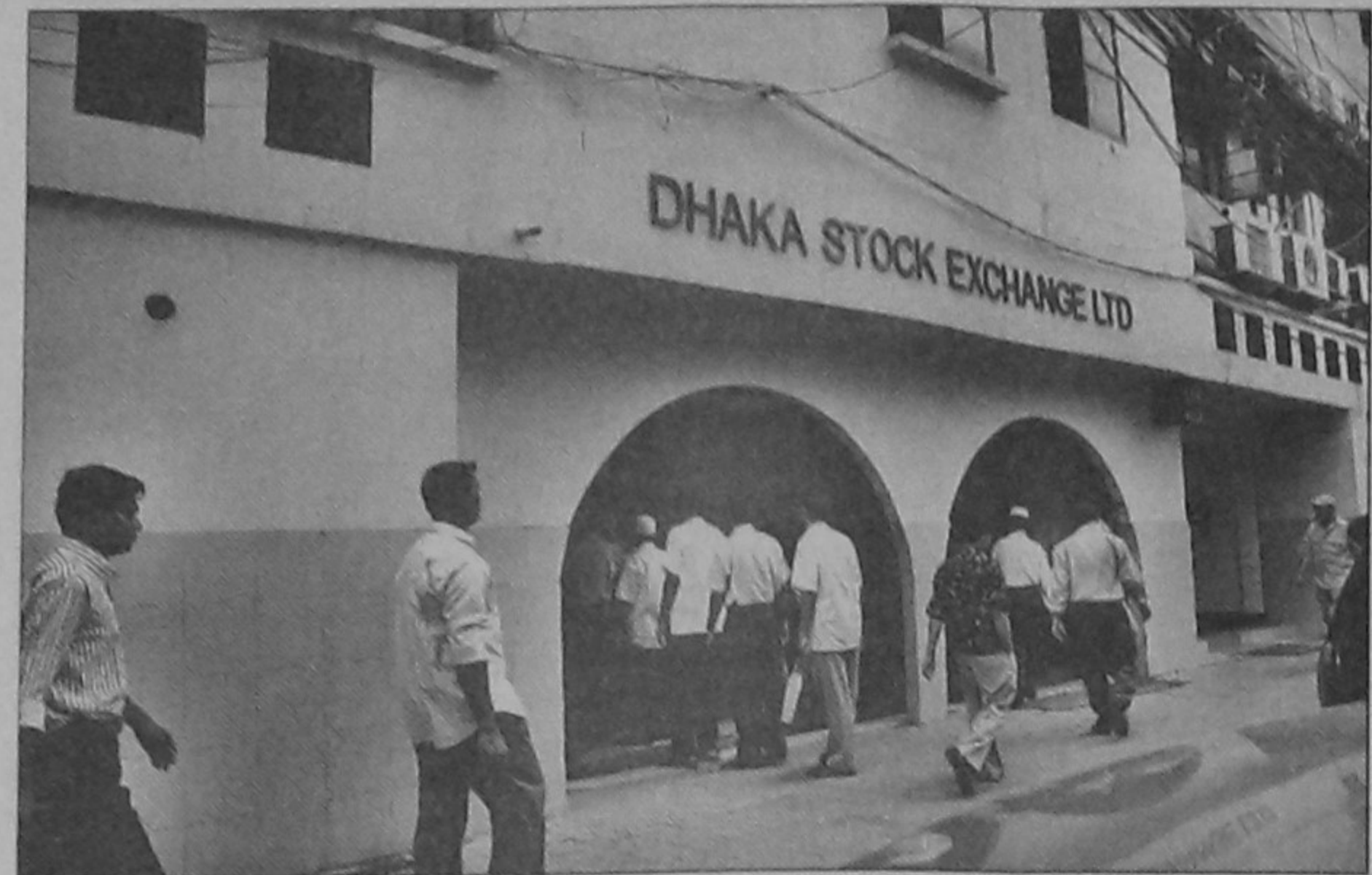


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Stock market

In the last few weeks we witnessed that the general index of Dhaka stock market reached 3,000 plus and then it was pulled down to below 3,000. A cat and mouse game is being played.

