

Politics

by Nowara Munir

BACK in the old days people in power probably had far higher standards and cherished political values than their counterparts do today. There has been a glaring erosion in political values. People who claim to be patriots, committed to national and public welfare do all kinds of underhanded activities to serve their ends. The end being to remain in power once having been given it by gullible masses who take the election slogans of the politicians at face value. Today voters are disillusioned. There is not a single political party which has declared an election manifesto which proposes how it intends to deal with the problems of people to provide them basic amenities like water, work, food, shelter and education.



Politics and violence in Bangladesh, almost an inevitable phenomenon.

At a time when the struggle for independence was gaining momentum, people who entered the national movement, even if they only played a marginal role in it, were charged with emotion. They were ready to lay down their lives for a CAUSE. We won our independence after a lot of blood shed. A few years after our independence, the father of the nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was assassinated by army personnel. Then Ziaur Rahman came into power who was also killed, again by army personnel. This time it was Hussain Muhammad Ershad who came to the seat of power who after staying in power for nine long years was forced out of his position in order to place another party into that position. At the present moment we are back to square one.

What we really need now is firstly, a free fair election. Secondly, we should hold a trial for punishing the assassins who, were associated with

behind in the country, collecting wealth by illegal means. These people should be tried and punished. Thirdly, laws and legislations should be set up stating the price one has to pay for murdering, adopting unfair means, and in the process destroying our country.

This erosion of political values if allowed to continue would destroy the nation which is already on the brink of collapse. The educated masses should shake themselves out of their apathy, mobilise public opinion and allow only those people to stand for the high position of public offices who possess a certain code of conduct.

Bangladesh has enough natural resources and man power to devote itself to development tasks and rise above petty communalism and casteism. It is not a difficult task, if there are committed people at the helm of affairs with the sole aim of taking the country, our country Bangladesh, on the road to progress.

THE last person to visit me in the hospital was the chief inspector of Dhaka's Central Investigations Department. "It was a tough case you had there, Agent Ahmad, a pity we may never find out what happened. All we have are speculations and reconstructions."

"I'm sorry sir, but I can't seem to recall any incident inside the victim's house, all I draw up is blank."

"Yes, the doctors told me. It's called selective amnesia. In cases of intense trauma the mind finds relief in deleting certain pieces of disturbing information."

"Tell me sir, did they find the victim's body?"

"No, there was nothing at the scene except a messed up house. By the way, due to a lack of evidence we're closing the case."

Selective amnesia my foot. He had no idea at all of what had happened. Contrary to the doctors' beliefs, I knew all that had happened, all. I just blocked it all up at the right time by a process I call voluntary subliminal control. During the times of questioning, I pushed all I knew to the back of my head and kept it there until I knew I was alone.

I mean, how could I forget. Each night the incident haunts me. Each day memories of its filthy hands around Mrs Nobila Zastri neck lay stagnant in my mind. Just how can I forget?

It began with a call transferred to my office. She was on the line, terrified, desperately seeking help. Through her uncoordinated rambling I managed to get her name and address. Her name was not unfamiliar.

Zastri, the self proclaimed king of all warlocks had died just a few months back. He was a constant trouble to the department, him and his cult of black magicians. And yet we had a very low profile on his wife.

That afternoon I found myself sitting in the living room of the forty nine year old widow. The room was dark and congested. If there were windows I could see none. The floor was decorated with black mosaic.

She sat in the middle of it all, on a blood red sofa like something out of a gypsy tale. Flowing hair to match her flowing attire, covered with zodiac symbols and all. Large loops adorned her ears and beads were draped around her neck. And despite this bold appearance, all that came out of the small, pale and some-

Rising Stars Story of the Month A Trip to the Dark Side

by Mir Saaduddin Ahmad

what pretty face were the frightened words "He's come back to take me!"

Personally I thought that someone was playing a cruel joke on her, but never-the-less I decided to investigate. The next day I filed a public disturbance report in the office, and that evening I was in the house to stay for the next twelve hours.

We sat and talked to about ten o'clock. From what she said I thought her to be crazy, but I said nothing. She narrated the essence of her story.

"We made a pact with the devil. My husband learned his secrets of black magic, and I took eternal life, hence my

given name. Eternal life spelled backwards."

Finally thinking that enough was enough, I asked, "So, when does Mr Zastri turn up?" I don't know if it was what I had said, or the way I said it, but at that moment, to me at least, all Hell broke loose.

I felt cold wind thrashing across my face, I saw papers flying around, chairs being tossed up, settees sliding across the room with the force of the gale, yet not a strand of hair was disturbed from my head. The phenomenon of a psychic breeze, I looked at the lady and her panic stricken eyes seemed to tell me that he was here. The wind stopped and despite my sweat, a cold

shiver ran down my spine. Mist was accumulating from nowhere, and then compelling at a distance not even ten feet from me. The mist rose to a column and an envelop of vapour formed around a solidifying interior. From the apex red droplets were forming soaking the tower of evil, and before my very eyes, I saw the birth of the devil incarnate.

