

Costly Insecurity

People of Chittagong City can be blamed for reacting in a frenzied manner to the recent high incidence of child-lifting.

So, why should some Chittagongians be beating innocent persons on this score? Not that they enjoy inflicting cruelty on an innocent victim.

That by taking the law in their own hands they too are committing a crime is conveniently overlooked by them.

However, this is a dangerous drift for a society. The suspects must necessarily be taken to the police rather than be handled by a mob.

City's Livability

The feedback we have so far received on our Save Dhaka campaign is indicative of public impatience to see things happen in Dhaka city on the positive side of life.

Quite true, the recommendations that bear the potential for radically changing the face of city-life would require to be backed up by a strong political will to fructify.

There is, nevertheless, another way of looking at it. The countervailing idea to weigh with the government may be to do something tangible to win the voters' gratitude and confidence for the coming polls.

So, some steps must be taken without any loss of time whatsoever. These relate to cleaning up Dhaka city, forcing the vehicle owners and operators to use anti-pollution devices.

The government can, at least, make a start in the organisational parametre such as creating a single coordinating agency for all kinds of city development work.

Remembering Nazrul

Although nineteen years have gone by since the passing away of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, research output on his works has remained at a lamentably low level.

All this is greatly regrettable because the ideals he stood for are gaining ground and getting vindicated with the passage of time. His literary lore revolves around emancipation of the downtrodden men and women and respect for gender equality.

He was — more to the point — against all forms of fanaticism and bigotry at a time when the world was, in these respects, much less complicated than it is today.

So, there is a lot to learn from his literary philosophy. The Nazrul Institute must promote interpretative research on his works along modernist lines.

Nazrul will remain an ever-lasting memory through the thousands of lyrics, including stirring patriotic songs he has bequeathed not only to our literature but to world literary traditions as well.

Our debts to Nazrul Islam are not repaid by calling him the national poet. In fact, by conferring the title on him, we have accepted a greater responsibility to plumb newer depths of his works.

ACCORDING to a BSS report, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, while addressing a group of lawyers on August 22 in her 30 Hare Road residence, said that there can be development and prosperity only if there is rule of law and a democratically elected government in the country.

The Daily Janakantha of 19 August published a front page report sub-titled 'Koko 3, 4, vs Ghazi Express 4 and MV Sadim'.

MV Ghazi Express 4 and MV Sadim had been plying on the route Dhaka-Bhola-Burhanuddin since 1980. It has been alleged that the license for these two boats to operate on this route, reportedly a profitable one, was cancelled on July 18, 1995.

If there was one blunder of Himalayan proportion in the post-91 administrative changes, it was the outright abolition of the Upazila system.

activities, and all government development organizations at that level were made responsible to the Upazila Parishad. But in practice centralization of the worst kind emerged mainly because of the vitiated elections to the UZP.

To the Editor...

Democracy and elections

Sir, Following the Government of India Act of 1935 which envisaged provincial autonomy and effective responsible government over a large sphere of affairs, we imported democracy in our country from abroad i.e. England.

From 1937 to 1995, during the last 58 years, we have gone through many trials and tribulations. In 1945 we held the second general elections in the country which ultimately resulted in the partition of Bengal in 1947 into two parts i.e., i) East Bengal province (now independent Bangladesh) becoming a part of Pakistan and ii) West Bengal province becoming a part of India.

The third general elections which took place in our country was in the year 1955. It toppled the Muslim League government of East Bengal province (East Pakistan) and also terrified the Federal Government of Pakistan.

In the independent and sovereign state of Bangladesh the first general election was held in the year 1973 but unfortunately it caused harm to our democracy and introduced one party (BKSAL) rule in the country.

It is hard to believe that the order of the Hon'ble High Court can be disobeyed by any government agency in such a blatant manner. Instead of carrying out the order of the High Court the agency victimized the person who sought redress from the High Court.

granted the license to Koko 3 and Koko 4. Since the cancellation was done without assigning any reason, the owners submitted a writ petition to the Hon'ble High Court seeking redress.

The order of the Hon'ble High Court was received by the Inland Water Transport Authority (IWTA) on August 8, 1995. In the light of the decision of the High Court the operators of the MV Ghazi wanted to resume operation on 11 August and tried to dock at the terminal.