Like all the bourses in the world, Dhaka stock market is growing as per the law of the nature, as assumed and required. Trade volume reached more than 1,000 crore a few months back. Usually it remains in the domain of 600 crore plus. There seems to be a profound psychological barrier at the 3,000 general index. Whenever the general index of Dhaka stock market reaches 3,000, the Security Exchange Commission, DSE, newspapers, TV channels, Bangladesh Bank etc. cry foul, become very much 'worried' and act in funny, anti-investor and anti-market ways. The news media, TV channels with the help of 'pundits' remind

people of '1996' again and again. Everybody is an expert! They pull the investors as well as the country back. Do we have to assume that the general index of DSE can never shoot beyond the 3,000 mark? Do we have to be pegged or chained forever to this 'magic' number? Bangladesh should never grow, develop and remain where it was ten years back! What logic, what patriotism!!

The investors, market and the country are much more mature and informed now than they were in '1996'. The SEC enacted many regulations to avert any mishap.

We call upon the relevant authorities to allow the market to grow at its own pace.

Dr. S N Mamoon
One-mail

Secularism

The ideology of secularism has come to the forefront again after assumption of state power by the Awami League led grand alliance as this government strongly advocates secularism which is one of the major policies of the AL. But a vast majority of the Muslims think that secularism contradicts the basic faith of their religion "Islam". It is not very difficult to understand the reasons if anyone closely observe the definition of secularism which normally means "An ethical system founded on the principles of natural morality and independent of revealed religions or supernaturalism".

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur R/A, Khulna

Attention: Bangladesh Bank

With the expansion of technology and effect of globalization the demand of external education/ distance learning is growing rapidly. Especially,

the institutions which have global reputation attract large number of students. The University of London is such an institution and most probably attracts maximum number of students from Bangladesh who intend to attend external programmes. But in sending different fees like application handling fee, registration fee, examination fee the students here face a harsh and painstaking reality. No bank is willing to process the bank draft for distance learning saying that there are restrictions regarding the matter from Bangladesh Bank. They also say only two branches of Sonali Bank are empowered to handle this kind of bank draft. But going to that branches it has been learnt that only the fees of the students who are recommended by two particular institutions are processed through those branches. If their version of the statement is true we must say how bizarre the situation is that the students who directly want to be admitted to

London University cannot send their fees without taking the help of any tuition provider, even when it is not necessary for them. To make sure whether the money is going to London University, is it not enough to ensure that the bank draft is crossed in favour of London University? And even after that if it thinks that an invoice letter is necessary it may ask the local British Council or British High Commission but it can in no way compel students to be admitted to a local coaching centre.

I hope Bangladesh Bank will make the process easy.

Anonymous, *One-mail*

Ramadan & school holidays

For the last few years we are observing that there is heavy movement of traffic in the Dhaka city during the holy month of Ramadan causing an unbearable situation for the commuters. This can be attributed to two main reasons. 1) The shopping spree

for the ensuing Eid starts right from the beginning of the month. 2) Most of the English medium schools remain open almost throughout the month. A rough estimate has it that more than 10,000 students in the English medium schools like Scholastica, Sunbeams, Sunnydale, Southbreeze, Mastermind, BIT and others move with cars to and from the school. If their movement is totally stopped during this month it will come as a big relief for other citizens. The school authorities, however, can complete their syllabus by adjusting this with summer vacation. Unless this is made mandatory by the government most of these schools will try to follow their own curriculum / academic schedule.

It has, therefore, become imperative on the part of the govt to issue notices to these schools to keep the schools closed during the month of Ramadan.

