

Learn from the Past, Shape the Future

by Qazi Khaliqzaman Ahmad

At this time, the most important thing in the national life is to bury the past violent enmity and build on the convergence achieved after so much bloodletting, so much of sufferings by so many, and so much adverse impact sustained by the economy.

Morale of the Officials

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party has demanded of the neutral caretaker government to remove officials, alleged by the party, to have played a 'political role' at the fag-end of the opposition's non-cooperation movement.

The two demands cannot be weighed on the same scale. The former relates to value judgement under very exceptional circumstances and the latter concerns administrative moves followed in a democracy ahead of polls.

Administrative shufflings are now expected to take place at the behest of the neutral caretaker government whose very natural objective would be to reorganise the administrative set-up towards staging free and fair polls.

We have three specific points to make about the episode. Firstly, the neutral caretaker government is not only the end-product of an all party consensus it is also the accelerated outcome of the proximate events.

Flush out Arms

We express our deep concern at the unusual concentration of arms and ammunition on the DU campus. Alarmed by the heavy smuggling of different kind of lethal weapons, the DU syndicate held a meeting and decided to inform the Chief Adviser of the caretaker government of the explosive situation developing there.

We know that the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) has a large following on the DU campus and their rivalry against their opponents might have intensified against the backdrop of the non-cooperation movement.

So here is a grave challenge for the neutral caretaker government. Such an arms race at the campus is definitely going to make the new administration's job more difficult.

Instead of opting for a show of force the rival student fronts can make their political scores if they just concentrate positively on the process of general election that is about to get underway.

Time out for Manch-es

The Bijoy Manch (victory podium) was dismantled by its organisers after it had served a historic purpose. Mayor Mohammad Hanif, the driving force behind it, has acted wisely.

Now that a new administration has taken over and a fresh political process is about to begin, we must attend to our economy, business, administration and all other normal functions without any hindrance.

With the political process moving forward, focus will now be shifting on to the constituencies of candidates. Meanwhile, the cities' main thoroughfares must be left as little impinged upon as possible.

DELIVERANCE at last. But I am much saddened that so many people had to lay down their lives in the political conflicts leading to this return to sanity.

The armed forces have enhanced their image by not interfering with the political process and, in addition, playing a correct role when called out to help restore law and order.

Democracy has got a new lease of life in the country with the people again gaining a chance to vote freely and fairly. Hopefully, that will be ensured by the caretaker government with support from all concerned.

The overriding mandate of the caretaker government is to ensure that the forthcoming parliamentary election to be held in about two months time is fair and free.

3. A free press is absolutely essential in a civilised, democratic society. In Bangladesh, television and radio have hitherto been used by governments almost as their mouthpieces.

To the Editor...

Country's loss

Sir, We are one of the biggest readymade garment manufacturers and exporters to Europe. At the moment we are facing very serious problem with our buyers due to the political situation in our country.

We believe in the good services of the suppliers and would not have made this investment if we had not even though we are fully aware of doing business in Bangladesh in regular times is not easy.

The situation now, however, is giving cause for real concern. As news of your country's problems filter through via news reports, and Reasons for late delivery, our customers are getting very nervous about placing business with us for A/W season in the knowledge that the production would be booklets in Bangladesh.

My points no doubt may have little effect with your political leaders but if they do not recognise this situation, for the country's future trash point of view, I believe a massive amount of foreign traps may be lost.

Hamlet's commitment to your country is clear and visible with a large office equipped and staffed to take care of our business. However, our customers do not have to buy from us and as our service becomes unreliable as has been the case over the past month, the future business becomes more and more difficult to secure.

concerned should cooperate on these two vital matters in their own and national interest.

Mindful that the next elected government will have so much to do to restore order and put the society and the economy back on track, I wish to propose that it implement, as a top priority, the four-point agenda outlined below in order to ensure inclusiveness, fairness and transparency in the governance process so that the advent of corrosive politics again in future can be avoided.

1. Hitherto there has been a monumental absence of public accountability in Bangladesh. Whims, caprices and corruption of individuals in high places have been the main factors behind policy making, policy changes, and programme adoption and implementation rather than careful analyses of pertinent issues and possible implications.

2. Independence of the judiciary and the rule of law must be established. The situation has degenerated so much that those who are in positions of power or have access to power or have the financial capacity behave and act as if they were above the law.

3. A free press is absolutely essential in a civilised, democratic society. In Bangladesh, television and radio have hitherto been used by governments almost as their mouthpieces. Institutional arrangement and legal safeguards must be introduced so that radio and television can function as truly autonomous organisations serving the interest of the nation as a whole.

4. Economy. In the short run certain steps aimed primarily at shoring up the economy will need to be implemented urgently.

Thoughts on Bishwa Jtama

Sir, I have gone through the opinion under the 'Thoughts on Bishwa Jtama' caption published in your esteemed daily on 4.3.96. Here I am not criticising the opinion of the writer but I am expressing my opinion too.

India is a secular country. I think if Bishwa Jtama asks the Muslim countries to stop genocide in Kashmir, ultimately the Indian government may put ban on Muslims to participate in it.

The word 'people' should be exempted. Sir, the word 'people' ought to be scrapped from the speeches and proclamations of the politicians.