The owner of the Ghazi submitted a petition to the Chairman of IWTA on 12 August. The Chairman, instead of honouring the order of the High Court, lodged a case in the Kotwali Thana and the owner of Ghazi Mr Delwar Hussain was arrested by the police.

ON THE RECORD

by Shah A M S Kibria



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constitutes the 'rule of law' in the eyes of the Prime Minister. Do we really have rule of law in Bangladesh today? How should we evaluate the Prime Minister's speech of August 22? Did she mean what she said? Alas, she does not seem to be aware of the irony of her speech.

Restoring the Upazila Parishad

If the democratic government wanted, it could have worked out a compromise between the Upazila Parishad and the local MP by legally associating the two in some amicable manner. Other alternatives could also have been explored. But instead of doing this, it decided to abolish the institution.

League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat, whatever may have been the side shows of protest. The reason is not far to seek. Most MPs, irrespective of political affiliation, did not want any powerful rival in the constituency in the form of an elected Upazila Parishad chairman, wielding

considered impotent and useless. In fact, such rivalry was quite acute even during the days of Ershad when bitter fights between Jatiya Party MPs and Jatiya Party Upazila Parishad chairmen took place in public on occasion more than one. It must, however, be mentioned here

Making Government Work

by Analyst

substantial power over development resources to build schools and roads. As the saying goes in Bengali, how can there be two Pirs in the same household? Although the MP is meant exclusively for making laws in the Jatiya Parishad, in the concrete conditions of Bangladesh, he/she must have the last say in all development matters within his/her constituency.

been explored. But instead of doing this, it decided to abolish the institution. Even this abolition could have been justified if the government could create some other decentralized institution at a different level of administration. Unfortunately, nothing of the sort has so far emerged, and now there is obviously no chance that anything in this direction will happen in the remaining period of the present government's term.

Attempts to assess which political leaders are most at fault is of limited value. The moral decay stretches right across our society. It erodes all our most cherished values and notions of justice and fair play. No one can escape the damage it has caused to our national psyche.

What is happening to the owners of MV Ghazi and MV Sadim does not represent an isolated case of the misuse of official power. It flows from the erosion of our fundamental values. If the Prime Minister had genuine respect for law, the bureaucrats would not have dared to disregard the order of the High Court.

OPINION

The Unsung City Schools

School education in the cities or in the 'urban' areas is on the increase. As a matter of fact, the increasing number of schools, the new ones, opening up each year makes many a person to surmise that 'schooling' is an excellent 'business' as if to make one believe that 'business' was 'evil' or it worked like a 'curse' for a society as far as it was connected with 'education'.

It is an open secret that the government recognized or registered schools function smoothly because of certain privileges they are gifted with or enjoy or acquire. Each year these schools have their yearly admission tests for the school going boys and girls.

Beauty contests and the philosophy of life

Sir, I would like to respond (briefly) to your write-up on the Parliamentary Committee's unanimous resolution against encouraging female beauty contests (Miss Bangladesh).

The Eastern mind is not the Western mind; in morality, and in other aspects, Materialism is a way of life, especially in capitalistic and industrial society. Plain living and high thinking is also a way of life, practised by the wise.

We, whether as Muslims or as Bangladeshis, are following the capitalistic philosophy — at least externally and officially. Advertising and competition are the rules of the game. There is no competition in nature (philosophically speaking). Products are advertised for sale, and more sale. The evils of consumerism are surfacing after several generations of capitalism.

Stranded Pakistanis

Sir, This is in reference to the letter written by M Abdul Wahab Khan on behalf of a group of Stranded Pakistanis and published in a section of the press late last week of May. Much have been written on the subject 'Stranded Pakistanis and formation of relief committees' by Abdul Wahab Khan and others on different occasions.

No office-bearer or worker either from SPGRS (Nasim Khan group) or SPGRS (Ejaz group) be allowed to contest the election in order to avoid giving it a political colour. Let the new elected committee have its own neutrality for smooth functioning.

There should be a Govt. nominee, nominated by the Deputy Commissioner for each committee to work and supervise the overall distribution of relief as Hony Magistrate.

We have every hope that the district administration, for the sake of neutral and peaceful election, will undoubtedly agree with our proposal.

M Haque
For non-locals of Geneva Camp
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

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