A conscious citizen
One-mail

Senator Edward Kennedy

The death of Senator Edward Kennedy has robbed Bangladesh of a great friend who came to her side in times of her need. He opposed the position of the then US President Nixon who supported the genocide launched by the Pakistani military regime. Ironically, Nixon stated in his own handwriting, "To all hands: DON'T squeeze Yahya at this time". Thus he blessed General Yahya Khan of Pakistan to continue the killings of Bangalis and to push several millions into India as refugees.

I took part in the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. In my capacity as the president of the Bangladesh Association of British Columbia (Canada), I wrote a letter to Senator Edward Kennedy in June 1971 regarding the US policy on military assistance to Pakistan. He wrote me back immediately and stated, "Thank you very much for your recent letter regarding arms assistance to Pakistan. I certainly share your dismay and concern over this violation of a self-imposed Administration embargo upon military aid to Pakistan. I am presently co-sponsoring a resolution together with Senator Charles Mathias which would ban arms assistance to Pakistan. Again, thank you for writing, and best wishes."

Subsequently, in August 1971 he visited the refugee camps in India and was deeply distressed to observe the sufferings of people. He exposed the brutality of the Pakistani military regime to

the world. Senator Kennedy visited Bangladesh in January 1972 soon after her liberation. He planted a tree at the famous "Bottola" of Dhaka University campus.

Senator Kennedy was a man of great vision. Just like the Bangladesh crisis in 1971, he opposed the US government's policy on Iraq in 2003. He was one of the very few US Senators who voted against the illegal invasion of Iraq describing it as "the wrong war at the wrong time". He was correct in assessing the situations whether it was in Iraq or in Bangladesh.

His absence will be deeply felt for a long time to come.

Dr. Shahjahan Kabir
One-mail

Indigenous children and youth

Indigenous children and youth are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations, as they often find themselves caught between their indigenous language, customs and values and those of the wider community.

Indigenous youths are vulnerable to a range of social and economic factors that affect their human rights. Indigenous youths are often forced to leave their traditional communities and move to urban areas to pursue employment or education opportunities. In the new urban environment, they are often subjected to discrimination by the wider community and denied equal opportunities in employment and education. Throughout the world, indigenous youths are disproportionately represented in youth unemployment. They may have great difficulty when they are separated from their traditional communities and live in a social environment that does not promote their participation in economic or social life. This can have devastating effects on their sense of self-worth and cultural identity and may lead to a range of serious health and social problems, such as depression and substance abuse. In many cases, indigenous youth also lack adequate access to affordable and culturally sensitive health education and health care, increasing their risk of contracting preventable diseases.

They inherit the responsibility to protect and preserve their traditional lands, resources and sacred sites upon which their cultural heritage and identity is based. However, many indigenous youths today are physically and psychologically removed from their culture and traditional life. They require special assistance so that they can regain and preserve their cultural heritage and enjoy free access to their traditional

lands and sacred sites. Continuous damage to the environment threatens the survival of many indigenous people. Because their cultural identity and heritage is inseparable from their traditional lands, the protection and conservation of the environment is a priority for indigenous youth worldwide.

We have to focus on education, health, nutrition, primary health care, basic education, safe water and sanitation, activities to protect children from exploitation, violence and abuse and rural development to improve the living condition of indigenous women as well as children.

Mohammad Rajja
Nepal Student Society, Dhaka

15 years old cars

It appears the government is being run by the car dealers of the country. They knew that import duty and taxes were going to rise before the budget was announced. So they imported a huge number of cars and released them before imposition of taxes. Customs officials worked day and night to clear the cars in time! But because of high price and economic downturn the car market is slow, at least not up to the satisfaction of car dealers. So, a new device are adopted to speed up the sale of cars. They will push the 15 years old cars off the city streets. BRTA in anticipation of such design stopped giving fitness certificate to such cars. Many such car owners deposited requisite fees including income taxes as advised by the BRTA officials.

Our officials should realize that we are not living in the period of Emperor Tughlak. It is a democratic country where rules and regulations should be in the interest of public, not certain business quarters. A car should be given fitness on its maintenance, not on age only.

