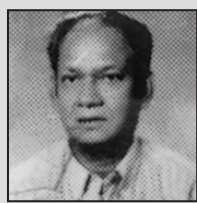


# Destabilising Turkey?



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

WITHIN one week two massive bombing incidents have rocked Turkey and the question that is being asked is: are there forces here? trying to destabilise the state. Turkey has entered a critical period of her history. In the first instance the Jewish population had assembled for their Sabbath (weekly prayers). The two synagogues are within a distance of five kilometres in the busy shopping districts of Beyoglu and Sisli in Istanbul, the largest mega city of Turkey. The death toll was around two dozen and injured ran into hundreds. Among the dead six were Jews and the rest Muslims. There was damage to property on a large scale. Condemnation poured from all over the world. The Israeli Foreign Minister rushed to the synagogues accompanied by his Turkish counterpart. The Turkish media gave it a very big coverage and commentators condemned the attack in unison. Turkish security was remarkably quick in identifying two Turks who had perished with their small trucks loaded with bombs. They had received training in carrying out suicide attacks among other places in Pakistan. In fact the Pakistan connection is too prominent to be missed. Hardly Turkey had time to look after the wounds that two suicide bombers appeared on the scene and this time targeted the British interests. Once again two small trucks loaded with bombs appeared at 9 a.m. before the British Consulate General in Beyoglu

## THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

**There is anxiety all over Turkey. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called upon his people to maintain calm. This weekend will be followed by almost a week of Eid holidays. That will be time enough to pick up the pieces. Turkey has a strong government and surely Al-Qaida or any similar outfit will be unable to destabilise the regime.**

and the skyscraper in Levent where is located the large British Bank HSBC and unloaded their deadly cargo. Among the dead was the British Consul General Short. More than two dozen perished and several hundred injured. This particular attack has taken place when US President George W. Bush has been dining at the Buckingham palace. Cutting short his visit the British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has appeared in Istanbul. After expressing routine condolences Straw has given powerful support to Turkey's great desire to join the European Union (EU). This is sweet music in the ears of the Turks. This second blow was so severe that one columnist of the largest circulation Turkish daily Hurriyet has called it Turkey's 11 September.

The targets selected believably by Al-Qaida deserve to be examined. In the first instance the target is Turkey and Israel. In Turkey there is great feeling for the Palestinians, who have been continuously massacred by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's forces. On the other hand there is considerable uneasiness among the Turks regarding the continuous growing relations between Turkey and Israel. The cooperation is going from strength to strength and is now embracing the defence field. There is great resentment among the Arabs about the growing relations between Turkey and Israel. The coming to power in Turkey of the Islamist AKP party has not slowed down the process.

In the second car bomb attack, within one week, the target is clearly

one of 10 new members of the EU. Elections are due in north Cyprus and it is a crucial election. President of north Cyprus Rauf Denktas, who has staked everything on his alliance with Turkey has been campaigning vigorously for his party. Sensing that southern Cypriots are due to join the EU, and benefit from such membership there has been genuine demands in favour of the island joining the EU as a whole. These elections, which are due on 14 December next, are likely to decide the

future of Cyprus and consequently the future of negotiations between Turkey and the EU. Turkey has set her sights on getting a date at the end of 2004 for the start of negotiations. Of the big two namely Germany and France, Germany has openly given support to Turkey. There are more than two million Turks in Germany and they too play a role in the politics of Germany. France continues to maintain Olympian silence. Britain, who does not have too much clout

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within the EU and feels somewhat isolated has thrown in her support for Turkey.

Membership of Turkey will have a major impact not only on Europe but because of the growing weight of the EU, on the world at large. If Turkey succeeds in joining the EU, she will be a formidable player with the second largest population after Germany. More importantly EU will cease to be a Christian club.

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Arshad-Uz Zaman is a former Ambassador.



