

JMB's Resettlement Issue

The much-awaited Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (JMB) is having human resettlement... The matter needs addressing very seriously...

There are indeed two sides to this issue. The one or a created one... We would like to know if we would be consulted or lectured the site for their ion and rehabilitation in be quite intriguing...

We do sympathise with the people who have to undergo the trauma of losing their ancestral homes... The important issue is to provide for an attractive and livable place...

Unmitigated Brutalization

With the might of the Russian military prowess turned on tiny Chechnya, the unfolding scenario of brutalization upon a freedom-loving populace...

The Russian airforce planes are dropping bombs to checkmate the southward movement of Chechen fighters from Grozny; mines are all around as an entrapped population anxious to move out to safety slide deep into total helplessness...

We don't understand why the UN security council is still silent when this war bears all the signs of an escalation not only in Chechnya but also in the Caucasus region...

Basically a Russian restraint is called for in Chechnya in the light of its failure at the CIS summit to get the member-republics to agree on common borders and a unified defence strategy...

How Dare They Do It?

The savage mistreatment of the Kuwait Airways staff with Bangladesh-born US national of a lady passenger, Leena Jamali, is an eye-opener incident on many counts.

The lone woman's handbag and purse having been checked thrice and cleared by the securitymen, she went up to her seat in the aircraft when came another round of rummaging of the same by the pilot in association with some crew members...

She was then ordered out of the aircraft and a notice was slapped on 249 other passengers cancelling the flight altogether for 15 straight hours in what was obviously a duffer-like rage that few people are capable of.

In the fall-out, despite provocations from the Kuwait Airways men and their embassy officials, the latter allegedly assaulting one of our aviation officials, the local civil aviation people acted appropriately...

The Kuwait Airways officials' adamancy after their crude misbehaviour with Leena is highly deprecable. This is against service sector norms in a sophisticated business where courtesy is at a premium because of options for other airlines...

Earlier, we had published stories about KLM official tearing off the passport of a Bangladeshi passenger or a passenger offloaded for no good reason. This misbehaviour pattern of some foreign airlines has to change.

IMMENSE discussion has taken place and a good deal has been written in the media about the prevailing political impasse centering on the mode of the next general election. The political parties have played their maneuvers...

National Objective Clearly the national objective is to achieve a credible national election to constitute the next Parliament. This is essential for continuous democratic governance and pursuit of party politics under acceptable norms...

Who should conduct the Election The most pressing and contentious issue is who should conduct the next national election. Normally, it should not be an issue, the sitting government should have the right and responsibility to do it...

Current Political Impasse - a Wayout Possible with Clear Thinking

by R.H.Khandker

The question should be what are the possible alternatives to this constitutional and conventional authority to run elections. The opposition parties have demanded election under a neutral caretaker government...

Need for Constitutional Amendment All the alternatives discussed above, apart from a government formed with sitting MPs, will require amendments to the Constitution. The Constitution does not provide for a caretaker government...

The position has changed with the Prime Minister's offer to resign before the national election. The BNP appears to be favourably disposed to holding an election under the supervision of the President...

If BNP does not insist on presiding over the election and does not intend to influence the outcome, it has no moral ground to refuse to go for an election under a neutral caretaker government...

The opposition parties have already accepted the principle of having the incumbent President as the head of a caretaker government. There should therefore be no objection to his heading a government of officials...

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The Law Minister attempted and then withdrew a bill to bypass the requirement of voter ID. Even if BNP intends to hold by-elections to fill the vacancies of the 147 resigning MPs...

The Wayout I am not a lawyer. The argument put in the preceding section may not be valid in the legal sense. Whether it is valid or not, there is no doubt that the only possible way out is, in a logical order, the following:

(1) reach an agreement on the form of a non-party government to preside over the election, composed of either neutral non-official personalities or officials under an executive President (2) withdraw the resignations of the opposition MPs to restore the full house of the Parliament...

Accepting resignations of the opposition MPs should not be an issue, it will only block the path for a solution to the impasse. The withdrawal of the resignations following an immediate consensus on the form of non-party government can perhaps still be achieved...

The writer is an economist and a former senior official of the Planning Commission and UNDP.

Politics, Economics and Development: Indian Perspective

Arun Ghosh writes from New Delhi

Economic development cannot be considered apart from the social and political development of the country. India needs a decent, decentralised polity for the economy to flourish.

RECENT developments in India, especially over the past couple of years, appear to indicate the futility of seeking purely economic explanations, as well as solutions to the problem of India's economic development. This is exemplified by a point made recently by a friend high up in the planning Commission hierarchy...

The point was well expressed, for I was discussing two developments: first, the sudden decision to privatise telecommunication services by giving franchises to private (foreign) bidders in the 18 telecom circles into which the country is divided...

To the Editor

To resolve the crisis Sir, That under Article 7(2) the Constitution of the country is the solemn expression of the Supreme Will of the people and Supreme Law of the Land and we are to abide by, and maintain the sanctity of the Constitution...

The truth is that the common people of this country have enormous wisdom. That wisdom was demonstrated in 1977, in 1980, and again in 1989. In 1985, after the assassination of Indira Gandhi, and again in 1991, after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the electorate was swayed by emotion...

We need, therefore, to reassess the political framework of economic development. And, in that context, we need to take note of two important desiderata. The first important point to note is the viewpoint of the upcoming generation, the generation born after the founding of the Republic of India in January 1950...

The news that Arjun Singh, a senior minister of the Union Cabinet has resigned, two of the several grounds being, (a) that the recent liberalisation efforts have in effect become liberalisation of corruption, and (b) that there is no inner democracy within the ruling party...

prosperity of the outside world (and of some people within the country) through the TV screen, a generation that is not able to comprehend many things (including the reasons for the backwardness of this country), also a generation that is very largely a deprived lot, mired in ignorance, in ill-health and disease, in poverty, in miserable living conditions...

The second desideratum is a fall-out of the first, coupled with the social milieu fostered by the dominant political interests today; a world of crass selfishness, of corruption, of lack of ethical values, of self before everything. The result is cynicism, and contempt for moral principles among large segments of youth...

Psychiatrists say a young woman chooses a lover who is the image of her dad - except for the traits in him she dislikes most. "Like heat-seeking missiles we will almost certainly find partners who treat us much as our parents did," says Dr. Harville Hendrix, author of Getting the Love You Want...

Reaching it involves a voyage of self-discovery and damage-limitation, of overcoming hurts and insecurities. For many, the voyage will start with a Valentine card. The original notion of what Valentine's Day stood for has now virtually been lost. A learned few still associate the day with the Roman saint who was imprisoned for his beliefs...

It's Chocs A Way as the 1,725th V-day Approaches

by Nicola Cole

Acres of red roses, tonnes of gift-wrapped chocolates, Champagne by the bucket - all these and more will be tactically deployed by those with the wit to woo as February 14 Valentine's Day approaches. A Gemini News Service correspondent muses on a festival almost as old as love itself...

RED roses, Champagne or a year's supply of best Belgian chocolates - as St Valentine's Day approaches for the 1,725th time, all come close to topping the charts for favourite February 14 enticement.

With V-day in view, it's chocs away to the tune of about 100 million tonnes worldwide - with mint the most popular flavour (it is said to be as potent an aphrodisiac as powdered rhino horn).

Champagne is also a first choice with romantics - and not just because it is traditionally "the wine of kings and king of wines". An ardent, anonymous suitor has given us this tribute: "Chocolates may be sweeter, but champagne is quicker. French and American men pour more bubbly into their womenfolk than any others - a key part of the more than 150 million bottlefuls they buy every year."

Valentine cards - lace-decked Victorian ones that bear charming couplets like "May love your footsteps sweetly tend/And guide you ever, dearest friend" now fetch up to \$250 apiece.

A more recent example, sent by actress Marilyn Monroe and inscribed "My heart belongs to daddy, but I love you tonight", netted double that sum not long ago.

Such gifts instantly establish the giver as someone of taste and wealth, and wealth can be as big a turn-on as power - even bigger than love itself, if you can believe surveys suggesting many couples put cash before passion in marriage.

Put it this way: the gold rush isn't over yet. For every dozen maidens modestly insisting it is his charm, his smile, his personality or his sense of humour that are the knock-outs, there is one ruthless realist thinking: "Be an angle, Valentine honey, skip the card, send me money."

For better or worse, she'll get what she wants: a hunk with a heart-of-gold and a matching bank account. "Nature has wired us for one special person," says psychologist Arithony Walsh of Idaho's Boise State University in the US; if we fall to find the perfect partner, our brain circuitry goes on hunting for the best alternative. When all the right bells ring, we're hooked.

NICOLA COLE is a British freelance writer who has worked for The Times of London and the London bureau of The Australian.