The minister concerned may look into the matter immediately.

A sufferer
One-mail

Why this dress code?

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina's advice to the people, particularly government officials and executives of different offices to wear casual dresses and avoid suits from March to November to save electricity is another knee-jerk response to power management. It is not easy to control people's lifestyle. Some people always need comfort to work better. There is no holding them back. What we have to ensure is that the government officials enjoying AC are not busy looting people's money and energy.

Will the government stop beating about the bush?

Tinku
Lalpur, Natore

21st August attack

Mr. Fazlul Karim Selim, a presidium member and some other AL leaders have demanded interrogation of the former Prime Minister, her son and State Minister for Home, Minister Lutfuzzaman Babar to find out if they were involved in that gruesome killings of many AL leaders and attempted killing of Sheikh Hasina on 21st August 2004. I think they have some valid points for making such a demand.

Let us recollect the very day of occurrence. Many BNP leaders immediately after the incident came up with ready statements saying, "This is the act of AL itself, they (AL) have done it just to make an issue to discredit the BNP government". During that time parliament was in session and many BNP leaders gave similar statements in parliament in presence of the former prime minister.

Then after a day or two, the prime minister herself, being confirmed out of no investigation, in clear language told the nation in parliament, "The grenade attack was in fact, planned and executed by the AL itself."

Then came the inquiries, calling of FBI but not providing assistance, destruction of evidences immediately after the incident, inaction of police who were present at the venue, Joj Mia drama, frequent transferring of IOs etc. BNP Secretary General while commenting on the re-inquiry process, repeatedly confirmed their concern by saying that "the re-inquiry is being processed just to implicate BNP leaders in the case". How does he know that the re-investigation will find the BNP leaders and not any other persons?

Shafiqul Islam
NY

BDR carnage

Hopefully, the investigation into the BDR mutiny digs deep and identifies the root causes behind the ugly incident. Otherwise, any 'shallow' or 'glossing over' of issues will only leave the root of discontent to germinate in future! Investigation is needed into the utter failure of various intelligence units whose incompetence is one of the major, if not the only real failure in this case.

I hope the relevant authorities are aware of the serious issues involved.

Fair minded
Dhaka

Paradox of Ramadan

The blessed month of Ramadan is for Muslims to renew and practise the lesson

of siyam or restraint, in eating, drinking and other worldly affairs which give pleasure. It is a month to learn self-control. I am therefore surprised that during Ramadan food prices go up which according to economic science must be because the demand for food items go up, and although Muslims fast assiduously I have not seen anyone actually lose weight in this month by this process.

Normally, eschewing eating, drinking and merrymaking during this month should make foods items cheaper, bodies lighter, and the spirit holier.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

Horoscope

In many newspapers & magazines nowadays, horoscope ("rashifal" in Bangla) is printed. These predictions or fortune-telling may be interesting and funny to read, but everyone knows that these are baseless. They do not have the slightest connection with truth or science. How could possibly the movement of planetary bodies and stars effect the regular events in human life? Some uneducated people or distressed persons tend to believe them, giving a chance to mislead themselves.

Why should newspapers print it? Doesn't it give a chance to the people who are practising this as an occupation to earn money through cheating?

I would request the newspapers and other media not to print or propagate horoscopes, palmistry, etc because of their baseless nature.

MD. Khan
Uttara Dhaka

Our swimmers

The South Asian (SA) Games will start from the 29th January and our swimmers have already started their preparation under the guidance of their Korean Coach Park Taegun. He is guiding our swimmers as part of the agreement between Korean Olympic association (KOA) and Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA). A few days ago, we were having a walk inside the Mirpur swimming foundation and had the chance to talk with Mr. Taegun. He appeared to be very optimistic.

We think the authorities concerned should pay heed to the plight of our neglected swimmers because we truly believe that they can bring glory for us in the upcoming SA Games, if they are provided with the best available facilities.