# Finding Dhaka in New York

## Nathaniel Kahn's *My Architect*

ADNAN MORSHED

IT was one of those rare instances that I would call an unadulterated moment of reflective patriotism. The psychology of the expatriate revolves a great deal around the nostalgic expectations of good stuff happening to the country of origin, now so far away. So I was giddy with excitement when one clear winter morning in November my wife and I drove 250 miles to New York from Washington, DC, to see *My Architect*, a poignant feature-length documentary on the architect of our National Assembly complex: Louis Kahn. The documentary culminates in an emotional, teary-eyed homage to Kahn's masterpiece that sits majestically at the heart of the urban jungle called Dhaka.

But *My Architect* is not one of those typical architectural documentaries that grace most libraries. Conceived as a philosophical journey -- albeit through architectural means -- in search of a father long gone, it is the brainchild of Nathaniel Kahn, Louis Kahn's son, born out of wedlock. Through a probing study of his celebrated father's buildings, Nathaniel seeks to understand the complex father he rarely saw and barely knew. The result is a personal reflection on the mysterious intersection of private life and public identity.

Nathaniel Kahn was 11 years old when his father died of a heart attack in 1974 in the men's room of New York's Pennsylvania Station after a 24-hour-long flight from India. Kahn was 73 years old and deemed by many to be the greatest living American architect. Yet, with a tragic twist of fate, his body lay in the city morgue unidentified for three days because he crossed off his home address in his passport for reasons no one knows. Was he trying to hide his identity? Or was this a self-conscious nomadic statement, characteristic of a modern-day hero who, as the Hungarian philosopher Georg Lucacs puts it, purposefully remains homeless? This question mark becomes the starting point for Nathaniel's saga of filial discovery. A son, never acknowledged publicly by his luminous father, now mature and ready to ask forbidden questions about his dubious origin, embarks on a five-year odyssey across continents to look for his father in the walls, shadows, forms, and, most of all, in the silence of the buildings he designed.

Along the way Nathaniel interviews celebrated architects and planners who were influenced or repelled by his father, the various people who came in contact with him, and, most of all, the two colleagues who bore Kahn's two children, including Nathaniel himself. The archeology of personal secrets interwoven with an epic narrative of

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architecture, built or unbuilt, spread out in America, Jerusalem, Iran, India, and Bangladesh, unleash a philosophical energy that forces the audience of *My Architect* to ask myriad questions concerning human nature, creative production, and the enigma of their relationship.

Kahn never married Nathaniel's mother, Harriet Pattison, a landscape architect who collaborated with Kahn in the design of Kimbell Art Museum in Texas. When in the documentary she is asked by her son whether she still holds any grudge against her long-dead lover for not marrying her, a contemplative Pattison not only says no, but also, quite startlingly, she appears to be a woman still in love and capable of rising above petty bickering. Nathaniel himself starts off the documentary with the huge burden of his own troubled past, yet in his search he remains resolutely philosophical about the nature of conflicts between his father's private world and public persona.

But it is the film's emotional and dramatic finale, expressed through the exquisitely filmed Sangsad Bhaban of Dhaka, that resonates with a son's reflective delight in at last being able to

reconcile with his dead father. Nathaniel comes to the Sangsad Bhaban premise at dawn when the winter fog shrouds the building with a surreal blanket. It is no surprise that he chooses to see it through the bedazzled eyes of a solitary, pre-pubescent Bengali boy, a subtle reference to his own age when his father died. Nathaniel, masquerading as the little boy, stares spellbound at the great building and its reflection in the water. This is the moment that eventually freezes into the film's official poster, now dotting various places in New York City.

It was impossible not to see Nathaniel's argument that his search had climaxed, if not ended all together, at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Both the Taj Mahal and Sangsad Bhaban, Nathaniel notes, were built in 23 years, a haunting coincidence that alerts us to the universal appeal of masterpieces across ages. As he meanders inside the Capitol building with his camera, he traces his father in the silence, shade, and light that together create a mesmerizing interior space.

There, all of a sudden, Nathaniel comes across Dhaka architect Shamsul

Wares -- a beloved teacher of generations of local architects -- who delivers the film's penultimate messages that personal failings should not blind us to the genius of a great artist and that a son must seek his father not always in the father's fulfilling of familial duties, but sometimes in his philosophical contributions to humanity. The Sangsad Bhaban, Wares asserts, exemplifies nothing less than the nation's dream of democracy. Nathaniel's eyes, beaming with tears, attest to the poignancy of the statement. Both my wife's and my own father passed away in recent years. So it was futile for us to try to hide our tears, as we experienced a renewed sense of reconciliation with our fathers. Did *My Architect* become a collective father?