Standing eight feet in red and towering above me, it roared in anger. "Who dare mock me!" And then it laid its eyes up on me. With a clench of its fists the angel of darkness commenced its attack. I was literally tossed from one end of the room to the other, hung upside down, spun like an erratic top and finally smashed against the wall. Hopelessly, I lay sprawled on the floor looking into the flaming eyes of the demon as it closed in upon me. I thought my end had come.

Then she spoke. The fact that she spoke was enough to bring silence to the room. "It's me you want, leave him alone!" Oh, Heaven be praised, I'm alive!

They were saying something, but in my terror I couldn't hear it all. and my dear, it was I who sold myself to the devil, you took all you could from the bargain. And look at me now, I am the devil itself, lord of all Hell. Do you expect me to while away in pandemonium while you live infinitely on earth with no worries? Nay my wife, you are coming with me!"

Pouncing towards her he grabbed her neck and squeezed it dry. I heard it snap. And yet she still spoke. "You'll never kill me, I am eternal. I'll live a million years and still not die. I'll never go to Hell!"

"But my dear, you will." He grabbed her by her hair, and ran a long crooked finger through her hair. A bright light and it was over. The next thing I remember was waking up in hospital.

At the Department, Agent Rahman, is the report ready? "Yes sir, it's on your desk." The chief inspector read through it. Top Secret. C.I.D, Dhaka. Case: The Zastri Affair. Investigator: Agent Ahmad. Status: Open/Under intense. N.B Agent Ahmad knows investigation. He signed it.



Notice

We are happy to receive so many write-ups in response to our story writing competition. Selecting one winner was quite difficult, nevertheless we had to come to a decision. The winner of the Rising Stars Story-writing competition of the month is — Mir Saaduddin Ahmad. Congratulations! Please collect your prize from The Daily Star office, at 4 pm, June 16, 1996. But as for all the other supernatural buffs (or X-Files fans) who took the time to mail us their fictions, don't be too upset! As consolation prizes we are going to print all the articles in the following weeks. Thanks to all the participants.

"Notre Dame Man of the Year"

by Shahed Latif

THIS year's Honourable Mention for Notre Dame Man of the Year is Shabab Emon Khan. He was elected as the man of the year because of his merit, extra curricular activities, academic background and his class programmes.

Born on the 14th of October 1979, Shabab passed his SSC exams from Government Laboratory High School. He was a science student during his SSC exams and changed to Humanities in the HSC level. He is currently studying at Notre Dame College.

Even though he switched to Arts, his passion for science still persisted. In his higher

Shabab informed that every year the "man of the year", award is based on these extra curricular activities. Shabab who is also good in economics and English, participated at the workshop in Dhaka University on "Introduction to economics". He also mentioned his interest in research oriented work, or education. Shabab also informed that they worked on computers and they had a project on transmutation with the computer. He told us that they tried making a mode for satellite system and tried teaching computers to the people and tried inventing something new with the computers.

secondary level activities he became a member of Notre Dame Science Club. Shabab was awarded the 1st prize as he participated in the National Science and Technology Exhibition held in 94.

This exhibition was organized by the National Association of UNESCO clubs in Bangladesh in co-operation with UNESCO regional office of Science and Technology for South and Central Asia. He was also granted life membership of Notre Dame Science Club for his outstanding contribution towards the science club.

Other than this special achievement Shabab is also a debater, he is a member of the Notre Dame debate club, he also participated in the workshop on "Between two words by Craig Garfinkel at the USIS, workshop on Law organized by Notre Dame College.

the workshop in Dhaka University on "Introduction to economics". He also mentioned his interest in research oriented work, or education. Shabab also informed that they worked on computers and they had a project on transmutation with the computer. He told us that they tried making a mode for satellite system and tried teaching computers to the people and tried inventing something new with the computers.

Shabab an HSC student will be appearing in the higher secondary exams this year. He also played Tennis for Bangladesh at the national level but could not continue to do so because of his studies. Shabab lastly informed that he wrote poems in English and is presently working with blue and gold magazine and he also worked on graphics for books.

Part-II

Q) What do you go for the music, lyrics, or the don't-give-a-damn attitude?

A) I go for everything, everything in metal is dependant on one another.

Q) Why do you listen to metal when there are so many "better" things within reach?

A) I really don't know I guess it's a good way to let your aggression out. It's complex, it's the ultimate music, you can bang your head to it, and it feels good to listen to it and playing it as well.

Q) Do you listen to anything else except metal?

A) Yep I listen to Mozart, Beethoven, Indian classical Raags, and blues.