Sheikh Iraj
Shakawat Hossain
Mirpur, Dhaka

Volleying back....

Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

Rajshahi board boss faces mayor's fury (August 31, 2009)

This is something everybody should take seriously. The parliamentary standing committees on the Ministry of Education and LGRD should move for a probe into the alleged events as stated in this report.

Shah M. Billah

If AL top leaders are not determined to keep up the image of the party, it will take them down the road to a distance that they will find it very hard to come back from. The mayor has no authority to ask the chairman for a review verbally. He could have written an application at best or gone to the court.

Habib Karim

This is certainly unacceptable and indeed an unscrupulous act on the part of the mayor. We need to change our demeanor in our dealings, behaviors with others and the political leaders should maintain that strongly as they are the public representatives. Here it clearly indicates the power and authority, which change the attitudes and behaviours.

Moreover, we did not expect

such unruly behavior from the son of a great leader.

Nasarullah

So, what is the government going to do about this?

Concerned professional

How will the ruling party save honest officials from party mayors, MPs and other influential people? This is now a question asked by millions.

Md. Abdullah

As a good father, he should not have requested the education board chairman to look into the results of his child. Our prime minister should institute an inquiry into the matter.

Nesar Ahmed

What a country we are living in! A leader is justifying his misdeeds.

Dr MA Obaydullah

This is not acceptable.

Hasan Kamrul

I would like to say that Mr Dipak was absolutely right.

P. Biswas

Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts. If the government fails to take drastic action against the city mayor, I will bring the issue to the international community.

Gopal Sengupta

Both the Awami League and the BNP are using Mujib and Zia for making political gains. Any time their corruption is challenged, they bring Zia and Mujib to cover it up.

Abdur

The Mayor's allegation is totally unethical. In a democracy it is a person's right to decide whether he/she wants to observe a day of mourning or not.

People should observe the day of mourning because they respect the person, not because they are forced to do so.

Raaef Khan

Mr. Khairuzzaman Liton is a mayor not a policeman to check whether someone was observing the national mourning day

or not. The mayor is now trying to defend himself through accusing the board chairman!

Eddo Brandis

The PM must form a committee to investigate the matter. This should not go unpunished.

Khandaker Tanvir Hossain

How long it would take before Sheikh Hasina takes some stern action against her party members? I was hopeful that change was coming in Bangladesh, but now I'm disappointed. All the same....