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Forum, we saw a long line of people waiting for the next sold-out show. Rows of *My Architect* posters featuring our own Sangsad Bhaban created a backdrop for the line, snaking beyond the urban block on West Houston Street in downtown Manhattan.

A pity our government, entrusted with the responsibility of preserving the country's cultural heritage, does not realize the singular importance of this globally admired building. Not only has its aesthetic appeal not been capitalised on to attract international "archi-tourists," but our government has also chosen to gobble up open spaces within the Kahn master plan by constructing buildings in precarious proximity to this architectural marvel, impairing the visual environment of the complex. But just blaming the government does not exonerate civil society of its failure to meet the challenges of cultural preservation. This is the contention for another day. In the interim, I wait till Nathaniel returns with *My Architect* to Dhaka where his soulful odyssey ended.

Dr. Adnan Morshed is an architect and researcher at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

## On a lighter note

# The Rugby World Cup 2003

GHALIB CHAUDHURI

IF ever there was a sporting match of a nail biting scintillating finish, then the final of the 2003 Rugby World Cup has to be one of them. It was played on Saturday 22nd November in Sydney between England and Australia, in front of a frenzied capacity crowd of eighty thousand, and a few more millions, glued around the world to their television sets.

England won, but only just in extra time and seconds to spare. The final score line was 20-17 in favour of England. Australia was devastated after breaking the record of reaching three consecutive world cup finals and being the reigning champion. Australian Prime Minister John Howard gave away the winning trophy without a flicker of a smile on his face; he was visibly upset, if not sulking.

I know this is not a game that is well known in Bangladesh, let alone have followers. Although I myself played it first in Bangladesh, at Faujdarhat Cadet College, and got hooked ever since. Many discard it as a violent game played by hooligans. Nothing can be further from the truth. I see it as a contest of ancient gladiatorial proportions but played with sophisticated and subtle rules. It is a game that sifts men from the boys. Yes, you need strength and lots and lots of it. But you need skills too. You need to be able to run fast, handle an odd shaped oval ball that bounces funny, and be able to kick it too. Two teams, consisting of fifteen each, confront each other for eighty minutes, contesting at close quarters with body and all four limbs for the possession of the ball. You score when you can drop the ball and touch it anywhere across the goal line or kick it over the horizontal bar of the goal post. To get a feel for the fitness that this game needs, try freestyle wrestling with a friend for more than five minutes, you may just about get your breath back. What may seem madness on the field, actually is played within very tight rules, with each team working out a detail strategy, tactics, set piece and above all teamwork. Sublime symphony at its sporting best.

Now, back to the match itself. In terms of a win it was of a historical proportion for England. The last time anything remotely similar happened was when England won the football world cup and that was -- wait for it, back in 1966. So you can imagine how the nation must have erupted with the victory, a crowning moment specially when all the other team sports are doddering at the fringes.

The final started with a spectacular try (ball touched down across the goal line -- accounting for five points) by the Aussies, a beautifully choreographed, in-play set piece. Wallabies as they are affectionately called, looked formidable, keeping posses-

## OUR TAKE

# Thoughts on leadership

ZAFAR SOBHAN

PEOPLE get the government they deserve, it is said. We are a democracy, after all, and perhaps the most painful realisation that we do not want to admit to is that our governments have been freely elected since 1991 and reflect who we are more accurately than we would like to think.

Maybe the problem isn't so much with our political leadership as we so fondly believe but in us as a nation. Maybe, instead of blaming our political leaders for all our miseries, we should look in the mirror and come clean as to our own complicity in the unsatisfactory state of our nation's politics.

We all know what we would want in our elected leaders. We all know what the problems of governance in Bangladesh are. Our aspirations and ambitions are not so very different and if you were to ask a cross-section of the population what needs to be fixed in the country, you would see a fair amount of unanimity of opinion.

