

Warming up to a Solution

Minister for Water Resources Abdur Razzak has re-emphasised the need for an immediate and permanent water-sharing accord with India in an interview with the paper published yesterday. What makes this reiteration of what Bangladesh wished to get from India on the water issue so important is evidently the timing of it. Barely ten days are left for the New Delhi meeting between the water resources ministers of the two countries and the second round of discussions at the joint technical committee-level.

Razzak makes out a convincing case both on the 'immediacy' and 'permanence' of the craved-for water-sharing agreement. Any delay in reaching an accord will further aggravate desertification and environmental degradation in the country and the economic hardship of its people. A permanent solution is warranted so as to enable Bangladesh to embark on a meaningful water management exercise encompassing drinking water supply, irrigation net-working, salinity-containment and flood-control.

By all accounts, the Indian central government, the relevant state governments and her major political parties are all professedly agreeable to according primacy to the problem of sharing the lean season water of the Ganges with Bangladesh. The idea of an early settlement of the question on an equitable basis has been endorsed by them in deference to the felt need for a rapid improvement in their relations with Bangladesh. As for the long-term nature of the solution no negative signal has been received from India either. On the contrary, we have witnessed how some leaders in West Bengal have been trying to impress upon Bihar and UP governments to lift more of the surface ground water in order that more of water could be released to Bangladesh in the lean season.

The West Bengal government will play a crucial role in apportioning dry season water of the Ganges to Bangladesh at the Farakka point. We are glad to be hosting Chief Minister Jyoti Basu's confidence-building visit to Bangladesh early next month. We are taking heart.

Both the governments are working towards the settlement of the water-sharing issue before the onset of the next dry season. So, the time-frame is very much there. One now hopes that a mutually satisfactory water-sharing formula will emerge at the soonest. For, as they say, "Where there is a will, there is a way."

Aiming Higher

Sports and games are one area where, we are tempted to feel, the nation has enough potential to achieve international recognition. Only that it continues to remain unrealised.

Apart from our lone success in cricket, winning the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Trophy that is, we have little to savour sport-wise. It has been a tantalising experience: international successes are so near and yet so far. A national sports conference now being held at the Bangladesh Kriya Shiksha Pratisthan, Savar, we would like to believe, has been occasioned by the realisation of the gap between national expectation and actual performance in the world sports arena.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon the sports planners to draw a five-year plan for a break-through in sports.

There is hardly any need to identify the games in which we have the best prospect. Cricket, shooting, hockey and football should come to the reckoning in the order they have been placed here. Kabadi is not an international game but in the region where it is played, it does hold an appeal for us. We are second best, we should aim to be the best there. The good thing is that India is the only challenge we must overcome.

As for the aforementioned four games of worldwide appeal, where we stand a very good chance of succeeding, a five-year plan would be hardly enough. If we are really serious about improving our standards to test level in cricket, to international quality in shooting, to Asian level in football, we need to plan for a much longer period, say, 15 or 20 years. Sri Lanka did it with cricket. A nation-wide talent-hunt, complemented by a development of infrastructural facilities and an ideal environment for nurturing the talents discovered in specific sports over a long period, will surely give dividends. The question is whether we are prepared to take the long and painstaking journey needed for the purpose.

Political Bankruptcy

The arrest of a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader of Dhaka College sparked off a violent protest by the student front that escalated subsequently into clashes between it and its rival, the Bangladesh Chhatra League. The student leader, according to the police, was wanted in connection with three cases involving alleged activities of extortion and terrorism.

The JCD went on a spree of car smashing in the street in front of the college and the BCL tried to resist them. But on a closer look it becomes clear that none of the student groups had been within their rights to do what they did. Both individuals and organisations may like to protest someone's arrest but it does not give them the licence to smash cars or damage 'in any way' public or private property.

Politics indeed is losing its way in the wilderness. The JCD is no proponent of damaging cars or shops, the BCL and others should have no reasons to go for it either. But why are such things happening? The political parties know little of constructive politics and are unable to enforce strict party discipline — that's why. Today there is hardly any difference between a political organisation and a mob when they are out in the street. If political parties or their front organisations get so unruly, they set examples for *mashtans* to emulate and even extend it into newer areas of lawlessness. Political parties must discipline their activists and show the way for others.

