

BNP writes letter after rejoinder

Demolition

FROM PAGE 1
2. At the outset, you have described the rejoinder as "rhetorical". This is a judgement that should have been left to the reader to make.

What facts are you talking about? It is fictionalism at its worst, as much as it is libelous. On the contrary, every condemnable attempt is being made by the authorities through inhumanely torturing people under police detention, in clear violation of all civilized human behavior, to force them to give false statements implicating others, including Mr Rahman.

a few days of this, at a meeting of senior media representatives with the then Information Adviser, he is reported to have publicly taken credit for bringing this administration to office through his writings. There are credible witnesses who can testify to this. But more importantly, major newspapers of the country carried this in their edition of 29th January.

businessmen.
17. The Daily Star editor's despise for mass based political parties in Bangladesh in fact has a pattern. Indeed, at a very recent diplomatic social event he described the BNP and the Awami League as the "biggest enemies" of democracy.

ment", also mentioned that we made your rejoinder our second lead story on the front page, which no other paper ever did in the history of Bangladeshi journalism.

leaders tried to propagate about the August 21 incident did not endure.
10-20. These eleven paragraphs of the letter do not refer to our report under discussion. They only vilify the editor and restate the same allegations regarding our role during the state of emergency.

have copies of that issue. For your information, we have two archives on the Internet, not one, for the benefit of our readers. This is done for the unforeseen eventuality when a reader may have difficulty in entering any one of them. As for the print edition, even today you can buy an old copy from our office.

FROM PAGE 1
overnight back to pursue their commercial interest.

"Invariably in all the cases, greedy building owners immediately rebuild the demolished portions of the buildings and run commercial activities at car parking spaces," said Md Aminur Rahman, a Rajuk official.

It takes Rajuk a long time to go back to rectify an errant building order, he said.
Frequent stay orders by the High Court (HC) and absence of a mobile court are two foremost reasons that often render meaningless the eviction drives to retrieve car parking spaces, said Rajuk officials.

Building Construction Act of 1952 (amended in 2006), under which Rajuk carries out eviction drives, award penalty of seven years' imprisonment or a fine of Tk50,000 or both against the offenders.

But Rajuk has no legal scope to conduct a mobile court, as the law is not included in the purview of Mobile Court Ordinance 2009.

Rajuk Executive Magistrate Md Rokon-Ud-Doula said, "The penalty of instant imprisonment or fine would effectively deter the offenders from occupying car parking spaces for commercial purpose again and again."

Commenting on HC stay orders, he said it delays the process of taking action against the errant building owners.

While deviant building owners create legal tangle to stall rectification actions, Rajuk, with an ill-equipped law office, most often loses legal battles.

Rajuk Chairman Md Nurul Huda said Rajuk has only one magistrate to conduct eviction drives in 1530-square kilometre area.

"The drives would yield sustainable results if we had more magistrates" he said.

There are more than 5000 cases filed against Rajuk that has just one law officer and a panel of 100 hired lawyers.

"As a result, we lose legal battles frequently while integrity of the law officer is also questionable," said Huda.

Besides, he said, "It takes up to a year to vacate a HC stay order."

Rajuk launched a drive on October 11 on the basis of a list, recently prepared by Dhaka Metropolitan Police, of 198 buildings using car parking spaces commercially.

Rajuk knocked down fifteen shops including fast-food restaurants Western Grill in the basement of Kashba Centre and Helvetia at Alta Plaza on October 13 in Dhanmondi areas along Mirpur road.

The Rajuk bulldozer smashed around ten shops on the ground floor of Alta Plaza on road No-10 at Dhanmondi.

All of them are back with so immaculate reconstruction that one would not even believe that the structures were earlier bulldozed and hammered to the ground.

The Rajuk team tore down around one hundred and fifty crockery and readymade garment shops in the basements of Muktabangla and Baghdad Shopping Complex near Mirpur-1 intersection on October 25.

It bulldozed Khan Optics, Khurshid Optics and Grameen Optics on the first floor of Sweden Plaza, Taj Optics, Ray Ban Optics and a showroom of Race readymade garments at MM Islam Plaza.

Rajuk dismantled basement warehouses at Grand Prince Hotel and Restaurant and Rabiul Plaza.

All the demolished structures were found rebuilt and running in full swing.

Probal Community Centre, furniture shop Hatil, illegal structures on the ground floor of building No-183 on the Rokeya Sarani and some other structures were torn down on October 26 but were seen back in business by November 8.

Bidding today

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Faridpur 50 MW, and Daudkandi 50 MW. The lone gas-fired power plant will be set up at Ashuganj with 200 MW capacity.
Bidders will have to submit \$1 million bid bond for the 200 MW power plant, \$300,000 for a 100 MW plant, \$240,000 for the 70 MW plant and \$150,000 for a 50 MW plant.

3. As regards the content of your response, you have, unfortunately, once again reverted back to fictitious and ill-motivated reporting with the sole aim of tarnishing BNP's image in the mind of your readers.

