despair of a poor nation against a mighty neighbour's arrogance in all aspects -- from economy to border killing. Let us enumerate a few of the unconceivable actions of our great neighbour that hurt souls of most Bangladeshis, both Hindus and Muslims and other communities.

(1) In 1947, immediately after partition of India Mr. Jinnah requested Mr. Nehru to allow use of Kolkata port for the then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh for six months considering no merchandise facilities in Chittagong port.

The great Indian leader politely refused the request saying that India could not allow Kolkata port to be used by East Pakistan even for six hours.

(2) In 1974, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib on good faith returned Berubari and other enclaves to India. But none of Indian leaders till now reciprocated the gesture by returning our enclaves under India. India showed "good will" by allowing a small strip of land about 340 yards to be used by Bangladeshis of Dahagram only for six hours!

(3) All Indian TV channels are permitted to be transmitted in Bangladesh. While India does not allow any Bangladeshi TV channel.

(4) Indian BSF kills on an average two Bangladeshis daily on various pretexts. Nowhere in the world such barbaric acts are seen even for worst kind of offences.

(5) Diversification of water from common river basin without any consultation with Bangladesh added new dimensions to bilateral misunderstanding.

(6) Bangladesh is the biggest market for Indian goods. Despite great demand from seven north eastern states, Indian govt creates different barriers for entry of Bangladeshi goods into this neighbouring states.

(7) India wants transit through Bangladesh but will not do so regarding our transit to Nepal and Bhutan.

These are the few of the points that touch souls of Bangladeshis, irrespective of religion. If such grievances are to be termed as "Anti Indianism" let God review Homo sapiens-consciousness of the person concerned.

Bangladesh looks forward to the horizon of developing world while India boasts of an aberrant psyche and hangover of Hindu-Muslim chaos of 1947. Let them live with it. **DR. Q.M. Ohidul Alam**
MBBS, Ph.D
Panchlais
Chittagong

Governance--the myopic view

The RMG sector is being unintentionally weakened by the successive political regimes; as the labour unions are being politicised -- for vote banks and illegal tolls.

"Office-bearership" is big business. The RMG factory owners are suspicious of the unions; and there is communication gap in introducing healthy and normal practices. The spate of violent incidents in several garment factories is an indicator of the shape of ugliness which has emerged due to cracks and fault lines in political culture practised in Bangladesh.

Similarly, the civil service has been politicised at critical points in the network. The party always comes first--above the national interest! The people have noticed the differences in quality and outputs after the two-year caretaker government rule; which revealed the weaknesses of polarised administration.

Why the political party behaviour patterns cannot follow national consensus guidelines? Today the BNP is in a pathetic condition -- cannot reorganise the party, after the massive debacle during the last general elections. The six months of AL

rule is not inspiring. The leaders do not notice such vacuums.

The new PPP scheme is a severe tester of public confidence in honest delivery of public services. Ruling through mastans and toll collections is not the criteria the nation adopted since its birth.

The governing mindset is terrible. Now it is proposed to ban three-wheelers from Dhaka city -- having utterly failed to operate taxi fare meters. How to travel in the city without getting into a bus, and having no private car? Why underground rail when unaccompanied women won't travel after sunset for security reasons?

Maintenance is not so easy in an LDC. Why this hankering for mega projects, which cannot be completed in five years, and there is no guarantee of continuity by the next incoming regime?

Parliament is a lame duck. If non-appearance of the Opposition is so popular in Dhaka, why not change the constitution to remove the political conflicts?

There is no time to wait, after three decades of dilly-dallying. **AMahasen**
Dhaka

Slum dwellers



AMAZIR RAHIM FETU / DRINKNEWS

This is a matter of shame that the government is again planning to evict slum dwellers of Dhaka city. I admit that they do not own the land in which they live. At the same time I must ask who made them homeless? On many occasions rural Godfathers and developers made them homeless either by force or by cheating them. Moreover, the government acquired many lands in rural areas through acquisition as part of the decision to provide opportunity to the people of Dhaka city for housing that resulted in rendering many land owners homeless and they were forced to take shelter in the vacant lands of the government. On the other hand, due to river erosion, floods and other natural calamities in Bangladesh, the unfortunate people who became homeless and having no profession, and no provisions for food and shelter, migrated to urban areas and started living in the government vacant lands.