WHEN somebody reacts, reasonably and critically to a proposal, the proposer should be grateful. I am grateful to Professor A K Monawwar Uddin Ahmad for his piece (Daily Star, October 10) written in response to my piece of September 24, and bearing the same title, Oxford of the East: Living With a Myth.

I find that Professor Ahmad is in general agreement with my main argument which centres round a false belief that Dhaka University was known as the Oxford of the East. I found no basis to this belief, and I tried to trace the source of a legend that has gained in currency. Professor Ahmad has contested — the suggestion that, in view of the chronic malaise afflicting the oldest university of the country, the Senate itself could perhaps institute a commission of enquiry, with the purpose of a thorough check-up of its present state of health. Apparently Professor Ahmad is in agreement with me as far as the necessity of a check-up is concerned, but he disagrees on the Senate's competence to do so. He quotes from the DU Order of 1973, Article 22, setting down the powers and duties of the Senate. The article was repeated, word for word, in the 73 Acts of Rajshahi, Chittagong

On Committees and Commissions

No doubt the Parliament can give us a new Act for the Universities and perhaps it will at an appropriate time. But before we expect the government to set up a commission to make recommendations on the basis of which the Parliament can legislate, what stops the Senate to form committee or commissions (not a commission) to do the groundwork?

and Jahangirnagar Universities, in Articles 22, 24 and 21 respectively. The same is true of the universities established in recent years, with the exception of Islamic, Sylhet and Open, where the Act does not provide for a Senate. The Bangla text, in these cases, is a verbatim translation of the English texts of the 73 Acts.

True, the relevant article is silent on whether or not the Senate can institute a commission of enquiry. Much depends on the meaning and interpretation of the third clause of the article: exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may be conferred or imposed upon it by this Order/Act or the Statutes. Also, we have to decide whether or not the three clauses are fully inclusive or leave out much not specifically mentioned.

Personally, I have failed to make out what was in the mind of the law-makers in this case. The Senate is on the top of the list of the authorities of the University. The Syndicate comes second in the order of the

authorities, and it is made clear that The Syndicate shall be the executive body of the University. In the earlier, 1920 Dacca University Act, the Court was referred to as the legislative body of the University. To quote M A Rahim, (History of the University of Dhaka), The Act vested the supreme legislative power in the Court. (p-24).

As the Act asserts it is, what is the policy-making authority, if it is not the Senate? Are we to understand, or are we not, that by implication the Senate is? The Senate of the 73 Act has every appearance of being the successor body to the Court of the 1920 Act.

Professor Ahmad thinks that, under the 73 DU Order, the

quity commissions as such, at least to visit the universities or to have them visited by teams of experts as and when necessary (Sections 5(2) of the Order). The provision looks innocuous, and the right has never been exercised, to the best of my knowledge. A right, which has not been exercised for a period of twenty-three years, may well have lapsed.

The same may be said of the Senate. Whatever authority has been vested in the Senate by the Order/Act has hardly been invoked by the successive Senates. Serious and persisting problems, some of them often underlined in official statements, as also in the annual report of the UGC, go virtually unnoticed by the Senate when it meets annually to consider the budget.

I can appreciate Professor Ahmad's disenchantment with both the Senate and the Syndicate, both being deeply coloured by factional politics. But then this is a syndrome which is all pervasive and the nation as a whole has to make a supreme

effort to get rid of this debased form of politics. No doubt the Parliament can give us a new Act for the Universities and perhaps it will at an appropriate time. But before we expect the government to set up a commission to make recommendations on the basis of which the Parliament can legislate, what stops the Senate to form committee or commissions (not a commission) to do the groundwork? There should be some consensus across the nation's civil society spearheaded by the academic community in respect of our vision of a university.

Is it too difficult to identify the quarters that have developed vested interest in the universities either serve as teachers or attend as students? Can those who have vested interest in the university also serve as guardians of the same? These and other issues of governance can and should be sorted out initially by ourselves. And with a few points of consensus emerging at the ground level, the task of a commission will be easier, not only in the formulation but also in the implementation of recommendations. Before urging the government to do something of our behalf, we have a task to do ourselves.