Sawgat Chowdhury

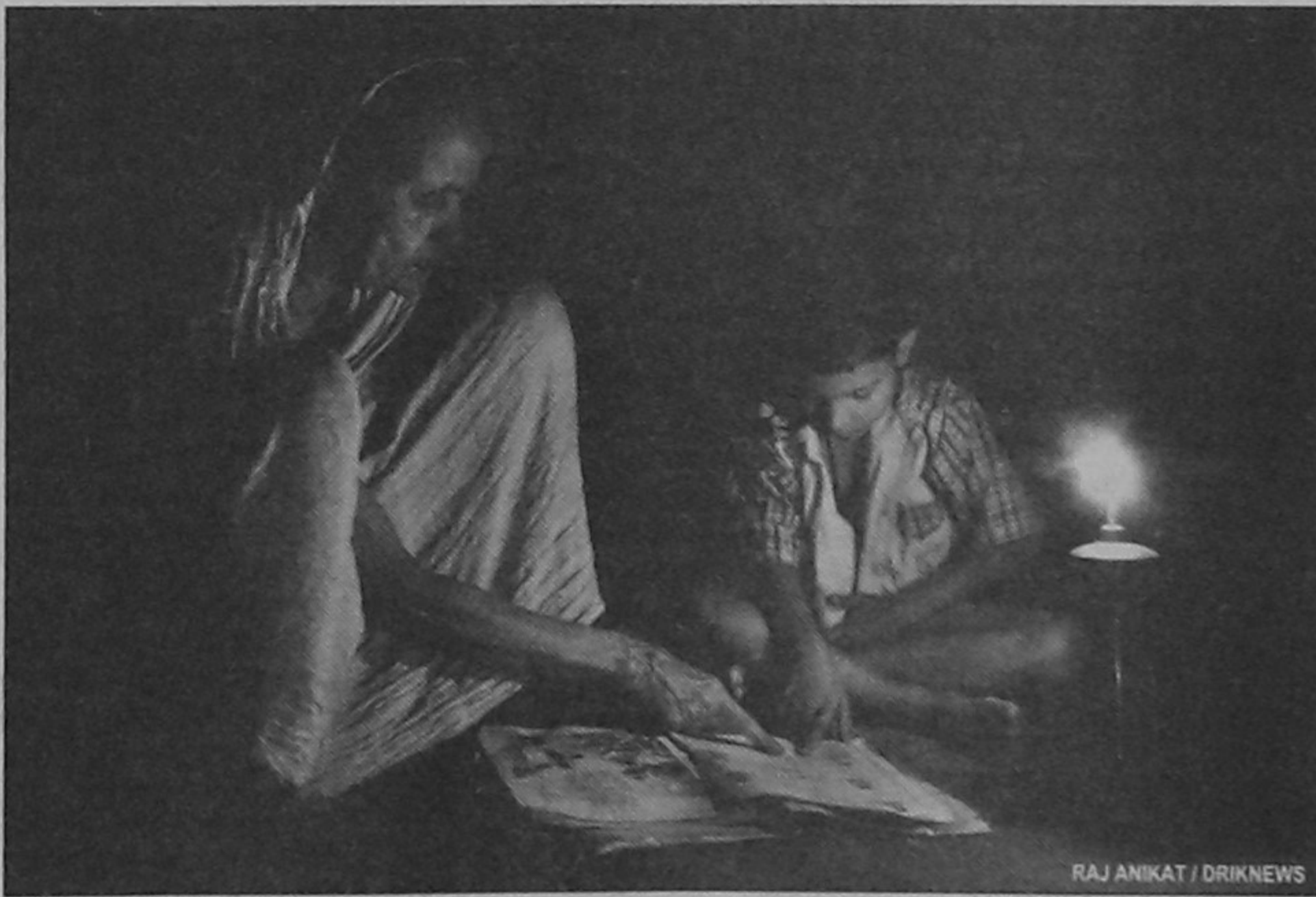
Nothing new! This time someone had the courage to say no. We need more people like Mr. Dipakendranath Das.

Jamil Ahmed

Please do not corrupt the name of Bangabandhu for personal reasons. It is quite obvious. The board chairman was absolutely fair. Hope the govt. will take necessary action against the men who intimidated him.

Dr. Alam

Rental & peaking power plants



The news was published in most dailies on the 20th and 21st August. The decision does not seem to be technically transparent as discussed below.

The proposal to have these peaking plants, using expensive liquid fuel at different dispersed locations will lead to higher costs, and in foreign exchange payments too! Instead why do we not install two units of say 400MW plants based on powdered coal steam boilers at locations near the coalmines? This would be economical and not based on imported fuel. A vital issue which must be sorted out once and for all is the rather unrealistic opposi-

tion to open pit mining, which is holding coal needed for power plant installation to ransom! Is this not the worst form of economic sabotage imaginable?

Or, is it that our transmission network is not capable to disperse the packets of power needed at different locations where the rental plants are proposed to be set up? The elected government must give all the reasons, and ensure open pit coal mining in the overall national interest for our economic development for which electric power generation is a must.

On power tariff if needed we should increase it,

possibly by 50 percent in two or three steps spread over the next two or three years at most. This will reduce the large financial burden of compensation to the power sector; which reportedly comes to Tk 3,400 crore per annum! Importantly, we must reduce power consumption and go all-out for improving electrical efficiencies of all our electric motor drives, retro-fitting it to have energy efficient motors. The necessary one time financial support for this move will be a one time national cost, providing long lasting permanent benefits!

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka