

On to a Prosperous New Year, Hopefully

Bengali people all over the world, especially those of us in Bangladesh, will celebrate today the beginning of the Bangla New Year...

It was the great Mughal Akbar, the pioneer of new thinking in so many areas, who in 1556 A.D. introduced the Bangla calendar...

While the utility and international appeal of the Christian calendar will be there, yet it can never replace the impact of the Bangla calendar in the heart and minds of our people...

Nobody should see any contradiction in our wanting to use more and more the Bangla calendar and our desire to become a part of the international world...

The century, the last year of which begins today, saw the Bengali people acquiring the intellectual maturity to think for themselves...

On the occasion of welcoming the new year — the year that stands as a bridge between the passing away of a century and the coming of a new one — we wish our people peace, tranquility and growth...

Finally, we wish our patrons, readers and the people of Bangladesh a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Woes of Foreign Students

There appears to be a serious breakdown in communication between a group of foreign students in Bangladesh and their academic institutions...

Without obtaining the version of the unidentified institution where the foreigner is currently studying, it is hard to say what has brought about what may well be more than a breakdown of communication...

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A leading Pakistani daily has said what the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would have done if it did not have Pakistan to blame for India's troubles...

The BJP's tactics are understandable. After failing in its campaign of vilification against the Indian Muslims, the party had to pick up an issue that would have overtones of the Muslim problem...

Sixteen people are said to have confessed that they were trained in Pakistan; they have supposedly mentioned the name of training places. They have also allegedly said that the task entrusted to them was to arrange a series of bomb blasts throughout India...

These are disturbing revelations, if true. Since they come in the wake of India-wide belief that Pakistan is helping militants in Punjab and Kashmir, the allegations have gained credibility...

Leave Advani's allegation aside, New Delhi and the central ministers said within three days of the blasts that the needle of suspicion was directed towards Pakistan...

I HAVE found S M Ali's article on "Non-partisan Experts Left Out in the Cold" (The Daily Star, 8.4.93) very interesting. Clearly Mr Ali has used the term 'non-partisan' in a party political context and I shall use it the same way in this write-up...

Notwithstanding differences among political parties from ideological and policy planning points of view, it is of crucial importance that there is a broad consensus in terms of goals and basic stands on major issues such as the establishment of rule of law, democratization of the society, poverty alleviation, the on-going privatisation and globalization of the economy...

In this context, it is extremely important that the government and opposition political parties are well informed about the realities, options and costs, without which neither consensus nor concerted efforts can be generated. Hence, the politicians in power and those in opposition must cast their net wide and interact with intellectuals in various fields and of different persuasions...

This lack of interaction is in fact a manifestation of a deep rooted malaise in the society, which may be termed as vested-interest based divisiveness, that militates against any consensus building process as individuals and groups ruth-

The Bitterness of Indo-Pak Relations

The disturbing part is the campaign India is articulating towards naming Pakistan as a terrorist state. Why are we trying to queer the pitch? The point at issue is not India versus Pakistan but India versus the Memons. Let it stay at that.

of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, when informed, was effusive. True, Islamabad's track record has been far from satisfactory. The persons who hijacked an Indian Airlines plane were sentenced to death by a Pakistan special court nearly three years ago but there has been no follow up...

The Memons and their accomplices — Pakistan has given a list of 13 — may well be in that country. However, the question to be asked is whether the government theory of Pakistani hand is as clearly established as is being projected. Their escape to Pakistan does not ipso facto mean it is responsible for the action. Suspicions, however serious, should be proved before Dinesh Singh, Pawar and such other government leaders make the charge...

The Indian foreign office has itself goofed off on tracking the culprits. The Bombay blasts took place on March 12. The passports of Memons and others are cancelled on March 22 and the Pakistan High Commissioner is summoned on the March 23 afternoon to locate them. What he is given is the photostat copies of pictures of the six culprits and the antecedents of their passports. There were no other details.

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Some Comments

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To the Editor...

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Let's be true Muslims

Sir, It seems Muslims today, all over the world are a most harassed and oppressed group of human race. It has often caused me immense agonies and left me probing with a series of unanswered conflicting questions.

Being a Muslim (do I dare say with humility and suspicion), I often feel angry as to why God's 'chosen followers' are in a state in which they are now. Surely the time has come for us for an intensive soul searching and self-critical analysis.

The Muslim Ummah is too vast. Yet as a Bengali Muslim (one who has lived over 10 years in the then West Pakistan with a brother still living in Pakistan as a Senior Pakistani bureaucrat), I wish to make a few observations. Strange and unacceptable as it may seem to many, I look for no rewards or retribution, since the views are my very own. Yet I shall consider my efforts worthwhile if I am able to even as much arouse the curiosity of a few.

Bangladesh and Pakistan of today were a single nation only twenty years ago. The sub-

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