Q) Thrash is called "unmusical garbage". Do you have anything to say against that statement?

A) Anybody who calls thrash "unmusical garbage" is garbage themselves. There are lots of classical music being played on metal so it's a mixture pow. I listen to and appreciate both classical and metal. I don't care about what people have to say about it.

Q) Heavy metal is considered a renegade. That's true. But the people who tuned in to sabbath and Deep Purple in the '70s are the same people who reject it now. What do you think caused the change in the headbanger's image?

A) Heavy metal is definitely a renegade in the music scene because it's going against everybody's will and staying there.

The image changed when the music got harder and heavier, and when the drugs left off and moshing came in. In the '70, people used drugs, it was the cool thing to do in an age time has forgotten or tries to. Now-a-days metal-heads are out of it. So I don't really know, I guess with time everything changes.

Q) Headbangers are called abnormal. Define headbanger's and define abnormal.

A) Abnormal is abnormal and headbanger is headbanger. Figure it out yourself!

Last but not least — here's Mr Monowar Habib or Dip Bhai,

WE WHO ARE NOT AS OTHERS

Kazi K Arafat

the famous vocalist of Rock Brigade who also was the front man of Phantom Lord. Having been in the first metal bands of the 80s, he's now retired from the stage. But it's really hard for him to stay quiet. So

Q) In your opinion, has the performances of the young children of the grave improved since you guys shook the stage?

A) We had so many disadvantages — like the lousy sound systems and sound effects inadequate processors, and we had a very small headbanging audience in our time. For example, as few as 20 to 30 people used to attend the concerts for us. Except for this microscopic amount of fans, everyone was (and still is, if you look at the thrash concert in April) anti-metal. We were the only young metal band in the late 80s and all our influ-

ences and inspirations came from the legendary Bangladeshi metal band, ROCKSTRATA.

All the youngsters are pretty good, but among them the best purgatorians are — Bappi, Wahid, Raju, and Zaygam of Maestria, Rezwan and Gibran of RedRow Arafat and Anon of Nutrition of dead cell? and Shahriar, the very promising young vocalist of Misanthrope.

