

# **The rise of a Mule from the ashes of a Phoenix**

## **Matiur Rahman of Prathom Alo and Matiur Rahman of Ekata**

*By Jagoruk Manush*

Time has changed. So is this world. Some changes have linkage with past. Others are so rapid, so much opposing, that past can not hold the present. And, present can not recognize the past. The latter is Mr. Matiur Rahman, the editor of Prathom Alo and a stranger to his own past. His change is no less dramatic and devastating than the change that tore Soviet Union into pieces. The reasons of such incredible change of Matiur and of Soviet are the same, 'Glasnost', 'Pestroika', and the death of communism as an ideology. When communism was in vogue globally, then Matiur was the young communist intellectual, used to live modestly in the poor suburban swath or with in-laws at Wari, splitting his time in organizing industrial workers and editing a weekly newspaper, enviably brave and enticing red "EKATA". If any staff of Ekata, may it be a proof reader or an artist, is arrested, thousands of workers, with red flag afoot from Demra and Tongi, would seize Paltan square until the staff is released. If any congenitally Razakar or Khatib would dare raise his derelict finger against 'Ekata', the razor sharp words of Matiur would crash that dirty finger at ease.

Today, time has changed, mono-centric world is evolving around free market; moral strength, honest thinking and working class are the lethal enemy of capitalism. Once friend of poor, sheathe and spade; Matiur now is a skilful designer of sceptre, throne and crown. He cultivates his intellectual seeds in Prothom Alo, the elite newspaper of civil society which is steering the country towards the graveyard of democracy. And today, when a petty staff of Matiur, cartoonist Arifur Rahman, is unlawfully yanked from Prathom Alo office by police and thrown into dungeon, Matiur,s silence dreadfully contradicts his own past. The cry of handful of religious bigots compelled his conscience to walk to Islamic Foundation together with Barrister Goebbels, propaganda machine of third military rule in Bangladesh, sit on his knees and tearfully pleading mercy and forgiveness to Razakar Khatib of Baitul Mukarram. The lustre of a glorious past thus succumbs to the lust of a glamorous present.