

FOCUS

Democracy is a Practical Necessity

by Boutros Boutros-Ghali

In today's world, freedom of thought, the impetus to creativity and the will to involvement are all critical to economic, social and cultural progress, and they are best fostered and protected within democratic systems.

OVER the last half century, the meaning of democracy has shifted considerably, in world affairs. In 1945, democracy was a clear concept as defined by the Allied nations in opposition to fascism. With the onset of the cold war, democracy came to be propounded from two perspectives, East and West.

This is not to say that democracy is without its detractors. In some quarters, the charge is made that there can be no democracy in times of trouble or war, that democracy itself leads to disorder.

Democratic institutions and processes channel competing interests into arenas of discourse and provide means of compromise which can be respected by all participants in debates, thereby minimising the risk that differences or disputes will erupt into armed conflict or confrontation.

Democratic institutions and processes within states may like-wise be conducive to peace among states. The accountability and transparency of democratic governments to their own citizens, who understandably, will have to bear its risks and burdens, may help to restrain recourse to military conflict with other states.

a culture of democracy are involved in a dispute, the transparency of their regimes may help to prevent accidents, avoid reactions based on emotion or fear and reduce the likelihood of surprise attack.

Lacking the legitimacy or real support offered by free elections, authoritarian governments all too often have recourse to intimidation and violence in order to suppress internal dissent. They tend to reject institutions such as a free press and an independent judiciary which provide the transparency and accountability necessary to discourage such governmental manipulation of citizens.

It is true that the introduction of democratic practices into formerly authoritarian or war torn states may contribute to civil conflict by opening channels for free expression, including the expression of hatred. Free and fair elections can be followed by the suppression of those defeated. There is also a danger that strengthening civil society without also addressing state capacity may undermine the stability of the state.

These difficult questions of prioritisation and timing suggest several important lessons. First and foremost, it is essential that each state itself decide the form, pace and character of its democratisation process.

through popular suffrage rather than intimidation or force; that political opponents and minorities have a right to express their views; and that there can be loyal and legal opposition to the government in power.

In today's world, freedom of thought, the impetus to creativity and the will to involvement are all critical to economic, social and cultural progress.

and they are best fostered and protected within democratic systems. In this sense, the economic act of privatisation can be as well a political act, enabling greater human creativity and participation.

Democracy is not an affirmation of the individual at the expense of the community; it is through democracy that individual and collective rights, the rights of persons and the rights of peoples, can be reconciled.

Many different balances can be struck between the rights of individuals and the rights of the community within the context of democratic politics. Democratic processes are the most reliable way to ensure that these balances are genuinely reflective of a people's broader culture, which, in every society, must itself serve as the ballast for the healthy functioning of democracy.

Democracy today is receiving widespread acknowledgment for its capacity to foster good governance, which is perhaps the single-most important development variable within the control of individual states.

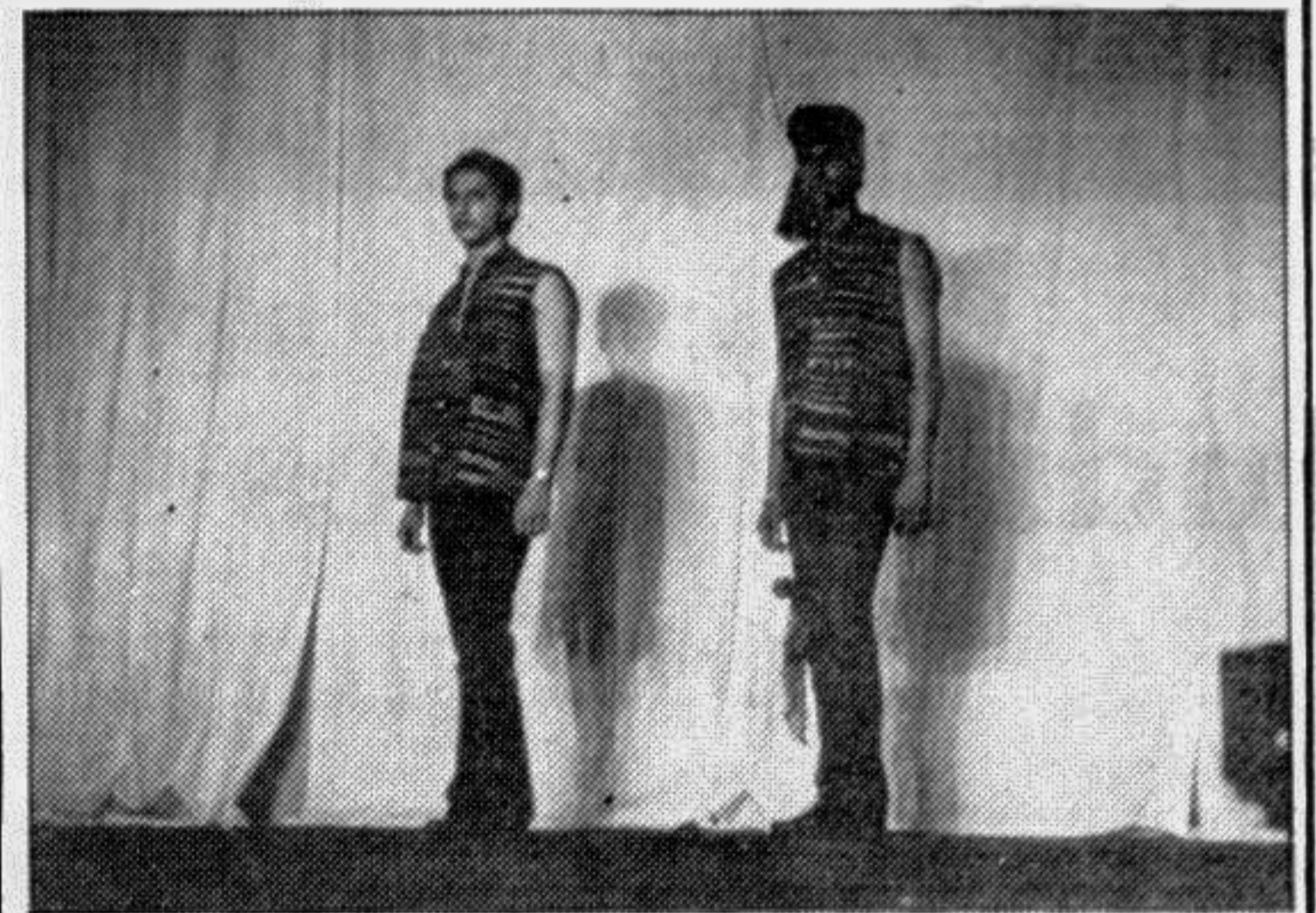
popular concerns. In development, they increase the likelihood that state goals reflect broad societal concerns and that government is sensitive to the societal and environmental costs of its development policies.

Non-democratic states over time tend to generate conditions inimical to development: politicised military rule; a weak middle class; a population constrained to silence; prohibitions on travel, censorship; restrictions on the practice of religion or imposition of religious obligations; and pervasive and often institutionalised corruption.

(Excerpt from 'An Agenda for Democratisation' by the author who is former UN Secretary General) - UNIC

Dhaka Day by Day The Gala Charity Event

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed



The fund-raising fashion show started around 6:25 PM or so, after almost one and a half hours' delay. It wasn't the organizers' fault really. The Chief Guest, the Honourable Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf arrived late and that hampered the timely starting of the event.

The models in the perfect Textile saris in soft pastel summer hues looked ethereal and received a lot of applause. The mostly thin models carried the pure silk saris in striking earthy colours of rust, brown and green very well indeed.

There was an interesting act in which three to four leather jacket and denim clad men took turns to follow gorgeous damsels on the ramp. The guys were (so it seemed) desperately trying to make peace with their girlfriends for showing up late. The girls remained aloof and relentless till the very end, when the happy couples left the stage hand in hand.

Shetuli's flowing shawl-alwar kameezes and Bidisha's stunning flaired silk skirts with matching embroidered blouses and dupattas stole the show. But it seemed they saved the best for last. The Bexi Fabric creations were simply sensational. Bright red sleeveless top with black Chinese buttons paired with an A-line skirt or Palazzo pants and the simple yet elegant skirt or trouser suits in combinations of blue and white, black and red and black and white drew excellent response from the crowd.

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Chained Children

by Dr KM Maqsudur Rahman

The question arises in the minds of many about how we could prevent such kind of tortured education and what should be the adequate punishment for the torturers?

THE BBC's TV news of Asia Today at 7:30 am on 27/1/97 showed how the young students were tortured at a religious school here. They were not only chained but the chains were attached with heavy weights of different shapes and sizes.

me of the mentally retarded children's faces that I used to see at Punjab Mental Hospital, Lahore while I was serving there in early fifties. However, many parents probably do not know the existence of such brutal torture that is inflicted on their children.

First on a tip the police detected existence of such a school in Chittagong some months ago and very soon they detected a similar institution in Dhaka. These are not the only two such schools that exist in this country. According to BBC's commentary there are perhaps many more such institutions at different places in the country.

considerable number of the children will ultimately become burden on the society due to this. When the whole world is moving in the forward direction, these groups of teachers are pushing the children backward to an environment of hell.

In recent months we often hear about child abuse that occurs in different type of industries, service sectors and other occupations. However, this kind of torture has surpassed all the ignoble activities that are committed by the ignominious people.

The question arises in the minds of many about how we could prevent such kind of tortured education and what should be the adequate punishment for the torturers? What should be done to the parents concerned who know the prevalence of such torture in the school of their ward(s)?

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Thursday 13th February (All programmes are in local time. There may be changes in the programmes)

BTV 3:00 Opening Announcement Al-Curon Programme Summary 3:10 News in Bangla 3:15 Releascast of selected programme from TV Archive 4:00 News in Bangla 4:15 TV Coaching 4:45 Cartoon: Shazzam 5:25 National Television School Debate 6:30 Sor Goal 6:50 Religion and Life 7:00 The News 7:25 Sandha Matinee 8:00 News in Bangla 8:25 Arabian Nights 9:00 Package Programme 10:00 The News 10:25 Film show: Switch 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Friday's programme summary 11:40 Close down

by Frame 9:00 Jump Start VJ Alessandria 10:00 Frame by Frame 11:30 The Vibe VJ Luke 12:00noon Rewind VJ Sophia



Arabian Nights on BTV, Tonight at 8:30

06:00am BBC World News 06:10 Newsnight 07:00 BBC Newsroom inc. World Business Report/Asia Today 7:24 Hours 10:00 BBC World Headlines 10:05 World Focus: The Giant Awakes 11:00 BBC Newsday 12:00 BBC World Headlines 12:05 World Focus: Naked City 13:00 BBC World News 03:30 Time Out: Holiday 04:00 BBC Newsdesk 06:00 BBC World Headlines 06:05 World Focus: Horizon 07:00 BBC World News 07:15 World Business Report 07:30 BBC Newshour Asia & Pacific 08:30 Time Out: Top Gear 09:00 BBC World Headlines 09:05 World Focus: The Giant Awakes 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: News 11:30 The Clothes Show 12:00 The World Today 02:00 BBC World Headlines 02:05 World Focus: Assignment 2:50 Earth Report 03:00 BBC World News 03:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 04:00 BBC World Report inc. World Business Report/24 Hours 5:00 BBC World Report inc. World Business Report/24 Hours

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