PASSING CLOUDS

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui

Again, The Chancellor stated that the University was a self-governing institution and the Court was its supreme body and the Court was so constituted as to embrace representatives of diverse interests. (p-35, bottom). While I quote from the History, I am not forgetting that the 73 Order/Act is not the same as the 1920 Act. What I fail to understand is the comparative vagueness of the 73 Act about the status of the Senate. If the Syndicate is the executive authority of the univer-

sity, and it is made clear that The Syndicate shall be the executive body of the University. In the earlier, 1920 Dacca University Act, the Court was referred to as the legislative body of the University. To quote M A Rahim, (History of the University of Dhaka), The Act vested the supreme legislative power in the Court. (p-24).

Even though it was not the usual rigour of party discipline which bound the participants, the fact remained that they agreed to be identified with the League. On that basis, Jinnah claimed to represent the Muslims. Subhas Chandra Bose, then Congress president, provoked Jinnah's wrath when he said that the League was the biggest Muslim body, but not the only one. Jinnah said in reply: The League is not aware that any other Muslim political

organisation has ever made a claim that it can speak or negotiate on behalf of the Muslims of India.

There is no doubt that 1937 was a watershed for Hindu-Muslim relationships. For then on the differences which were earlier based on prejudice and social attitudes between the two communities began to be institutionalised. Jinnah took full advantage of the situation and stoked the fires of separation from then onwards.

Uttar Pradesh thus became the cradle of Pakistan. Perhaps, as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad argued later, "If the UP League's offer of cooperation had been

Partition: Jinnah Insisted that He Alone Represented Muslims

When Jinnah took over its presidency on March 4, 1934, his first task was to make it a representative body by bringing the Muslim leaders of various convictions under one umbrella. For this purpose, he convened a conference at Lucknow. Not all who attended the conference were Muslim Leaguers.

WHILE Congress went from one civil disobedience movement to another, the Muslim League propagated among Muslims that it was "fighting for the supremacy of Hinduism and the submergence of Muslims."

One result of the civil disobedience movement was the two Round Table conference convened at London — the first in November 1930 and the second a few months later. Both conferences failed because there was no agreement on the number of seats that the minorities should have in various legislatures. The British could claim with some justification that the fault lay with the Muslim League and the Congress Party; with the Hindus and the Muslims, and not with them.

One of the delegates to the round table conference was Muhammad Iqbal, a renowned Urdu poet. He is said to be the author of the idea of partition. He said: "I would like to see the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state... The formation of a consolidated North, North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India."

But it was Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, a lawyer in England, who three years later coined the word Pakistan meaning thereby the "land of the pure." In his inaugural address to Bazm-i-Shill, he said: "North of India is Muslim and we will keep it Muslim. Not only that, we will make it a Muslim state. But this we can do only if and

when we and our north cease to be Indian, i.e. the sooner we shed Indianism, the better for us all, for Islam."

But Edward Thompson, a British writer, has said that Iqbal had told him that though he advocated Pakistan because of his position as president of one of the Muslim League sessions, he felt sure that it would be injurious to India as a whole and to Muslims specially.

Since the question of communal electorates was the rock on which the two round-table conferences foundered, Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress began to play it down. In the Central Assembly, when the British White Paper was processed to give more power to Indians, the Congress Party stayed neutral on separate electorates. Jinnah, however, supported their continuation "until a substitute is agreed upon by the various communities concerned."

Nationalist Muslims were equivocal in their attitude, even though they knew that the Congress ticket for Muslim candidates would be a dead weight in the elections. Some among them joined together to form the Muslim Unity Board, so as to appeal to the Muslim electorate.

They hoped to cooperate with the Congress after the poll. But this strategy annoyed the Hindus. The moment the Nationalist Muslims looked like

giving indirect support to the communal electorates, the Indian press, owned mostly by Hindus, branded them communalists.

So far, the League was still a party of the Muslim electorate dominated by the tilted gentry and toadies who went as far as the government allowed them to go. When Jinnah took over its presidency on March 4, 1934, his first task was to make it a representative body by bringing the Muslim leaders of

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kuldip Nayar writes from New Delhi

various convictions under one umbrella. For this purpose, he convened a conference at Lucknow. Not all who attended the conference were Muslim Leaguers.

There was Sikandar Hayat, head of the Punjab's Unionist Party, a body of agriculturists, which included Hindus. Jinnah had won him over by promising to work for full autonomy for his state. There was Fazlul Haq who had won a seat in the Bengal assembly on the Krishak Praja ticket, not on the Muslim League's. They went along with Jinnah because he promised not to interfere in their states' politics.

