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Phulbari issue

Do not understand why the government allowed the situation to drift so far, where some innocent lives were taken in such a cruel way. It's a development project and a huge FDI in a neglected area. Many people got undue benefit from the controversial Barapukuria and Madhyapara projects. The environmentalists and ultra leftist intellectuals remained silent but they instigated innocent people against AEC in Phulbari project while relevant government agencies approved the environmental issues. The victims are innocent villagers and not those talk talkers.

In Australia environmentalists are opposing an 11 billion dollar gas development project in Barrow Island, Western Australia. The island is category 'A' Natural Reserve and has many endangered species like flat-back turtles, wallabies, many different types of rare birds etc. EPA initially rejected the project jointly mooted by Chevron, Exxon-Mobil & Shell. But the Australian government and opposition politicians realising the benefit of the project have joined the chorus of support and the project goes ahead.

AEC project benefits can be easily evaluated and stringent environmental requirements can be meticulously implemented to derive the benefit of the huge FDI. The loss of lives could also be avoided.

Saleque Sufi, Melbourne, Australia



PHOTOS: AFP



Hair controversy

Hair said that the decision, which he later withdrew, was not spontaneous, a spur of the moment thing. He said, "This correspondence (regarding \$ 50,000.00 for early retirement) was composed at a very difficult time and was revoked by him after a period of serious consideration." Could Hair not have revoked his decision similar to this and taken to the field for the greater interest of the game which he advocates so vehemently?

The Pakistan team returned to the field at the request of the ICC match referee, but the game did not proceed because the umpire chose to stick to the law. Now the ICC is charging Inzy for the game abandonment as Hair chose to stick to his decision. Should not Mike Procter be also charged for insisting that the game goes on, despite the fact that the umpires had closed it?

Throughout his 14 years of umpiring career, Darrell Hair has invited controversy with wrong



decisions which he stubbornly upheld. It has been that way from his very first match, between Australia and India at Adelaide in January 1992 which was "marred by controversy over lbw decisions. Eight times Indians were given out, while all but two of their own appeals were rejected." But that was only the start of things; in 1995 Hair became embroiled in the row that made him a household name in Sri Lanka.

On the first day of the second Test between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Hair no-balled Muttiah Muralitharan seven times in three overs for chucking. This was despite the fact that Hair was at the bowler's end, rather than at square leg, from where an umpire would ordinarily study a bowler's action.

Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga was so incensed by Hair's actions that he took his team off the pitch, although - unlike Pakistan on Sunday - they returned

shortly afterwards. The other umpire that day, New Zealander Steve Dunne, had no problem with Murali's action when he was brought on from his end. Dunne also pointed out that the rules stated that any suspect action should be reported to the ICC which should rule a bowler's action legitimate or not. Hair refused to back down, despite the rules and went on to describe Murali's bowling action as "diabolical".

Prior to the Murali mayhem in Melbourne in January 1993, at Adelaide Hair was heavily criticised for his wrong decision of giving Craig McDermott out, caught behind, as Australia were denied a record-breaking win over the West Indies. At the same ground a year later, South Africa's Peter Kirsten was incensed by a series of wrong lbw decisions from Hair, eventually prompting an outburst which cost Kirsten 65% of his match fee.

Again in another incident Pakistan team were angered by Hair's decision to refer a run-out call involving captain Inzy to the third umpire, despite the skipper only being out of his ground because he was taking evasive action. In the same Test, Hair warned opener Salman Butt for running down the middle of the pitch, sent him back to the striker's end and gave him out lbw next ball. When he was appointed for the third and fourth Tests in England this summer, the Pakistan management privately expressed their disappointment and was promptly punished by Hair on the first morning of the third Test when he refused to give Kevin Pietersen out when he appeared to clearly edge a Shahid Nazir delivery to the wicketkeeper.

Hair has been guilty - at best - of stubborn intransigence, and at worst of bias against Asian players due to his superiority complex. Ranatunga after Sunday's fiasco at the Oval said, "Hair is a misfit in today's cricket because he acts in a high-handed manner whenever he officiates, his body language says everything." He should be removed immediately from the elite panel of umpires.

An elite umpire is one who records the least mistakes on the field and one who has the confidence of both the teams of being fair for the greater interest of the game. Hair falls far short of this criterion.

If Pakistan did not cheat I think it was perfectly reasonable for them to refuse to continue playing a match that had been unfairly and unreasonably brought to dispute by just one unreasonable man who is ready to let the spirit of cricket go to dogs for \$50,000.00 for the post he holds.

Mahmoodul Haque Gulshan, Dhaka

Story of Rina

As I read the story of Rina and her father's reunion I felt like I was reading a fairytale. I am a regular newspaper reader and very much concerned about our country. Reading about murder, corruption and all sorts of crimes every day makes a person mentally depressed. Therefore, I would love The Daily Star to take another great step and report positive stories on a regular basis in the front page. It helps a person to start a day in good mood.