4. For example, you claim to know for certain that Lutfozzaman Babar, Haris Chowdhury and Abdus Salam Pintu "were the principal actors in the plot to assassinate Sheikh Hasina". You have however breached journalistic ethics and professionalism by failing to provide any specific proof to back your definitive comment, specially, when the whole matter is still under investigation and is sub-judice. Importantly, in doing so, you have maliciously tried to influence the outcome of the whole investigative and the legal process. The country's relevant law stipulates that the accused is presumed to be innocent till his guilt is proven beyond all reasonable doubts. Let the court of law decide the matter. In the meantime, we urge you not to take up the role of judge, jury, prosecutor and the punisher upon yourself.

5. You also claim to have "verified independently" the authenticity of your source and yet you deliberately shy away from providing any further details about your source. This is not a demonstration of serious journalism. You have in fact blown to smithereens the credibility of your source, if at all there be any.

6. You reach the lowest level of basic decency when you mention Mr Tarique Rahman as being guilty when you state "facts speak for themselves".

7. This is a vile, orchestrated and motivated attempt on your part to poison people's mind about Mr Tarique Rahman, a man who himself had been subjected to Nazi style mental and physical torture while in police custody during the military backed interim administration.

8. Ethically, the least you should do now is offer an unconditional apology to Mr Tarique Rahman.

9. Investigative journalism is all about bringing well proven facts to light. One has to have the professional ability and the personal integrity to do so. Anything less would make the whole effort an exercise in immorality, as is the case here. As a corollary, we ask you to relieve us from the culture of disinformation and misleading journalism. After all, disinformation may have speed, but truth has endurance.

10. It is indeed laughable that you deny your editor's support for the imposition of the state of emergency on 11th January 2007, and the installation of the unelected and undemocratic administration of Fakhruddin two days later.

11. You will be well advised to take a look at television footage of the scenes immediately following the oath taking ceremony of Fakhruddin and his group of Advisers in Bangabhaban on 13th January 2007. The editor is seen blatantly expressing support for what happened two day earlier when he tells television channels "I support this and I will support it even more....."

I do not see any ambiguity here.

12. On 28th January, within

13. Interestingly, the Daily Star internet edition of 29th January, 2007 has gone missing from its archives. In the language of criminal investigation, this will be called destroying incriminating evidence.

14. The role of your newspaper during those dark days of emergency is known to all. Devoid of any integrity, you had a sustained policy of printing the so called confessions of political leaders, businessmen and others extracted under extreme duress. As is now clear, these "confessions" have all disappeared into the realm of concoctions of the architect of the dark plot. Are you now not equally culpable as abettors to this heinous plot? It is time for you to come out of your selective amnesia.

15. Freedom of the press entails responsibility; it is not a license to kill.

16. What is alarming is that you have not taken any lesson from your past habit of trying to influence events at the dictate of those who have total disregard for democratic values and principles. Your unholy alliance with those forces still appears to be alive. How else can you explain your being privy to "privileged document"? Just in case you have chosen to forget, may we refer to your own news item of 10th June, 2007 captioned 'Hasina should quit politics' where then Awami League Joint Secretary General and now a President member Obaidul Kader is reported to have "confessed" to the Task Force Intelligence during remand of how the present Prime Minister had received money as graft from different

17. While making such a damaging and self defeating judgment, he clearly chose to ignore the fact that both these political parties, and their top leadership, enjoy broad support among the masses, as subsequent events have proven. He also forgets that they have been elected, and re-elected, to office with popular mandate. It was no surprise therefore that his remark was met with such stony silence by others present on that occasion.

18. Obviously, your lofty claims to upholding democratic values and the rule of law are all illusive and deceitful.

19. Finally, we strongly feel that it would only be fair that you print this response in full and give it the space you have given your response. The reader must have access to all facts; it is his right to do so, as much as it is your obligation and responsibility to ensure that these do.

(Khondkar Delwar Hossain) Secretary General Bangladesh Nationalist Party-BNP

OUR RESPONSE

(Paragraph numbers refer to paragraphs of Mr Delwar's letter)

1. We are sorry that our response disappointed you. However, it would have been in the fitness of things if you, along with your "disappoint-

ment", also mentioned that we made your rejoinder our second lead story on the front page, which no other paper ever did in the history of Bangladeshi journalism.

2. You said we should have left it to our readers to judge whether your rejoinder was "rhetorical" or not. Fair enough. You termed our report "concocted", "libelous", "malicious propaganda", "far-fetched", "fanciful", "heinous fiction", etc. Shouldn't you have left it to the readers to judge as well?

3. You describe our reply as reverting back to "fictitious and ill-motivated reporting with the sole purpose of tarnishing BNP's image". Just as in the original rejoinder, so also now, you fail to point out where our reply is a "fiction". It is never our purpose to tarnish anybody's image. Their own actions do so, we only report them.

4. You say "the matter is still under investigation and is sub-judice". You contradict yourself. If something is under investigation, it cannot be sub-judice. As a lawyer you, of all people, must know it.