Different people may have their different pet issues and might choose to emphasize some issues more and others less, but by and large, people want the same thing both for themselves and for the country.

We would like to see corruption curtailed. We would like to see law and order prevail. We would like a functioning system of justice. We would like better infrastructure. In short, we would like the government to provide us with the kind of services that we have been led to believe government should be in the business of providing.

Notice that the above -- and it's a very short list which can be expanded almost at will -- cuts across ideological boundaries. There are other issues upon which people of good conscience can and do disagree fiercely -- whether to export gas to India, how to or indeed whether to privatise nationalised industries, how to or indeed whether to deregulate the economy, what should our relationship with India be like, what percentage of the budget should be devoted to development etc.

Again, this list can be expanded indefinitely and I am not suggesting that there is some kind of political consensus in the country on all issues of economics and politics.

But we all pay lip service to the former list. Where is the public official or private citizen who will boldly proclaim that he is actually in favour of corruption or bad roads or unsafe water or intermittent electricity? So there is a fair deal of consensus -- enough for what should at the very least be a working consensus.

The point I am trying to make here is that if we believe all these things then why do we continue to elect representatives who resolutely fail to deliver on matters that are of important to us. And I don't want to hear that it is the fault of this party or that party. Again, we can disagree on which party is more corrupt and which provides government services more efficiently etc. But no one can argue with a straight face that either party has much of a record to be proud of.

The fact of the matter is that we do have the power to change things. It is within our capability. We talk about the need for new political leadership, but the fact remains that we do have leaders who might be able to deliver for us better than our existing leadership -- we just don't tend to vote for them.

Political leaders do not arise in a vacuum. There is a context for everything. Perhaps the quality of Bangladesh's elected leadership tells us more about us than it does about them.

Zafar Sobhan is an Assistant Editor of The Daily Star.

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tion of the ball and playing in the opponents' half. This lasted for about ten minutes, when England came back with a vengeance by keeping possession of the ball and winning penalty kicks (grant of a unopposed kick and if hit over the horizontal bar accounts for three points). England fought back with grit and stony determination and the score moved on to 9-5 in favour of England after been granted three penalty kicks for handling errors by the Australians. Then just before half time, came a skilful running try for England by Robinson, initiated and created by their indomitable No8, Lawrence Dallaglio, and the kicking maestro Johnny Wilkinson, taking the score to 14-5.

The 2nd half was another story, England looked tired and started to make handling errors, the Wallabies took advantage and started to catch up with the England lead. In the 79th minute with a minute to finish and England lifting the Rugby World Cup, the score stood at 14-11, the Aussies were three short of a draw, which would give them a new life line through twenty minutes of extra time. Lo and behold they get a penalty kick which they also convert on the 80th and final minute of regulation time to level with England. The game moved on to extra time, ten minutes each way.

At the first half of extra time, England took the lead by three points through an award of a penalty kick. The second half of extra time, Australia equalised through yet another penalty kick. The score stood at level again, and

the game looked almost certain to go for a further extra time, inflicting the cruel sudden death rules, when the play stops as soon as someone scores. No body wanted that. The penultimate minute, the clock showed 19 minutes of extra time has been played, one more minute to go before the sudden death rule would kick in. England had possession of the ball and was in Australian territory, there was really no time for a try, but the whole of England suddenly felt certain what the final move for England had to be, it was now or never. The kicking maestro Johnny Wilkinson had to take charge, and sure enough, the ball got passed back to Wilkinson and the rest, as they say, is history. England won by a drop goal (a kick performed by first dropping the ball to the ground) with 28 seconds to spare. If you can't call this thrilling, you are not a man of heart!

This was a match befitting a world cup final that usually are a disappointment, as they rarely live up to the hype. England went into the tournament as favourite and reigning world numero uno. But failed to live up to its reputation in the earlier games and soon lost their position of favourite. They showed their first flash of brilliance when they beat France at the semi's to move on to the final. And then they produced this extraordinary game that legends will be made of, for years to come.

Ghalib Chaudhuri, a former investment banker, is managing partner of Octavian Associates, an independent consulting practice based in Singapore.



English fly-half Johnny Wilkinson kicking the winning drop.

PHOTO: AFP