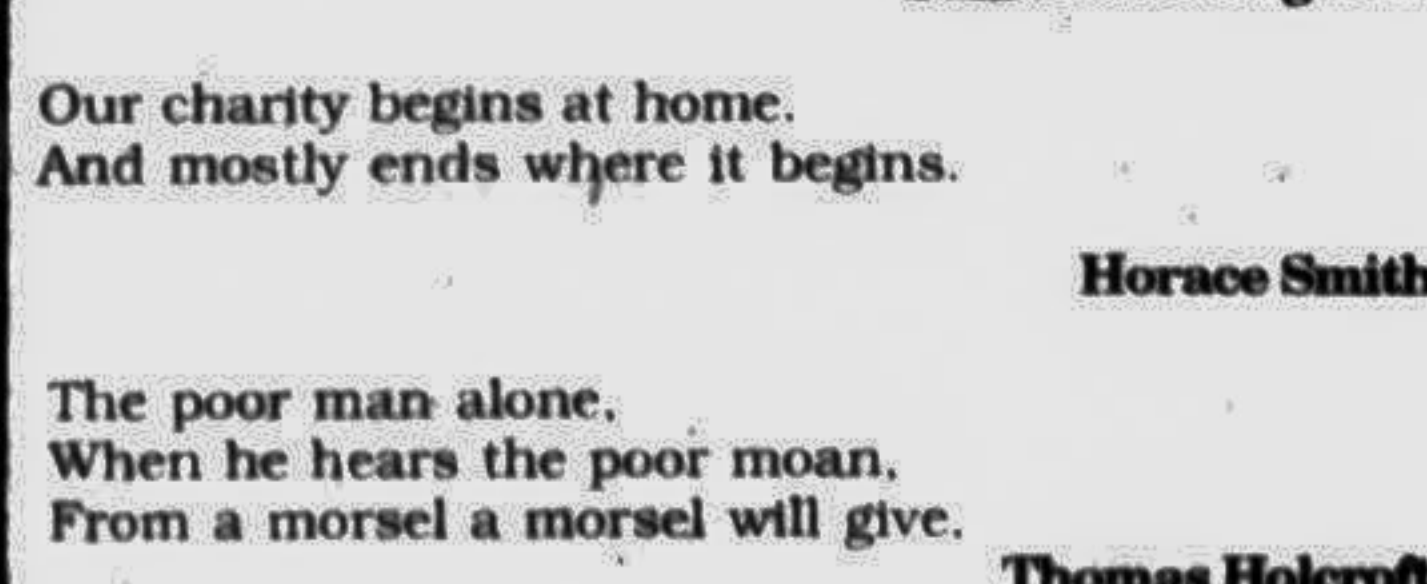
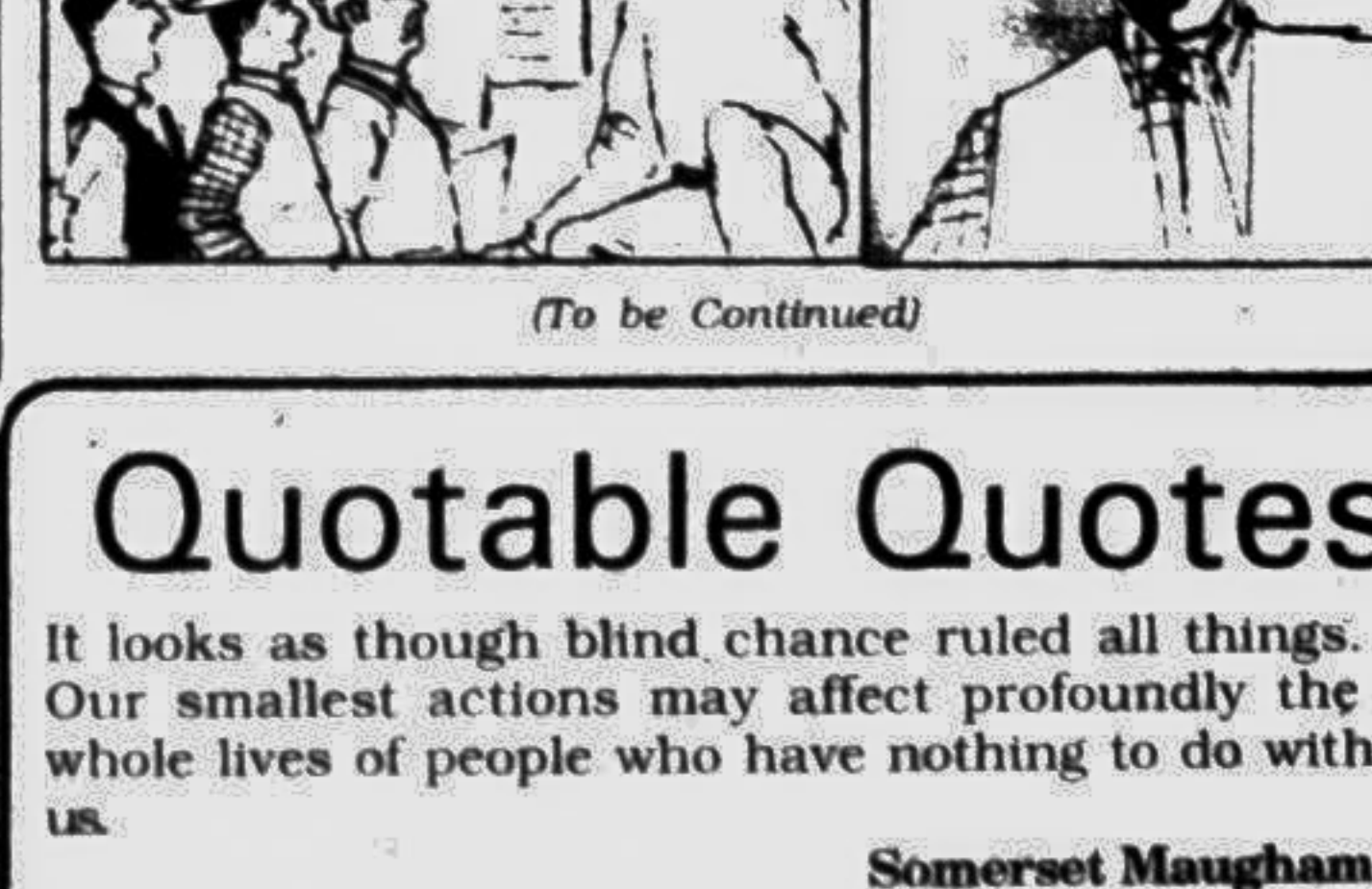
Q) Heavy metal has never really been accepted. Youngsters now, however, are fighting back with thrash-death and industrial metal bands like Primus, Helmet, Machine Head, White Zombie and Brutal Truth. You have always been a fan of the old, classic metal bands like Black Sabbath and Deep Purple. What can you say about the 'new' generation



Gibran Tanwir of Misanthrope, playing his guitar

WILDER BILL HOWLADAR

story: Hamid-ur-Rashid cartoon: Sharier



(To be Continued)

Quotable Quotes

It looks as though blind chance ruled all things. Our smallest actions may affect profoundly the whole lives of people who have nothing to do with us.

Somerset Maugham

Our charity begins at home. And mostly ends where it begins.

Horace Smith

The poor man alone. When he hears the poor moan, From a morsel a morsel will give.

Thomas Holcroft

We don't care! The End