It deserves mention that most of the slum dwellers engage themselves in jobs of rickshaw pullers, day labours, garment workers, domestic helpers, office peon etc for maintaining their marginal level

livelihoods. They are contributing to society hugely but are being paid back very low amount of money.

Some people say that crime rate is high in slums, which is ridiculous. If we compare the crime rate of any ministry of the government it will be much higher than the crime committed by the slum dwellers. If for the sake of argument we consider that the crime rate in slums is high, then again the government is largely responsible for that. People who do not have any permanent address will feel more secure to commit crimes.

If slum is a curse of over population, then again I must say successive governments failed to spread education among the poor people.

Article 15 of the Constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh states that the State will provide basic necessities of life including shelter for all.

So, it is up to the government whether they respect the constitution or violate it.

Dr. Mahboob Hossain
Associate Professor
Department of Pharmacy
The University of Asia Pacific
Dhaka

Dams and earthquakes

Asia is a land of extreme natural disasters like earthquake, cyclone, flood drought, tsunami etc.). South Asia (Indian subcontinent) is more disaster prone. And Bangladesh is at a higher risk of natural disaster.

Indian subcontinent situated on the Indo-Australian plate and Eurasian plate boundary. These plates move toward each other. Massive folding of the crust occurred along northern India, forming a range of Fold Mountains. The Fold Mountains are mainly found close to plate boundaries where plates are moving toward each other. In these zones, earthquakes occur frequently because of Himalayan ranges standing face to face on the directional zone with that two plates.

There southeast range of Himalayas is enlarged till Assam and Manipur hills. This is the natural cause of earthquake.

Anthropogenic earthquakes are caused by human activities. There were many earth quakes caused by construction of dams. To save the world, construction of dams on rivers must come to an end.

Md Ariful Islam
Dept. of Geography and
Environmental Studies
University of Chittagong

No filling station!

There is no filling station for petrol, octane or diesel in Gulshan or Baridhara. The residents of these areas are required to send their vehicles to far-away Tejgaon, Mohakhali or Kuril for refuelling. From 5 to 10 litres of fuel is consumed for this purpose. The erstwhile DIT had allotted 2 plots in Gulshan for establishment of filling stations. How come these allottees built multi-storeyed buildings on these plots? If Rajuk can demolish 100 crore taka Rangs Bhaban, the multi-storeyed buildings built on plots earmarked for filling stations can also be demolished.

Rajuk should allot a plot in Baridhara J-block on priority basis for a filling station to serve the residents of Gulshan 2 and Baridhara. **Asfa Hussain**
Baridhara
Dhaka

A complete code of life

The Arabic word Islam is derived from the word 'Salam' which means 'peace'. As a religion it stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah. It is a universal religion and its objective is to create and cultivate in man the quality and attitude of 'Silmi' i.e. submission to Divine Will. 'Islam' is, indeed, an attributive title. Whoever possesses this attribute, may s/he belong to any race, community, country or clan, is a Muslim. Islam is a state of mind, a way of thinking and a mode of life. It is a complete code of life. Human beings are hungry for peace and happiness. But they cannot enjoy peace and happiness unless their physical needs, psychological needs and intellectual needs are satisfied. The world is full of material resources. At the same time, we find lots of people are immersed in a miserable plight. They get only a scanty portion of the vast material resources spread all over the world. It proves that mere abundant availability of resources does not alleviate human sufferings. Unless resources are justly distributed among people at large, poverty continues to pinch the people and they are bound to be deprived of peace and happiness.

In fact, the prevalence of peace and happiness solely depends on a system which ensures equitable distribution of wealth amongst all people, creates a healthy atmosphere for the satisfaction of their psychological needs and develops a congenial environment for the wholesome growth of their intellectual faculty. If we carefully scrutinize the ideologies of the world without harbouring any bias in our minds, we shall definitely come to the conclusion that there is only one ideology in the world which can satisfy all the prerequisites stated above and the name of that ideology is Islam.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Jamea Rahmania Fadil
Madrasa
Chittagong

Unnatural deaths

At least 105 unnatural deaths have been recorded in Gopalganj district hospital in the last 7 months. Deaths in road accidents, suicides are often reported from the five upazilas of Gopalganj district.

