

No More of This, Please

It was a most unusual train accident. Although a small stretch of rails were found out of alignment with their sleepers in a weird situation, another train had run on the same just an hour before the accident. So?

Whatever the reason the last bogies of the inter-city Mohanagar Urmi fell from the tracks and into the wayside water-filled ditch only three kilometres from the international airport on Saturday noon, killing at least 7 and wounding more than a hundred. The government to whom the business of running the railway system exclusively belongs, must own responsibility. We do not now even dream of a minister resigning owning up responsibility for some lapse in his or her domain. But then we would like very much to take Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju's words very seriously when he said the whole thing needs a thorough overhauling. We believe he knows what such overhauling would require and mean.

We very sincerely condole the loss of life and the suffering caused by injury and appreciate the government's prompt compensation to the families of the dead. It can be a noble challenge that the government may take — that there will not be another such accident as long as they rule. It is unbelievable how we have allowed our railways to rot. Years of neglect, lack of support and incompetent leadership combined to ruin something seasonably good that we inherited. Railway journeys were traditionally the last word in dependability.

Only a total overhaul can give us an accident-free and efficient and corruption-free railway system. This will call for rationalisation, modernisation and infusion of double-digit billions of Taka. But above everything else we shall be needing two great things to let the miracle of modern trains happen — one, a great vision, two, making the nation railway-minded.

We never had a national communications policy. Other interests in this sector representing other modes of transport had been allowed to prosper at the cost of the railway. This is tantamount to harming the nation's economic backbone and must not be allowed to continue anymore.

The railway has been ailing for long. Ad hoc reliefs and half-baked antidotes and gimmicks without adding one locomotive or a ton of rolling stock to our strength — have only worsened the railway's chance for a recovery. No more of that, please. And only a thorough overhaul. Yes.

Early Encouragement

The FBCCI president has returned home with hope from India. His recent visit to some of the seven north-east Indian states — Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland — has proved to be an exploratory success. Landlocked, these states have much to offer for the expansion of the market of Bangladeshi goods. Not only in these states, we want to compete with our goods in the totality of the Indian market. As the icing on the cake, they have a huge repertoire of natural resources which can serve as vital raw materials in quite a few areas of our industry. Apart from marble, coal, limestone and bamboo, Bangladesh can get electricity — and all at relatively low cost due to the geographical proximity of Bangladesh to some of these northeastern Indian states.

The visit of the Bangladeshi business delegation has brought home another reason for optimism besides that of the great store of raw materials across the border. What is more encouraging is the appreciation and acknowledgment of this yet unexplored commercial potential of the region by the local business community and people's representatives. In today's highly commercialised world, businessmen for the better or for worse, enjoy tremendous clout over government.

Although, a welcome willingness of the businessmen and leaders of these states to join Bangladesh in a commercial cooperation for mutual benefit is far from being the 'open sesame' keeping in mind those inter-state problems, this visit, expected to be followed up by many more, has enough in it to be deemed as early encouragement. Businessmen, true to their elements, have explored some of the regions with great potential in contributing to the mutual benefit of Bangladesh and India. Why should the political leaders find it so difficult in accepting each other as partner in progress?

A Thumping Initiation

Bangladesh has annexed the Pepsi ACC trophy. They did it on Saturday with a thumping 108-run victory over the United Arab Emirates. In this outing Bangladesh has been shaping very well on its way to the final, demolishing all the adversaries with power and relish. But on their part UAE also reached the final through convincing wins all the way. The earlier meeting in 1994 between yesterday's contenders had gone UAE's way and that made the ACC Trophy final an exciting uncertainty till half way through the UAE innings. After that Bangladesh bowlers made quick work of wrapping up the whole thing in a matter of minutes and less than 10 overs.

The win comes soon after Mohammedans' soccer drubbing at the hands of Laos Electricity and gains immensely in contrast and stature. Bangladesh will now be able to play in the ensuing World Youth Cricket Tournament. And the next year we shall be playing against Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka for the 6th Asia Cup. With yesterday's win and the Pepsi ACC Cup in the pocket Bangladesh are now no more babes in international cricket. It has been a very befitting initiation into the seniors' club yesterday.

We congratulate Akram, in spite of his foolish heave, and his whole team specially the opener Bidyut (58) and vice-captain Bulbul who kept the solid foundation from crumbling by sheer grit and intelligent coolness. Our bowlers and responsive fielding kept the opponents constantly unsettled and before they could dig in they were bundled out for a paltry 109 and much before the overs were over. We never had it so good — sportwise.

Let this first successful outing of our young people be the first of many satisfying encounters to come in all kinds of sport.

MOTHER Teresa's recovery brought smiles to millions in India and millions outside. Nobel laureate of 1979. Mother Teresa of the missionaries of charity and the Roman Catholic Church, remains a symbol of love and devotion to humanity, to the poor and the underprivileged. Universal love for her is perhaps eclipsed only by Pope Paul II himself. While we celebrate a *voie de vie* for her recovery and 86th birthday, we would like to see more works of charity and philanthropy in a world where the Chimera of Malthus is on the prowl with ever-growing perseverance.

Athwart the Eurasian landmass another happening of tremendous impact took place by putting the final seal of divorce between Princess Diana and Prince Charles. It was indeed the year of *annus mirabilis* for Her Majesty: the House of Windsor survives — the unintentional and unintended jolt notwithstanding.

The Prince has a problem though. He is not being able to come out clean, with or without Camilla Parker Jones. Princess Di on the other hand is still on a winning spree. The Prince of the House of Windsor must be watching ruefully his erstwhile better-half ruthlessly by bettering her gallop poll standing! While Anne Boleyn was a victim of the King's avance, an unfettered Di kept her promise to be a modern woman. By refusing to accept the role-model assigned to her, she has earned more friends than she herself had ever dreamt of. But long live the crown: the crown is the fountain of honour, as the Treasury is the Spring of business. Do you remember Walter Bagchot? *****

In the first 60 days offer of investment of over a billion dollar has been received. For the cellular phone, a BNP leader has been selected along with two others. These are good vibrations. We are with them — good luck.

SEPTEMBER 5 will remain in our history as a landmark in our slow but steady progress towards establishing a mature civil and democratic society. A few and minor irregularities notwithstanding, the elections were free and fair, establishing an example that such elections are possible under a party government and political wisdom. The prime minister set a rare example in not going on political hustings for her party candidates — unprecedented in democratic history. A neutral and recalcitrant candidate, thrown out of the party, Panchanon Biswas, beat the Awami League candidate in Khulna-1. The 30 odd foreign observers along with several thousand FEMA field observers ensured the fairness of the elections. The two places the PM visited before the elections figured prominently on the democratic map of Bangladesh as points of reference. She did not use any official protocol. This is the institution of democracy at work. Don't we remember Prime Minister Edward Heath going to the Tory party headquarters from 19 Downing Street in a ramshackle French Citroen?

Respect for institutions is more important than anything else in democracy. In contrast one remembers the fateful train journey performed by Begum Zia to Chittagong before the February 15th election costing the national exchequer, by different accounts, several crore taka. Instead of appreciating the Chief Election Commissioner Abu Hena, Faizur Razaque and his able colleagues for giving a good and credible

An Eventful Week

bye-election to the country. Some inane efforts are being made to malign the Election Commissioner. Opposition Party BNP even staged an aimless gherao of the CEC office. The gherao made headlines more in the photo-journalist-bashing than the gherao itself. Some even made an unacceptable suggestion that the government shouldn't have contested in the BNP-vacated constituencies! Many eyebrows were raised at the suggestion but I was not surprised. This suggestion itself smacks a kind of mindset that is anything but democratic. Some putative BNP

learn that is a democracy and there is a loser and a winner. When a senior cabinet minister in an official dinner announced that BNP came to power for 25 years, we were all looking at each other for an answer. We are now coming to find one. Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury had a close shave with his creator. Now HS Khoka, SQ Choudhury, MPs, perceive Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as deceased. Prior to June 12, they were bent on making this dear land of ours a 'Hasina-free country.' They wanted to displace Awami League, the party that gave lead-

Bangabandhu only diminishes her own and party's profession of adherence to democratic values. As Plimby said: 'The cobbler should not judge above his last.' As for the so-called 'failures' of the government, as an opposition party person recently suggested, I would beseech him to look up the WB reports, IMF papers, ADB documents, USAID and UNDP critiques of the past 5 years for an answer. *****

AS I have persistently suggested several times in this column, India would do well to agree on a permanent accord for sharing the Ganges water on a non-reciprocal basis. Press briefings by Gujral and Samad Azad indicate that we are proceeding exactly on this line. An agreement is possible on the basic of clear understanding of each other's national interest, backed by the political will of the leaderships of both India and Bangladesh. It is neither 'friendship' nor 'obsequance' that would underpin any future accord. It is commitment and pragmatism in that order that would ensure a successful negotiation. The presence of CPM, CPI, Forward Block leaders and Iyir in the Indian team was helpful.

Lord Palmerston once said on Schleswig-Holstein question: 'There are only three men who have ever understood it: one was Prince Albert, who is dead; the second was a German Professor, who became mad; I am the third — and I have forgotten all about it.' Let us get a bipartisan consensus on the Ganges water-sharing issue and give a lie to Palmerstonian prognostication. *****

TWO senior Cabinet Ministers Kibria in Paris and Tofael Ahmed at the BERDEM Ibrahim Memorial made some significant remarks. They both laid emphasis on bipartisan approach to all major national issues. Kibria wants it for expeditious approach towards reform measures, privatisation and quick utilisation of consortium funds. The amount pledged in Paris is robust and adequate. Accountability and transparency in this utilisation of fund, those pledged and in the pipeline, would certainly give us better leverage vis-a-vis the donors. Tofael Ahmed stated inter-alia, that government wants cooperation of the opposition for political stability and greater transparency in governance. He said this for the proposed expanded Shahjalal Fertiliser Plant, a committee headed by Dr Iqbal Mahmood, has been set up to look into various areas of the project. In the first 60 days offer of investment of over a billion dollar has been received. For the cellular phone, a BNP leader has been selected along with two others. These are good vibrations. We are with them — good luck. *****

BY the time this column goes into print, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will have finished her first official visit to China. Apart from the government signed and bonhomie exchanged the visit will be important in further consolidating our relationship with the world's largest country and a leading industrial power. PM's meeting with the Hong Kong investors will lay the groundwork for future capital and technology transfer to Bangladesh. More details are awaited. *****

ENCHIRIDION

Waliur Rahman



leaders giving a free rein to their tongues at the Press Club, and later in a meeting in Chittagong indulged in the language of necromancy — which would have immensely pleased the Voodoo-King Papa-Doc and his able successor Baby Doc.

It all started in the Parliament with the first walk-out by BNP to the utter shock and bewilderment of Speaker Shaikh Razaque Ali. This was followed by free use of expletives by the MPs like Major Akhtaruzzaman with the denouncement delivered by Begum Zia herself. Then she disappeared from the Sangsad for about two weeks. BNP must

ership to the glorious War of Liberation, to a museum! One can brush these utterances as sick joke, grave-diggers humour. But can the nation really do that? Begum Zia must till her party zealots that she is the leader of a democratic party — she is no 'Madame Hiller'. She must also tell them that August 15, 1975 is a national tragedy in as much as the assassination of her dear husband — President Zia November 3 jail-killing of the four national heroes is a blot on our nation's conscience.

Therefore a Chhatra Dal procession in favour of the self-confessed perpetrators of

Saddam Hussein Taught Another "Lesson"?

America Again Raises 'Storm' over Kurdish 'Cup of Tea'

by AMM Shahabuddin

President Clinton and his European allies should realise the "mistake" committed by Bush in creating the two 'no-fly' zones, thereby virtually creating two 'states', one in the north and the other in the south. It has already created "misgivings" in the minds of Turkey and some Arab states who were staunch allies of the West during the Gulf war.

SO they are at the same old game again. But why? Because it is a cat-and-mouse game continuing in Iraq since the Gulf war in which Iraq got a thrashing reply to its 'adventurism' in Kuwait. Since then Saddam has been taught several 'lessons', both costly and devastating, by America and its allies, with no tangible results so far as the West-designated 'Butcher of Baghdad' is concerned. So the West has got a good 'play' to use whenever they like. Even if necessary, they would make the calm water 'troubled' and then start fishing in it.

The latest in this series has again startled the world with wide repercussion and consternation. It started like a textbook story, in accuracy and straightness. Saddam Hussein's armed forces and tanks crossed into the 'forbidden land', the so-called 'no-fly' zone in the north of Iraq, as ear-marked by America and its allies after the Gulf war in 1991. But by doing so, Saddam committed a big international crime as he has been warned again and again not to show his 'muscle' by trespassing into the 'no-fly' zone. So prompt came the 'blunt message' from the White House. President Clinton first sounded a warning, then ordered a missile attack on the defence targets in southern Iraq, near Baghdad on 3 September. There was a repeat performance of the same on 4 September also. Thus more than 40 cruise missiles landed safely on the defence installations from the warships stationed in the Gulf area. Results: five civilians killed and more than 20 injured, besides crippling the defence and air installations altogether. More such attacks are waiting, if Saddam fails to get the 'message'.