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Uttar Pradesh thus became the cradle of Pakistan. Perhaps, as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad argued later, "If the UP League's offer of cooperation had been

accepted, the Muslim League party would for all practical purposes have merged in the Congress."

Intriguing, nonetheless, is Jinnah's remark to Louis Heren, then the New Delhi correspondent of The Times, London, within a few months of the formation of Pakistan that "Nehru was responsible for partition; had he agreed to the Muslim League joining the UP Congress government in 1937, there would have been no Pakistan."

After making this observation during a talk with me in London on October 3, 1971, Heren recapitulated his meeting with Jinnah in a letter to me thus: "I recall that we (Jinnah and Heren) were together one evening, when while acknowledging the creation of Pakistan and the political necessity for it, I regretted the partition of the Indian subcontinent. I can recall referring to the tragedy — for anybody who knew it in the past — of the division of the Old Indian Army and the ICS. Strangely, he acknowledged all this, and then went on to blame Nehru for partition as I said when we met in London."

Whether Jinnah was trying to shake off responsibility for the division of the subcontinent or merely trying to blame Nehru with whom he invariably clashed is anybody's guess. What Jinnah was referring to was Nehru's refusal to give two

seats to the Muslim League in the United Provinces' cabinet. But this was probably an attempt to over-simplify the situation.

But what could Nehru do when a UP League leader, Khaliquzzaman, added to the draft agreement with the Congress a covenant that "the Muslim League party members in UP will be free to vote in accordance with their conscience in communal matters"? What was meant by communal matters? Where did one draw the line?

Nehru explained to Khaliquzzaman a few weeks later, on June 27, 1937: "As far as I am concerned I have carried on in the past and I shall carry on in the future, thinking more of the principles I cherish than of the results that may follow from my actions... I have found life often enough a heavy burden to carry, but I have had some consolation from the fact that I have tried to adhere to some fixed principles."

In 1959, when Nehru learnt from Azad's book that the latter had blamed him for giving a new lease of life to the Muslim League, he explained that as he had been eager to introduce land reforms in UP he had been averse to the idea of the League, which represented "some big landlords", joining the state cabinet.)

After rejecting the League's offer, Nehru declared that henceforward only two forces counted, the British Raj and the Congress. But Jinnah countered by saying that there was a third power: the League. How right he was!

of treatment from my own national flag carrier? However, I must admit that this was much less humiliating compared to the one I experienced while traveling through Saudia Airlines in early part of 1985. I was returning from Medina to Jeddah after performing ziarah. During that disgusting journey during 3rd week for Feb. 1985, I together with two other Bangladeshi teachers despite having boarding cards were asked to get down from bus leading to the aircraft without giving any reasons whatsoever. It appeared as though the officer in-charge, like an angel, was dropped there from heaven to take us away from other fellow passengers possessing the similar boarding passes.

Coming back to the humiliating journey by Biman, I have no hesitation to admit that Biman offers one of the cheapest journey and the services rendered by the smartly dressed crew members on board are simply wonderful. Once I settled down in the executive class of the Air Bus (BGO 74), I have come to know from two out of 10-11 ill-fated passengers that Mr Kabir Hussain having ticket no 997-4202-709-203-0 paying Tk 5386 and the other Mr. Ramzan Ali with ticket no. 997-4101-274-0 paying Taka 2340 for upgradation. In fact, all these passengers with re-confirmed tickets who were compelled to pay extra money ranging from \$56 to 129 or 'ts taka equivalent were repenting for the sufferings they had to undergo for arranging such a huge amount for which they were not mentally prepared.

Now to cut the story short, the reason which explains this malpractice is the secret dealings of the unscrupulous ones to make with the blood-sucking manpower agents who are alleged to have been charging seventy to eighty thousand taka from a single worker coming to Malaysia to seek his fortune. The officers at the counter issuing boarding passes are simply bought by a handful of dishonest manpower agents (vide Human Resources Minister of Malaysia, Mr Ah Lek's allegation published in the New Straits Times dated 20th July, page 4). These kinds of malpractice have been going on for years. Last time I had gone through similar kind of ordeal was in June 1992.

Professors Ataul Haq Pramantik International Islamic University Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

BTV's 'Sabinaye Jigghasa'

Sir, We congratulate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on her question and answer programme on the TV marking the completion of 100 days of her government. This is indeed one of the steps towards our march to accountability and transparency in the government with a view to institutionalising democracy in our country.

In her 'Sabinaye Jigghasa' live TV programme which is first of its kind in the country, Sheikh Hasina has highlighted the performances of her 37 activities during 100 days in power. However, she has indirectly criticised the former BNP government now in opposition for all problems created in the country. We feel that such rough edges of sarcasm are apt to lacerate the feeling of a sensible and politically neutral person.

We strongly feel that government for governance's sake and opposition for opposition's sake are by no means a solution to country's manifold mounting socio-economic and political problems. We are grateful that replying to a question Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the BTV authorities also to arrange a 'Sabinaye Jigghasa' programme for the Leader of the Opposition.

We feel and suggest that the leaders of different political parties in the city of Saigassad may be given equal opportunity to express their views and policies on various national problems and issues through BTV's 'Sabinaye Jigghasa' programme.

O H Kabir  
6, Hare Street  
Wari, Dhaka-1203

Load-shedding and water scarcity

Sir, Intolerable weather is prevailing over the city now. City dwellers have become irritated from unfavourable weather and load-shedding. No water in the city is getting. The public electric supply, The PDB is producing only 1,888 megawatts of electricity whereas our demand is about 2075 mw. So

all over the country electricity supply system has apparently collapsed. Most of the industries and productive sectors are in great problem to maintain their usual production. No doubt, it will affect our national economy in the near future. On the other hand, due to load-shedding, WASA's pumps cannot work properly.

As a result, water scarcity has become acute in the city. Thousands of people not getting even drinking water. Moreover final examinations of the schools and colleges will start very soon. So student are anxious while they prepare for the exams. My earnest request to the government and authorities concerned, please take proper and effective measures immediately and rescue 80 million people from suffering.

Md Abdul Mannan  
Room no- 15  
Shahidullah Hall, DU

The Fast Billioners

Sir, The Daily Star is one of the few English news papers of the country which boldly encourages writers to freely express even the contradictory issues. "The Paralyzed Generation" is one example. I hope my article "The Fast Billioners" is no exception! Late Zahurul Islam was one of the few Bangladeshis, who were among the recognised rich business class along with the Adamjees, B-awanes, Ispahanes and the Harrons. After our Liberation many Bangladeshis rightly took the opportunity to earn fortunes. Firstly, through trading, indenting and later industries. The riches earned by them is nothing extra-ordinary, but much within the normal norms. The sudden accumulation of the excessive wealth and riches by a few does not in any way fall within the normal circumstances! The quick expansion within one generation-time really arises a lot of questions in ones mind, 1. Who are they? 2. How could they earn that lot? After all none of them were after any landed aristocratic families nor from rich families. Everyone blames m/s Dundee Dyeing for everything but it now appears that

some companies must have been favoured by the government banks during a certain regime somewhere in the past. These companies no doubt a solid contributors to the nation but we as citizens of the country do have the right to ask: How have they accumulated such wealth?

A Citizen  
Bara Megbazar, Dhaka

A note of caution

Sir, A smartly dressed young man of about 25 turned up in my apartment building one afternoon when I was alone in my flat asking to see me by name and posing as an acquaintance of a certain friend of mine in the US managed to gain entry into my flat. He claimed to be the son of a certain Addl. Secretary here studying in the US and coming to Dhaka after 9 years and said he had brought some expensive gifts for me from my friend which I could collect from his house in Baridhara in the evening.

He however said he had to pay about 10 thousand taka as customs duty on my goods by borrowing from a fellow acquaintance and was at that moment going to Sonargaon hotel to pay him off by encashing his T/Cs. If I could give him the money it would save him from selling his foreign exchange on my account. The young man presented a lot of facts and information which did well to establish his bonafide but he aroused my suspicion by his poor English and bad accent. A man staying in the US for 9 years could not be that non-profligate, I thought. I told him that I did not have the money with me but I would arrange for it in the evening if he would just show me his house. I promised to drop him off at Sonargaon also.