I wish Rina and her father all the best as well as her sister who they have yet to find.

Tareque Islam IUB, Dhaka

Congratulations!

Congratulations, Roney & Mithu. You have saved Bangladesh from the blunders. You have pulled up Bangladesh from the black hole of failure. You're our heroes.

Please don't be smug with your success; you have the potential to do well at the Asian level. Try hard; we are eagerly waiting for the national anthem tune in Asian Games.

Solaiman Palash East Jurain, Dhaka

Retirement age

According to a report published in a Bengali daily, a decision is about to be taken in the parliamentary committee on the retirement age of government employees. But the daily was unable to follow up the report in details. I think if the government increases the retirement age by 1-3 years, the nation will be benefited through better services from highly experienced officials and employees.

Jahid Hossain, On e-mail

Extra fare charged by drivers

Auto rickshaw and cab drivers charge extra money from the passengers in addition to the bill shown on the meter. They just force the unable-to-do anything passengers to pay extra money. They take advantage of the helplessness of the commuters.

The drivers never bother about the passengers but make an excuse for taking the extra amount.

On behalf of the sufferers, I would like to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to this illegal practice.

Fatima Zannat Mohua Bangladesh University of Business & Technology (BUBT) Mirpur, Dhaka

Little rainfall

Bangladesh has experienced very little rainfall this year in the monsoon months - a record minimum in 25 years. There was virtually no flooding which was essential for crops, irrigation, recharging of ground water table, navigability etc. We expected heavy shower in the months of 'Ashar' and 'Sraavan'. But nature eluded our suffering country. It drove all the monsoon clouds to Burma, parts of India and Thailand.

Rajshahi and Chittagong region suffered 40% less rainfall compared to the previous years. A severe drought may hit the country. Could it be an ominous sign of nature's displeasure or wrath of God?

SNM Dhaka

Our peacekeepers

Despite a lot of bad things we say I am happy and proud of my nation providing 2,000 peacekeepers. This reflects not only strongly the image of our country, but also gives us coverage in the international media.

Cheers to the govt! Mohammed Shadman On e-mail

Milk Vita price

It is learnt from a reliable source that Bangladesh Milk Producers Cooperative Union Ltd., a govt. controlled enterprise, is going to increase the price of its prime product, Milk Vita liquid milk, by Tk 4/- per litre from the present price of Tk.30/- per litre with effect from September 1, 2006. It is worthwhile to mention here that in remote places of the country milk is easily available at a price of Tk 16/- to 18/- per litre. By collecting from its different units and processing in its own plants Milk Vita Company sells the liquid milk to the consumers at Tk. 30/- per litre which is considered an exorbitant price. If the price of Milk Vita is increased the other producers of the same product will follow suit. Naturally the price of liquid milk and other allied products will increase substantially.

While the government is trying to bring down the prices of essential commodities, some vested quarter is trying in various ways to foil it. The proposed price increase of Milk Vita liquid milk is one of the examples of such attempts, especially at the fag end of the tenure of the present government. Moreover, the holy month of Ramadan is beginning shortly. I think the government should resist such attempts to protect the interest of the general consumers.

As a general consumer, I would like to draw the attention of the Honourable LGRD Minister to the issue.

M. K. Alam Pabbi, Dhaka

Why warrant of arrest?

I was shocked to learn through the media that the court straightway issued the warrant of arrest against five illustrious personalities of the country over the trifling issue of a defamation suit filed by the Bol Chairman, Mr. Mahmudur Rahman.

Our question is, what made the court issue warrant of arrest instead of summoning the eminent citizens? If the court has acted as per the law and there was no scope of issuing summons, then it was another matter. If not, and the court had the options of discretionary power, then people might ask why it had to resort to the extreme measure.

Here comes the big question of separating the judiciary from the executive, and unless it is executed people will remain deprived of basic justice and human rights. No wonder, successive governments came and went but their promise of addressing this basic issue remains a promise only.

The present government is no exception. A.B.M. Zakaria Middlesex, UK

No longer a gentlemen's game

After Hair's hairy incident at the Oval, cricket has ceased to be a gentlemen's game. A gentlemen's game needs to be officiated by the "gentlemen" umpires, and not by officials who show favouritism to the "first world" players and discriminate against the "third world" players.

The ICC needs to change its historical colonial mindset by getting rid of umpires

who still act like colonial masters. It's the 21st century, and there is no place in cricket for umpires who are still living in the colonial past.