We reiterate here that our report was based on authentic and reliable sources, extensive interviews with police officials who investigated the case during the BNP government (but were prevented from pursuing the case properly), caretaker tenure and are investigating now, and interviews with militants who were in the know of the August 21 grenade attack, and other relevant documents. It is a great success of any reporter to unearth such documents and inform the public. All reports on Abu Ghaib prison abuse in Iraq were based on secret military and government documents that journalists secretly procured and made public, to cite only a recent example. Isn't the world better off because of that revelation? We take pride in such journalistic achievements.

5. About revealing sources of news, it is a sacred duty of journalists, editors and newspapers to protect their sources. Many reporters, editors and publishers all over the world have accepted threats, intimidation and even jail terms for refusing to reveal the sources of their stories. The case of Pulitzer Award winner Judith Miller of The New York Times may be cited who braved imprisonment for not revealing her sources on CIA leaked reports on weapons of mass destruction. The famous "Deep Throat", the most crucial source of Watergate investigation of The Washington Post newspaper in the early seventies, which caused the fall of President Nixon, was never made public.

6. We really don't understand your anger and abusive language for our use of the phrase "Facts speak for themselves" in reference to Tarique Rahman.

What is so "low" and "indecent" about this expression? Don't facts speak for themselves?

7-8. We would be happy to apologise to Mr Tarique Rahman if you could tell us what we did wrong. We have quoted the IGP, Mr Nur Mohammad, in an interview given to this paper in June 2007, where he said that Mr Tarique Rahman has been supporting Bangla Bhai's militant activities.

9. Thank you for telling us about the dangers of disinformation.

However, may we humbly ask what sort of information was it for the BNP and many of its leaders to say, over a period of several months, in public meetings and rallies, and also in parliament (where MPs are under oath) that the August 21 grenade attack was the work of Awami League itself, notwithstanding the fact that 22 of its activists died, and it almost killed Sheikh Hasina herself? What was "Joi Miah" story if not disinformation of the crudest type to misdirect the investigation? You are so very right when you say, "Disinformation may have speed but truth has endurance." That is why the "information" that your party and some of its

10. We respect your right to hold any opinion about us you wish. Our only plea would be that if those views were based on facts, then everybody would be well served.

The beauty of a newspaper is that all its work is in the written form. We can neither hide from what we say, nor can anybody attribute to us what we haven't said. Reports, articles, features and everything else can also be taken to judge the overall performance of a paper, but for policy it must be judged by its editorials. Under no circumstances can comments of its editor (which, in this case, is an incomplete sentence), taken in fragments of TV clips and also taken totally out of context, can form the basis of judgment on a newspaper.

We have invited you before, and do so again, to cite published materials in this paper to substantiate the accusations that you make about us.

We stand before the public in the written form, which is the oldest and most durable form of communication, to be judged.

We have deliberately responded to your letter in as detailed a form as possible. This we did as a mark of respect to you and your party and also to show how seriously we take your comments and how sincerely we have tried to respond to every point raised. We did so not to win any argument but to genuinely try and remove any misunderstanding that you may have about our report.

11. Here you quote an incomplete sentence of the editor totally out of context. You do not mention which TV channel broadcast it and at what time and in which programme (news, talk show, etc). Unless you specify, it is not possible for us to respond, especially when the basis of your claim is an incomplete sentence.

12. You claim that The Daily Star's editor "is reported to have publicly taken credit for bringing this administration to office through his writings". You also claim that it was widely reported in the issue of January 29, 2007 of all major newspapers. We have looked through the Ittefaq, Amar Desh, Naya Diganta, Jugantor, Samakal, New Age, Independent and UNB/BSS copies, and of course Prothom Alo and The Daily Star. Nowhere is The Daily Star editor reported to have said what you claim. We urge you to name the major paper(s) that substantiate your contention. If you fail, it will amount to your admitting that you falsely tried to denigrate this paper's editor.

13. Just because you or your staff had a problem locating the edition of January 29, 2007 in our website archives, you concluded that we were "destroying incriminating evidence". Even if the Internet edition went "missing", many libraries, archives, research institutions, and even many readers, not to mention other newspaper offices and, perhaps your own office, would

ঢাকা ইলেকট্রিক সাপ্লাই কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (ডেসকো) DHAKA ELECTRIC SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED (DESCO) (An Enterprise of Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)

"বিদ্যুৎ বন্ধের বিজ্ঞপ্তি"
ঢাকা ইলেকট্রিক সাপ্লাই কোম্পানী লিমিটেড এর সম্মানিত গ্রাহক বৃন্দের সদয় অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ডেসকোর আওতাধীন নিম্নোক্ত স্থানে উপকেন্দ্র সমূহের বাৎসরিক রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ কাজের নিমিত্তে বর্ণিত তারিখ ও সময়ে সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকা সমূহে বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ বিস্তুিত হবে।

Table with 4 columns: তারিখ, সময়, উপকেন্দ্রের নাম, যে সকল এলাকার বিদ্যুৎ বন্ধ থাকবে. It lists various substations and the areas affected by power cuts on different dates.

বিদ্যুৎ বন্ধের কারণে সম্মানিত গ্রাহক বৃন্দে সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখিত। ডেসকো কর্তৃপক্ষ