The administration should look into the matter. **Mahmud Ali Kabir**
Ex-BSS correspondent
Gopalganj

Private coaching in schools

It has become a common phenomenon for some govt. and private schools to mint a huge amount of money in the name of conducting coaching classes.

It is reported that some school authorities ask and compel the students to attend coaching classes in the school premises for better results. If for any cogent reason any student shows or regrets his/her difficulty or inability to attend the coaching classes, the schoolteacher warns and threatens him/her of unfavourable circumstances, cutting sorry figure or failure in the exams.

The coaching classes start after closure of the school when after attending the whole day routine classes the students feel hungry, tired and exhausted. Further, the schoolteachers demand exorbitant amounts of money for coaching, which is beyond the reach of the parents/guardians of the students. Many of the students fall sick and weak due to overwork and untimely food intake. Moreover, many of the students have their own tutors at home to teach them.

We fail to understand the justification of attending private coaching in the school when the students are regularly and timely going to school and making payment of their prescribed monthly school fees. What is the need for additional payment of huge amount of coaching fees at the cost of untold hardship and financial difficulty of students' parents/guardians?

Would our authorities concerned, especially the Ministry of Education, kindly look into the matter and ban private coaching in the schools?

Our schoolteachers may kindly concentrate their mind, time and energy on teaching the students in normal classes, rather than conducting coaching classes for spreading education and literacy in our country.

OH Kabir
Wari, Dhaka

Sufferings of common people

It is inconceivable that any ordinary citizen without influence and powerful connections can come out unscathed from any government office in Bangladesh. His lot is to silently endure untold harassments, indignities in the hands of those occupying government positions. It makes no difference whether the position is high or low. All have the air of Lords and Masters.

Treating a human being

with any kind of decency and respect has no place in our offices. And we have to accept this state of affairs as part of the price of being alive in Bangladesh.

However, what is most surprising is the way our politicians think and behave. They make so many promises to the people, offering them the sun and the moon, but never for once decent and dignified life. **A K M Mohiuddin**
Rajshahi University
Campus

Dhaka College library

The central library of Dhaka College is facing multiple problems, like shortage of space, books and manpower, for a long time, hampering education of the students. Many students say that they hardly get chance to have seats in the library due to shortage of space.

The library that has a single reading room is quite incapable of accommodating the readers as there are more than 25 thousand students in 21 Departments, including HSC. The students are deprived of contemporary reference books on honours and master's level subjects. Students are also deprived of the advantage of modern technology in the absence of computer and Internet facilities in the library. A large number of rare old books in the library have been damaged due to lack of proper care.