Time has come to move ICC headquarters to the east! A.S. Khan USA

BNP's policy

Today the BNP lost one of its biggest supporters and apologists - ME... While I understand that my one vote probably may not count for much in the upcoming elections, but we supposedly live in a democratic country, and it is my right and privilege as a concerned Bangladeshi citizen to openly criticise what I feel to be just plain wrong in the ruling party's decision. For the past 13 years, I have lived in the United States, and watched the political playing field in my country from afar, but in my heart and in my mind, I have always kept its interests and image at the top. Today, I feel a sense of trepidation, coupled with anger towards BNP's shenanigans. The main trigger event for this has been the inclusion of former president Ershad into its alliance for the upcoming elections. One of the main reasons that in the past I have refrained from supporting the AL, has been because I always felt to some extent an element of hypocrisy in the AL's actions. With this decision by the BNP, they have now proven what many other people have always said, but I always refused to agree with, that they're no different. After spending almost nine years from 1982 to 1991 trying to bring down the Ershad government, on charges of corruption, and ineptitude, it does not bfit the BNP to ally itself with Ershad. If that is what it takes for BNP to win in the elections, it is just plain wrong. And now, with some of the senior members of the BNP complaining, they're going to remove those members from the party. What kind of democracy is that, where you are forced to comply with every decision of your party, fall in line or be forced out? How is this different from President Bush's "You're either with us or against us" statement? While the BNP joined forces with the Jamaat and other religious fundamentalists, and then slowly made every concession to their junior partners in the past five years, slowly but surely eroding our standing as a secular nation, I kept quiet, and even apologised for them in my discussions with others. When everyone around me questioned the ethics of the party, and branded it as being corrupt at the very top, I made apologies for them. When people accused the BNP of protecting and giving shelter to its own miscreants and other anti-social elements, while beating and rounding up those of other parties, I sat back and watched. But I cannot any longer. To those of you who care about this party, and care about the country, I say to you, it is time we stopped making excuses for its misdeeds and inaction. I can no longer accept the paradigm that "You have to do what you have to, to ensure victory, if we do not take these actions, the opposition will."

Today, you have lost my vote and my support, BNP. Asif Shah Mohammed Vanderbilt University

Demise of a hope It has taken one life to be wasted in a tragic way to make us aware of the problems that the female students face while they come to the university. But is the society aware of the many silent sufferers or victims who carry this agony with them for the rest of their life?

Inspired and inspiring Nazrul

To evaluate Nazrul it is not wrong to say that Bangla literature has progressed to a great extent with the emergence of such a great figure in the literary sphere. Without him the Bangla literature would have been incomplete. It is believed that after Tagore it was Nazrul who for the first time introduced several new trends that have contributed a lot to upholding the features of Bangla literature.



If we look at his literary works, we will find the evidence of his craftsmanship in almost all the branches of literature. That is why Sharatchandra Chatterjee considered him the best poet after Tagore. As a poet, musician, playwright, novelist, journalist, actor, director, and short story writer he achieved great accomplishment. The influence of Nazrul on our social, cultural and political life is very much acute and unavoidable.

His voice was always high in favour of the suppressed, oppressed and exploited people. He made the life of colonial rulers difficult with his pen. As a result, he was imprisoned and one of his books was banned.

No doubt he is irreplaceable, his timeless and matchless works are the source of inspiration and exuberance to all of us. Kazi Abubakar Siddique Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT) Mirpur, Dhaka

immediately address the issue. Md Nazmul Huda International Islamic University Chittagong

Voter's dilemma

Vote to elect whom? I think we all know that the candidates are almost the same, as we have seen in the last 35 years. What have we got or learnt from them? We got a poor economy, poor society, poor policy and learnt to do everything for our own benefits only. I don't need to explain that. People know well about the works done by our so-called patriotic leaders. Then whom should we vote for?

But still we are dreaming, hoping that someone will come to rescue us, a true leader having great love for this poor country. I am waiting for that day. Shaw IUB

BSF atrocities

The killing of innocent people by the Indian BSF and the inaction of the Bangladesh government raise some relevant questions. What the people in the foreign ministry are doing to stop the killings of our citizens by the Indian BSF?

Look at the responses of other countries when their citizens are killed or kidnapped. The state machinery is used to protest and free their citizens. Bangladesh can at least summon the Indian High Commissioner and protest the activities of the BSF. Unfortunately, this is never done.

The foreign ministry must explain why it is doing nothing in this respect.

Mamun Ahmed Las Vegas, NV, USA



Sri Lanka is embroiled in a bloody conflict. It has been a major problem for nation building and peacekeeping in Sri Lanka. And there is yet no solution in sight.

Even the role played by other countries could not help Sri Lanka bring back peace. The two communities which are fighting each other should see reason and end the war in the greater interest of their country. Mortuza Dhaka University



PHOTOS: AFP