Apparently, it sounds well and logical. Saddam committed a violation of the 'no-fly' zone by pushing his forces in Kurdistan in the north, and thereby committing an aggression on the Kurdish population. As every crime has its prescribed punishment, Saddam also received his requisite 'dose'. He had to pay a heavy price for the tough lesson he had learnt, if he had it at all. Meanwhile, Clinton, extended by a 'flat' the existing 'no-fly' zone in the south from 32° to 33° parallel to further limit Saddam's movement.

Bush Leaves Bad Precedent Does the story end there?

There seems to be more underneath. There are some missing links which were either downplayed or totally blacked out from the 'audience', particularly the American people. Was not the situation, created by Saddam in north Iraq, exploited by Clinton to his advantage by showing a 'brave face' to Saddam to win more votes in the up-coming November elections? It may sound like a 'fiction', but is not strange. It appears more like an electoral gimmick than anything else. His illustrious predecessor, George Bush left a 'nice' precedent. He ordered an air attack on Baghdad by 100 war planes during the last week of his Presidency. Did he achieve his goal? No. He failed to befoul the conscious American voters who professed to send Clinton to White House as they liked his 'economic pills' than the 'sabra-rattling' of Gulf-war hero. He shouldn't try to overstretch on Bush's failure by ignoring his golden beaten track that led him to the Presidency. Both American and the world at large still need his leadership.

Clinton's Drive Questioned

Moreover, Clinton's hasty action in ordering missile attack on Iraq, not even consulting his European allies before action, has raised many questions than answers it brought. It has created a division among his European allies who he had successfully brought together on Bosnia peace issue. America's Arab allies and even Turkey are keeping a safe distance from US action, although all of them haven't flatly rejected US action. Even US Republican Senator John Warner, who is also the Chairman of the US Senate Armed Services Committee, has some pertinent questions. He has asked: 'Why Clinton had not acted before Iraqi troops crossed the 36th parallel into the safe haven?', adding, 'our intelligence obviously saw this massing of 30,000 (Iraqi) troops plus tank divisions. We should have reacted then....' Why Clinton didn't react at the proper time to stop the Iraqi troops at the

border would remain mystery, perhaps forever.

What Saddam Says?

Meanwhile, the story of the other side given out by the Iraqi media, gave a different version of their action with a new angle and a palatable signal. They say they entered the Kurdish area beyond the 36th parallel, being invited by one of the Kurdish factions, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) to assist them in ousting a rebel group, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which was being aided by Iran in its struggle for power in Kurdistan. However, the Iraqi forces, they say, along with their heavy armour returned to Baghdad after two days of fighting. And the KDP forces continued their march till they occupied important cities including Sulamanyah, at the northeast point, by throwing out the rival forces. Even Clinton has acknowledged that there had been no evidence of the involvement of Iraqi forces in the KDP operation against PUK forces. The Devil is not as black as he is painted, so they say. It must, however, be admitted that Saddam did, directly or indirectly, a clean job, on behalf of the West, in ousting the Kurdish faction which is being backed by Iran. Saddam deserves 'kudos'. The 'Devil' must be given his due credit.

So where do we go from here? Let us go a bit deeper to see things in their proper perspective. There is confusion and there is complexity over Clinton's 'prompt' missile attack on Iraq, when the operation inside Kurdistan was almost over, for which Iraqi forces entered there at the request of KDP. Even the European leaders haven't swallowed the 'reason' advanced by Clinton.

Noreiga in American Prison: Saddam Survives

It is an open secret that many Third World country leaders, including President Saddam, and President Noreiga of Panama, were in the good book of America. But they lost their 'credentials' with Washington for some obvious reason and fell from their grace. Noreiga, literally kidnapped and two rebellions with full force

smuggled out from Panama, by American commands forces, is now rotting in a US prison on charges of drug smuggling. Saddam, more lucky fellow, has survived so far. It may be recalled here that during the last US Presidential election, Ross Perot, that Texan billionaire, then a Presidential candidate, in an election campaign televised programme, threw a 'hard-ball' question to Bush. He wanted to know why the USA 'spent so much time and money' in 1980s 'pumping up allies who proved dangerous'.