A student
Dhaka College

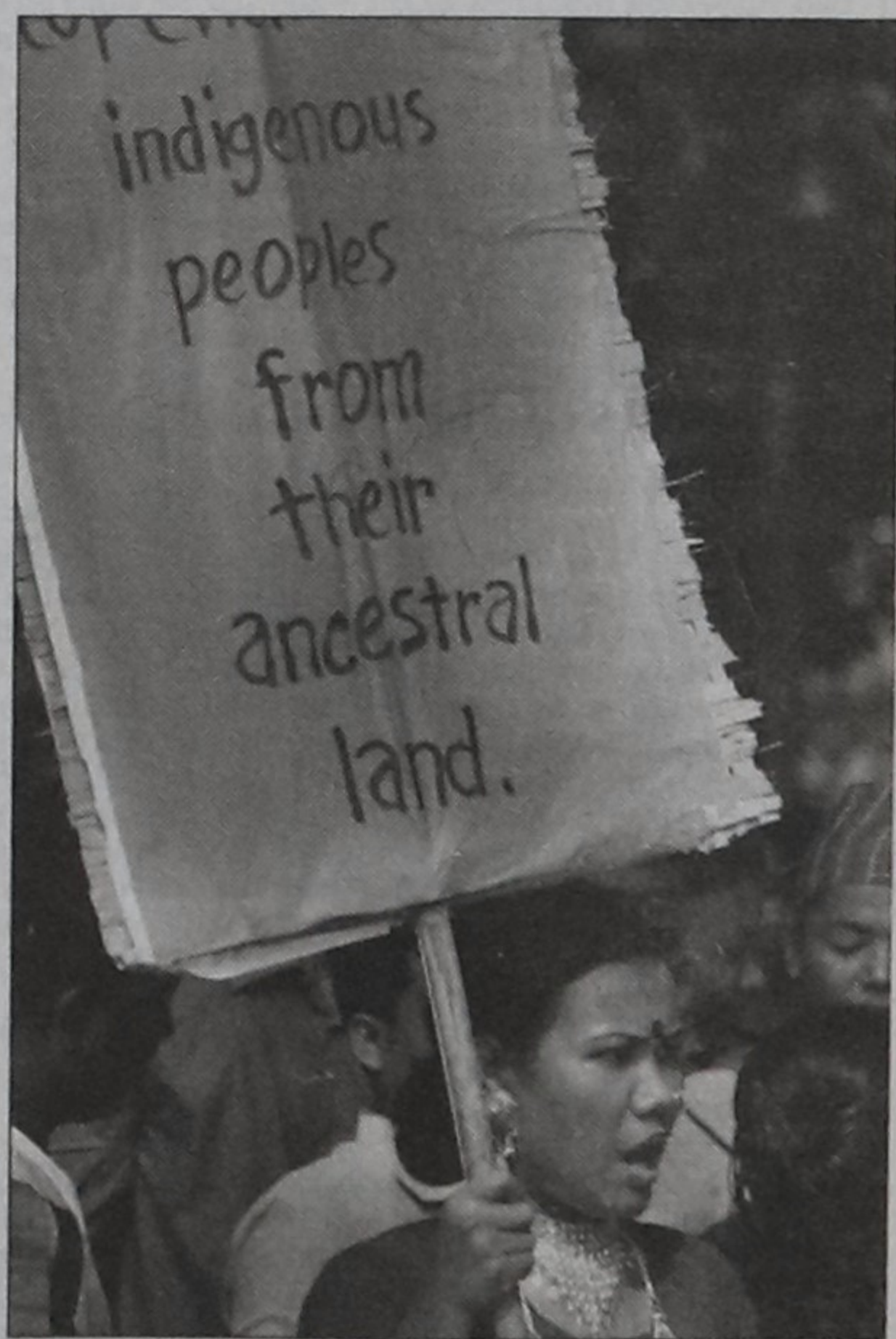
Advisers' corruption

Some of our politicians proved themselves not trustworthy, so we opted for new political ideas of the unelected caretaker government. Though rumours were there about some advisers, consecutive three caretaker governments passed honourably, thanks to the integrity of the chief advisers. But the last one headed by the most controversial President Prof. Iajuddin Ahmed could not keep the tradition of their predecessors. Now with transparent media coverage many gross type of corruption and irregularities are coming out.

The parliamentary committees are digging in the right direction. We the taxpayers are cautiously waiting for the outcomes. Elected or unelected, everyone should come under strict scrutiny for their deeds while in public office and duly punished if found guilty.