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4. Economy. In the short run certain steps aimed primarily at shoring up the economy will need to be implemented urgently. The most important concerns in this category relate to revitalising productive activities by ensuring necessary imports for the industrial sector and availability of necessary inputs.

In so far as foreign exchange reserve is concerned, it is still quite healthy at about 2.3 billion US dollars. Steps should be taken on an immediate basis so that any further strain on it can be avoided or at least reduced substantially.

But, I also strongly feel that the overall management of the economy being pursued within the framework of the economic reform programme, or Washington Consensus as it is also known, needs to be seriously reviewed.

is clearly essential that a serious review is made of the pace and pattern of the reforms being implemented.

Indeed, the package of reforms being implemented in Bangladesh is the same as implemented in most other reforming countries around the world, promoted and supported by the World Bank, the IMF and other donors.

1991 election offered a historical opportunity to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her party to restore a democratic polity after a long hiatus. Instead, her regime got characterized by non-governance, politicization of administration and destruction of a civil society.

One has to bear in mind that the track record of two other important constituents of the opposition alliance — hypocrisy and fraud — to name just a few of their abuses. The Jamaat has never been in power and hopefully, will never be, but it will be an affront to our conscience and sacrifice of the martyrs if we try to gloss over their role during 1971.

The regime which comes into power after the next election will have an uphill task to perform. On the one hand, they will have to rebuild the institutions severely mauled by the out-going administration and on the other, lay the foundation of a truly democratic society — a society responsive to the hope and aspiration of this vast magnitude of people.

It is, no doubt, a formidable task not achievable in the short run, nevertheless, the nation would like to see the correct course is charted out. Let us hope and pray that those who are soon going to assume power in the name of the people will go down in history as one who saved the society from disintegration and restored its pride.

Economy stands shattered, institutions destroyed, society disrupted; in other words, the new regime will inherit a legacy needing a complete overhaul. Rehabilitation of economy will obviously take precedence over other issues.

The next election will provide another opportunity to the genuine democratic forces to respond to the expectation and aspiration of this nation. The opposition alliance should not be carried away by the euphoria of a popular uprising and successful overthrow of a regime which lost its credibility and moral and political authority to govern.

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At this critical juncture of our history, let us recall a famous saying of Sir Winston Churchill: In war Resolution, in defeat Defiance, in victory Magnanimity, in peace Goodwill.

OPINION

In Victory Magnanimity, in Peace Goodwill

Hopefully the Prime Minister after having fulfilled her constitutional obligation, has resigned to pave the way for a neutral caretaker government to take over the interim administration.

The past successive military and quasi-military governments have destroyed the moral and ethical fibres of the society which ensure social cohesion. The nation is divided more than ever before.

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with butcher Tikka Khan. Therefore, the nation as a whole expects the Awami League to resurrect democratic institutions from the ashes of the past and restore the lofty ideal of this nation which struggled against colonialism and all forms of exploitation.

The past successive military and quasi-military governments have destroyed the moral and ethical fibres of the society which ensure social cohesion. The nation is divided more than ever before. Political expediency took precedence over national interests.

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Dhaka Day by Day

When Pets are Troublesome

by SMS Joya

To have a kitten as your pet may be a joyful experience at first but gradually you learn that there's more to it than just love and affection. The first few days you stick to the notion that the kitten is simply happy with the dairy milk you feed it.

The kitten has weaned itself and finds most part of your food to be toothsome. Still obsessed with the idea of providing the kitten with sufficient food (other than a hefty share of your own chicken and fish) you start buying separate fish (specially Puti-fish — they love it) for your royal highness.

When it is a couple of months' older (still probably a teenager) and still growing bigger and fatter, you heave sighs of relief to finally see it go out whenever nature calls. However, you do have to be cautious about not letting it hang around the house for too long — it might just have a mood-swing. And when you try to get some sleep at the end of a long day — you may just discover the reason why the house has been so fetid all day long.

All that hustle and bustle could've been avoided only if they had the hospital telephone numbers under useful telephone numbers in corporate diaries. One call to the hospital would simply be enough for you to know that all your cat needed was a Fimoxyl syrup 3 times a day for 5 days.

Bazaar! Then you have to have a skirmish with your brother (who usually enjoys the company of the playful cat) about going to the hospital with you.

Taking the crony-turned-pest to the hospital is one sitcom that makes even the flick 'Ace Ventura' a flop. You make deliberate efforts to put the puss in your hold-all to take it to the vet and keep on failing. Somehow, after managing to do so, the next horror comes when it hears the discordant sounds of the car starting off.

At the hospital, you'll be surprised to have to queue up even on Friday morning. All the while, all you can do is pet the puss to calm down after hearing a goat in labour making queer noises inside. Finally, your turn comes and the friendly chief veterinary officer takes a quick look at your cat and asks the attendants to check up its temperature. While the attendants take the reading through the rear of your puss (you might as well be 'shocked' to learn it the first time), the cat stares at you as if you're Judas himself and you strive to keep up a straight face.

From the third day of its medication, the cat regains its appetite and gradually becomes frolicsome again. At the end of the day either it bestows itself to you and you know that you've earned it after the bitter — sweet experience or you end up with a stinking bed again.