And his list of the 'allies' included president Saddam of Iraq and Manuel Noreiga, Bush, who was himself once the CIA Director, failed to give a straight reply to Perot's query. At that time, US Vice Presidential candidate, Al Gore, during election campaign, said: 'George Bush (is) presiding over a cover-up that is significantly larger than the Watergate cover-up.' Iraq-gate, by contrast, includes the largest bank fraud in the history of America. 'There are many things between the earth and the heavens that we don't know'. (Excuse me for misquoting from Shakespeare.) We can only see the tip of the iceberg!

Bush's 'Instant Coffee' Fizzles

In fact, the very creation of the two 'no-fly' zones, one in the north of Iraq for the Kurdish minorities, and the other in the south for the Shi'ites, had their basic built-in contradictions and defects which were bound to explode like a time-bomb in due course. That is what happening in Iraq today. Bush was desperate for collecting, 'at any cost', as he himself said, his marching votes to the White House for the second term. So whatever action he had taken at that time, he never bothered to think beyond his election date. So when he urged the Kurdish people in the north and the Shi'ites in the south to rise in arms against Saddam to throw him, he didn't foresee the consequences. Saddam, though defeated and humiliated for his own folly, turned back on the two rebellions with full force

and crashed them. This created a horrendous situation. Bush wanted 'instant coffee'. But unfortunately for him the boiling kettle was leaking. He ushered to create the two 'no-fly' zones or 'safe havens', banning Saddam's forces from entering the two earmarked areas. In fact, the creation of the two 'no-fly' zones, or more precisely, partitioning of Iraq into three parts, was never authorised by the UN Security Council resolution on Iraq, Resolution 687. But efforts were made to give it a UN umbrella protection. Even UN Secretary General Ghalil wrongly interpreted this resolution when he had said that Bush's order to bombard Baghdad for 'violation' of 'no-fly' zone was done under the mandate of the Resolution 687. But they say, in wars, everything is fair. So everything is fair. But Saddam, the 'little' Hitler in the Middle East, is trying to assert his country's rights as a sovereign state. Post-war 'ransoms', imposed by the victorious nations on the vanquished after the World War I, was dubbed by H G Wells as 'plundering'. So the partitioning of a vanquished country by a group to countries can be described as what? Raping?

Missile Attacks Strengthens Saddam's Position

America and the West must accept the truth that each missile that strikes Iraqi soil, further strengthens Saddam's position as a dictator. The boisterous anti-American and pro-Saddam demonstrations held in Baghdad, shown worldwide on television, is a good pointer. America has so far failed to remove Saddam from the scene, nor even been able to destabilise his regime, despite the harsh fact that Iraq has been practically 'strangled' by the economic sanctions imposed by the UN. There is rising poverty and employment, inflation is sky-high, commodity prices are beyond the reach of the common man. Innocent infants and children are dying for lack of medicines. Still Saddam goes strong. Further missile attack or bombardment of Baghdad would not convey any mes-

sage' to Saddam. It would only accelerate the sufferings of the Iraqi people. Let America and the West accept this truth. So they should give up the path of 'sabra-rattling' and highly-charged rhetoric of 'teaching Saddam a lesson' everytime they find the 'adolescent' boy ignoring his 'lesson' given by his western 'friends'.

Misgivings in Arab Minds

So President Clinton and his European allies should realise the 'mistake' committed by Bush in creating the two 'no-fly' zones, thereby virtually creating two 'states', one in the north and the other in the south. It has already created 'misgivings' in the minds of Turkey and some Arab states who were staunch allies of the West during the Gulf war. But they are now moving cautiously, keeping a safe distance. The Gulf states see an independent Shi'ite state in the southern Iraq, nurtured under the protection of 'no-fly' zone, would be a potential 'powder-house' for them as the new regime would prefer to be with Iran's radical forces than with the conservative Arab states. And thus it would serve as a comfortable spring board for Iran. Turkey, on the other hand, sees an independent Kurdistan in the northern Iraq, protected by another 'no-fly' zone, would be a nightmare for them as they would always look forward for establishing a bigger Kurdistan, by extending its borders, to include 12 million Kurds living in southern Turkey.