I took him out in my car and when I turned toward Baridhara he sensed my suspicion and jumped out of the running car getting himself nearly killed and escaped. The house number and his phone number he gave me were all phony. I saved myself from being taken is only by outsmarting him. The point is that these sorts of criminals are increasingly becoming active in the city. Since the incident I came to know about another similar act in which a lady who returned from the Middle East was cheated. How they manage to collect convincing information about a victim and their mode of operation is unknown. Possibly these thugs operate in groups

Mishandling of passengers by Biman

Sir, I was one of the unfortunate passengers traveling by Biman from Dhaka to Kuala Lumpur on 19th July (BG 074, FR 19 Jul., 1996 12:30). In fact, I was a transit passenger. My journey from Kuala Lumpur began on 8th July (BG 081, Mo 08 Jul.). On my way back from London on 15th July (BG 056, MO15 Jul.) I stopped at Dhaka for two days. Having traveled all the way from Geneva to Dhaka via London, I was completely exhausted and worn out. Despite all physical complaints with a little sleep for two days, I as a genuine passenger tried to follow the repeatedly made sweet announcement by the Biman's crew members for reconfirming the onward journey by Biman before 72 hours. Immediately after landing at Dhaka, on 15th July at around 3 pm, I rushed to Biman office at Motijhel and reconfirmed the ticket for the above-mentioned onward journey from Dhaka to Kuala Lumpur on 19th July.

On 19th July, I reached Biman counter two hours before the scheduled flight at around 12.30 pm. To my shock the officer in charge of checking passports, tickets and of issuing boarding card told me that he had no boarding card left for me. I can imagine all other passengers in the queue like me got a shock of their lives since most of us were already working in Malaysia and expected to resume duties on time. The worst cases included those whose visa would expire 2-3 days after the proposed journey on 19th July. Desperately, I gathered courage and talked to the gentleman sitting inside the wooden room behind the counter and explained my position. Many others also expressed their helplessness, too. Having listened to my situation, the gentleman responded by saying that in case any passenger is off-loaded, I would be given the chance of having a boarding card. However, the fortune did not turn to

my favour.

Leaving behind the ailing wife with other family members in a foreign land, it is not difficult for anyone to imagine the uncertainties one can be in such a situation like this. When I proposed to the said gentleman for providing a seat in the executive (J) class he instructed me to pay extra \$56 for no fault of mine. When contacted, even the duty manager did not do anything for us. The funniest thing of all was when the gentleman at the sales counter expressed his ignorance of the latest circular for upgrading the economy class ticket to J class on payment of \$56 instead of previous circular to the effect of \$129. The gentleman at the sales counter was not ready to be convinced by the officer who appeared to be senior to him by position since he already charged \$129 or its equivalent Taka of 5086 from some passengers of that flight.

The officer at the sales counter pleaded of not receiving the latest circular for upgrading at the cost of \$56. As the good senses prevailed he ultimately agreed to accept \$56 for upgrading my ticket. Before leaving the sales counter I enquired as to whether I would be required to pay travel tax of Taka 1800 since I was a transit passenger and my ticket issuing agent at Kuala Lumpur (Economy Travel) informed me of including taxes within the ticket fare.

Totally heart broken and sweating as I was passing through the last check-points, a blue-uniform officer insisted on my paying travel tax. When I told him about the information I received from the sales counter, he became outrageous and shouted to silence me by saying that I was talking too much. With all the heavy hand luggage the contents of which included fresh honey from the Sundarbans, fresh green seeded national vegetables like potol and kakrols packed by the near and dear ones, I had to run towards the bank to pay the travel tax.

Despite my request, the blue-uniform officer did not even show the courtesy of allowing me to leave my hand luggage at the counter for a couple of minutes. After I was taken to the bus leading to the aircraft, I was pondering over the humiliating treatment at the counters. I asked myself: did I look like one of those unfortunate Bangladesh workers with defective travel documents? Having travelled almost all the continents during last three decades, did I deserve this kind

of treatment from my own national flag carrier? However, I must admit that this was much less humiliating compared to the one I experienced while traveling through Saudia Airlines in early part of 1985. I was returning from Medina to Jeddah after performing ziarah. During that disgusting journey during 3rd week for Feb. 1985, I together with two other Bangladeshi teachers despite having boarding cards were asked to get down from bus leading to the aircraft without giving any reasons whatsoever. It appeared as though the officer in-charge, like an angel, was dropped there from heaven to take us away from other fellow passengers possessing the similar boarding passes.

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