M. Sanaul Huq
Uttara Model Town
Dhaka

Indigenous people



AM.AHAD / DRINKNEWS

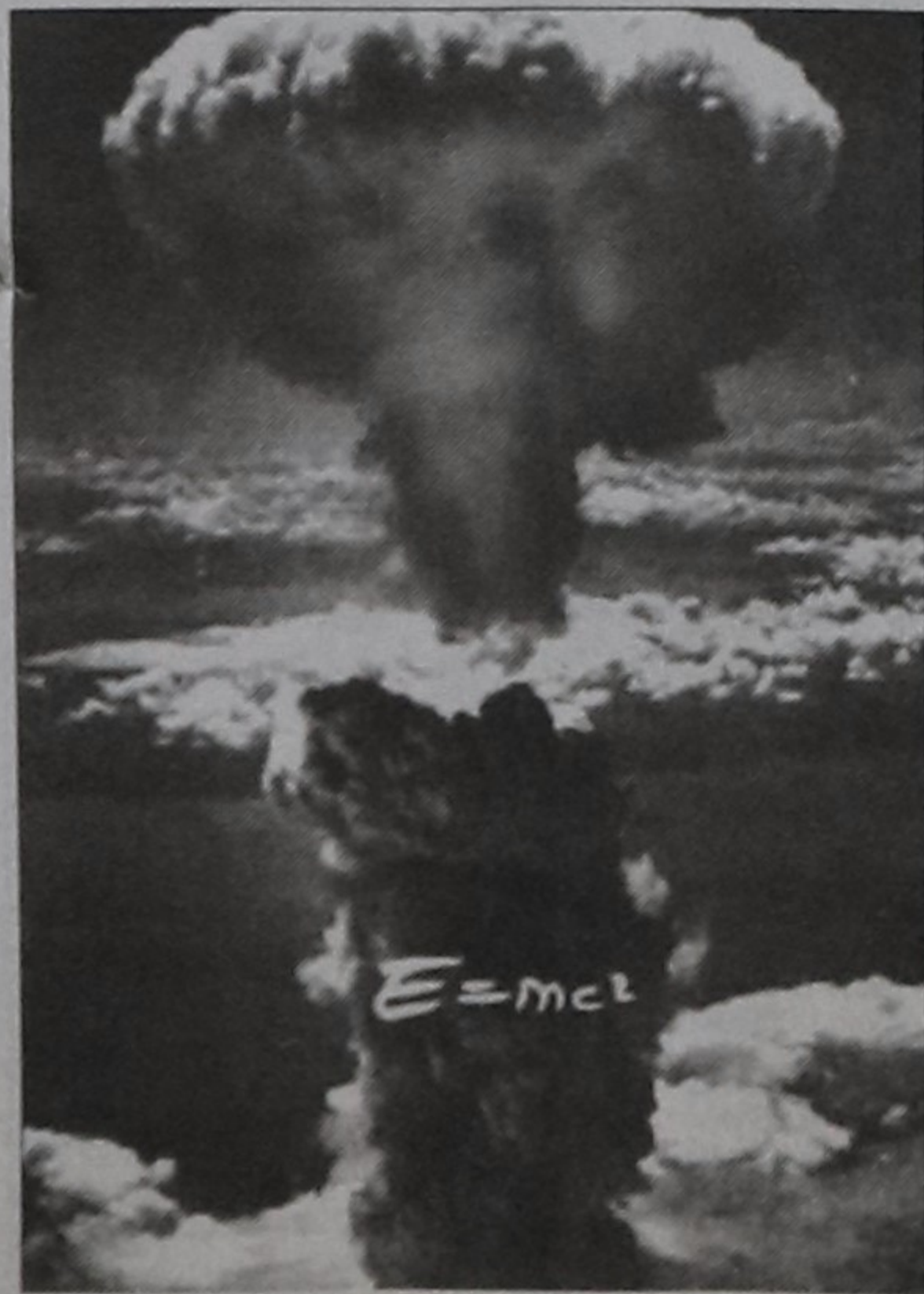
Those who are opposing the government move to operationalise the CHT accord are simply showing their disrespect for fundamental rights of the ethnic minorities.

I am afraid the support of the political leaders, especially the "Gang of Three", of the BNP might provoke a situation so that the present move of the government is halted.

I would urge upon the leadership of the ethnic minorities to keep a close watch on the law and order situation in the CHT and elsewhere.

Quadir
California, USA

Hiroshima...



Hundreds of thousands of people of Japan became the victims of nuclear bombing in the month of August. But we the most civilised species did not take any lesson from this incident. We are now busy equipping ourselves with nuclear weapons. We all now want to be "world winner". We have not come to this world to be happy but to be "big"!

Would the world ever be peaceful? Even today, conflicts are going on among many countries. Three lakh Tamils of Sri Lanka are almost shelter-less. Every day, on an average twenty to thirty peace-loving innocent people die in Iraq. at any moment, a war may break out between Iran and Israel. The stronger nations want the other nations to stop nuclear tests. But they would never reduce their armaments. Is it not a whimsical strategy?

We the citizens of this world, now want to establish our colony in the moon. Apparently, this is great. That would be another significant gift of science. But later on, we would definitely start a nuclear war in the heart of the moon! We will try to divide the moon too.

Pradip Das
A novelist
Dhaka