points to our failure in upholding a positive image of the nation, mainly due to unwholesome politics. As he explains, the western world is very likely to take an interest in our politics because they are also affected by the political instability of the developing nations.

Chowdhury notes our sense of being dependent on them for opinion and endorsement is very high. "For the last 42 years we have not shown any sign of political competence. We are forever running towards the western brink, asking what to do, they are suggesting because we ask. We suffer from a lack of a national self-confidence and we look towards them for solving our problems." He exemplifies that it doesn't work this way as in the 1990s, Sir Stephen Ninian from the commonwealth came to Bangladesh to mediate between the AL and the BNP, which ended up in failure.





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We have created a global image of a people who cannot manage themselves very well, adds Chowdhury. "To the international media, we don't figure as a country with political development although our economic development has received praises. But this economic growth, too, is irrational because we are not fairly paying and compensating our workers or looking after their wellbeing. Foreign buyers will obviously look for cheap labour and good material. But it is we, not them, who should ensure that our labourers get fair wages. But our garments owners are keener about keeping it inexpensive by exploiting the workers and risking their lives."

He enquires, "Do we have the courage and strength to argue against what they say? What do we have to say if they allege us of not having a rule of law? We seem to be doing well without it."

Despite all these, what keeps us running as a nation is a collective will to function amid dysfunction, summarises Chowdhury, "The west has probably categorised our areas of competence and incompetence. The executive and the legislative don't properly work here, the judiciary cannot properly handle all cases, people have least trust in them – the country is not likely to function but we are functioning. We have an increased coping skill through strengthening our social institutions; we defy political unrest by finding alternatives, for instance, shifting work to holidays in lieu of hartal days."

These observations and critical commentaries clearly articulate the fact that blaming the international media, given its nature and role, is of little use when our nation is riddled with allegations, people speckled with corruption and politics fraught with plain nonsense. The veteran journalist also observes that we have become alienated because no one listens to us anymore. "We survive despite our politics; faced with such adversity, another nation would have crashed; we have instead created a parallel world by switching to a survivalist mode," he says. That may be true, but for how long?