Keep Up the Image

When George Bush ordered bombardment of Baghdad during his last days in office, a London-based Canadian writer on international affairs, said in his column in the Toronto Star that 'Washington has no policy whatever on Iraq that extends past the counting of the votes in early November'. This scathing remark came during the last presidential election which brought Clinton to power, literally over the body of the 'Humpty' 'cumpty' who had a great fall. Clinton should, therefore, try to defuse the time-bomb planted in Iraq, instead of igniting it to suit his 'political expediency'. In Bosnia, he has emerged as a big US President with his Dayton peace-plan. Let him keep up this image in the next election as an undisputed world leader.

To the Editor...

Proceedings of Jatiya Sangsad

Sir, The proceeding of Jatiya Sangsad sessions made us deeply disappointed. We watched with sinking hearts how the guardians of our people were wasting their valuable time and huge amount of public money on unnecessary lengthy talks on subjects which will not help our country in any way. Per minute fifteen thousand taka is quite a lot.

It was understood that BTV was telecasting important parts of the proceedings. But we had seen, mostly of abusive words, walkouts of our people were warring political parties and table-thumping. Are these the important parts? It is quite contrary to what it should have been.

Every word uttered by the members should be for the solution of existing problems and betterment of our country. Dwelling on the past will not help us in any way. In the future the government

must telecast the whole proceedings of the JS, not parts of it, as it is misleading.

Nur Jahan 1390, East Nasirabad Chittagong.

'Paralysed Generation'

Sir, I refer to the write-up of Dilara Begum under the above heading which was published in 'The Daily Star' on September 10, 1996. At first I would like to thank her for an analytical feature. At one point she is telling us 'we had a leader', even if she didn't mention the name of that leader. But we can presume it was general Ziaur Rahman. Not only I but also everyone will admit that after Ziaur Rahman has passed away his family possessed very little. But the obvious question which arises is that how did his family make several crores within a few years of Zia's decease. Was it from the 'broken suitcase'? None will believe that. The

writer too didn't mention it. Undoubtedly, Ziaur Rahman was an honest man, but patriotism? When he killed thousands of freedom fighters and army-men, began to rehabilitate the 'Razakars' and opened the door of corruption for his disciples then how can we term him a patriot? She didn't mention the name of the founding father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. By keeping him aside, she has tried to dignify General Zia. There comes the question of awareness of real history and paralysed generation. If she knew the real history, she would have cited the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman prior to her leader General Zia. At the end, again I would like to thank her for admitting that 'Zia was not the announcer of independence of Bangladesh.

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Time for Constitutional Activists

Sir, Soon after assuming the power the Awami League government continued to say a new doctrine of democratic government involving opposition parties calling it the 'government of consensus'. It is true that all political parties of Jatiya Sangsad were unanimous during new legislation towards personal interests involving benefits to JS members alone.

During Jatiya Party government, tax-free 4-wheel cars, jeeps, station wagons etc. were allowed for JS members only. Again, during BNP rule a bill was passed providing pension for JS members only though they may serve a 5-year term. There were opposition parties including Awami League, Workers Party, Islami Oikyo Jote and so on but none objected to

this pension bill of JS members.

Under the above backdrop it is about time that constitutional activists start acting so that JS members cannot pass bills for their 'own' benefits alone in the name of total consensus or so. Let us ponder over the consensus issue of present regime in the light of first Awami League government.

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Gaol incident

Sir, The recent gaol incident which has found some of its inmates walking into freedom has created renewed interest among the public to know about the gaol, gaol-bird, gaol-break, gaoler — many things related to this other world of humanity. As gaols are cursed by rogues, they are also blessed by roses like Nelson Mandela.

The Dhaka gaol had an occasion of accommodate an international scholar, an authority on English language and literature, who was no less than Dr Syed Sajjad Husain, a prisoner of conscience. The Dhaka University deprived itself of his blessings, but he did not deprive the nation from his grace. He has left some intimate but objective observations on Dhaka gaol in beautiful English in his book.

Wastes of Time! People in authority who need to know about the affairs of our gaols and those who have a curiosity to know about them may read the relevant chapters of the book. It can work as a handbook for any gaol reforms and save the government of forming a commission costing millions of taka. Mohamed Abdul Mutalib Omnesha College 74 Dhanmondi, Rd No-14 Dhaka.