

Corruption Profiles

How pervasive is corruption in Bangladesh? The answer to this question may not be simple and direct. But that most people consider it one of the country's major problems is indicative of the tentacles it has spread in to our social fabrics.

The Judiciary's placement rather high on the corruption list looks somewhat surprising and the Accountant General of Bangladesh (AGB) office not figuring at the top of the list too may look amazing.

Now if this is the way the permanent bureaucracy works, what benign touch a political government can bring to bear on the system of governance? The vested interests have corrupting influences and staunchly defy political government's programmes for any house-cleaning.

Sincere Good Wishes

Fifty years ago freedom came to the subcontinent. Freedom from colonial control and exploitation. And freedom came to the dismembered parts of this 1.6 million square miles of landmass as to its 500 million people in disparate levels of quality and quantity.

How have we subcontinentals fared in this half century of freedom from alien domination? Spectacular gains have been made in literacy and longevity of our populations. Earnings and spendings by the states have grown exponentially.

Freedom came at midnight between August 14 and 15 and in two portions. Pakistan took the anterior one fixing its Independence Day on today, August 14. On this their auspicious day we wish the people of Pakistan our sincerest wishes for their progress towards a truly free society.

Pakistan's initial problem started with reducing its eastern wing into a colony in every respect. That weakened Pakistan and set unhealable disaffection in the east. To stall its own reduction as a result, the military usurpers mounted a campaign of unalloyed genocide on the Bengalee people in time for give but never forget.

Pakistan, now under a mature and changed Prime Minister in Nawaz Sharif, is poised to come to terms with India. And India led by Gujral is equally responsive to the need for the two subcontinental giants to lead the way for peace in South Asia.

A healthy Pakistan we pray for. Because that will capably help us all partners in the subcontinent to march ahead in step with each other.

For a Pleasant Passage

The DMC and other authorities obviously forgot, in unison, to take the mastan factor into account when embarking on the underpass project. Now with the three city underpasses hardly a hundred days old, the mastans have duly taken over the facilities doing whatever they please with the shops and shoppers and the users.

The passage through the underpasses must be truly pleasant or there will be no point in having them. This is a challenge for DMC to win the first ground free of mastan bullying and insecurity.

"Yes Prime Minister" Does More Harm than Good to PM Hasina

by Abdul Hannan

For a political leader home matters more than external affairs as that is the base of power and authority... A democratic leader cannot afford an image of privilege but needs to keep to roots to demonstrate that he/she cares about people, to assure people that their interest and concerns are constant in his/her heart.

THE press was awash with criticism about Prime Minister Hasina's frequent foreign travels, particularly her recent long absence from home on a private visit to Miami to remain at the bed-side of her daughter during and after her child birth.

British Press that Tony Blair was too much in touch with foreign affairs at the expense of domestic preoccupations. The costly haidro by Mrs Blair who is an eminent and prosperous lawyer in her own right, in course of her recent visit to New York was a publicity disaster.

she forgot during her long absence abroad that she is not only the mother or grand-mother of some one but is also the Prime Minister. She has to explain her every step for becoming the representative of the people.

or cares little about public opinion of lumpen ordinary voters. Prof Dr Nurul Islam's advice to Prime Minister while launching the publication of his book on Bangladesh the other day seems most appropriate when he said, "Not that all who are close around you may not be yours but beware of those who are flattering you and trying to make you believe the wrong is right."

she went on 13 foreign tours and she is expected to go on visits to Indonesia and Philippines next month, that there was slow pace of administration during Prime Minister's absence and that a number of ministers taking advantage of the opportunity of her absence completed foreign tours and warned that these news may not enhance the acceptance of her government by the people.

BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of Sixth Prosecution Witness

Cross-examination of Havilder (ret'd) M Sohrab Ali, prosecution witness in Bangabandhu murder case, was completed on Tuesday.

Following are the excerpts from examination by advocate Abdur Razzaq Khan, defence counsel for accused Hon Capt (ret'd) Abdul Wahab Joardar.

Q: When were you interrogated by CID police?

A: From 3pm to about 5:30pm.

Q: Who did interrogate you and take down your statement?

A: The person who asked me questions noted down my statement.

Q: Didn't you tell anyone, excepting CID, the incident of August 15, 1975?

A: None asked me and I didn't tell anyone.

Q: Did you talk to anyone about Bangabandhu's house, SB, police or any employee there before, after or during the incident?

A: No.

Q: Could one see from where you were standing a person entering the house or going out of it?

A: Yes.

Q: Did anyone ask you to hoist flag on August 15, 1975?

A: No.

Q: Not even Havilder Gani?

A: No, he didn't ask.

Q: You said at the CID office that "Havilder Gani asked me to hoist the flag."

A: I can't remember.

Q: Didn't you tell the IO that "the next guard party came when I was on duty."

A: Yes, I said, I don't know if he wrote it or not.

Q: Did he read out what was written down?

A: Yes, it was read out.

Q: You didn't see Subedar Major Abdul Wahab Joardar.

A: Yes, I saw him.

Q: The incident of adorning new rank badges is false.

A: I told the truth.

Examination by advocate Khar Saifur Rahman, defence counsel for accused Col (relieved) Syed Farooqur Rahman.

Q: Were you a gunner of artillery?

A: Yes.

Q: The ammunition of a gunner is shell.

A: Yes, shell.

Q: Please give a brief description of shell.

(Prosecution lawyer Ramjan Ali, with a laughter, said give him paper and pen. He will sketch a shell).

A: It is made of iron. It has splinters and hits after being defused.

Q: When did you come to the house of occurrence?

A: I started my duty at 8am on August 14. My last shift was from 2am to 4am on August 15.

Q: When did you leave the house?

A: I went to the guard room at 4am.

(A dissatisfied Rahman repeatedly asked him when did he leave the house. Judge Kazi Golam Rasul advised the witness to understand the question first and then answer).

Q: Were you free after the duty was over?

A: No, we were under the guard commander.

Q: What was the name of guard commander?

A: Havilder Gani.

Q: Did you hear that artillery shell hit the Moham-madpur area?

A: I heard the sound of three to four shells.

Q: Did you hear later that human beings were also killed by the shell?

A: I don't know.

Q: Did the inmates of the house ask the security personnel to resist the attack?

A: No.

Q: Wasn't there any resistance step?

A: No step was taken.

Q: Did Sheikh Kamal not call you to resist?

A: He requested me to go to him. I don't know if he asked me to resist.

Q: Did you hear grenade explosion at that house on the day?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: Do you know Sheikh Muhammad Yunus? He was a sepoy under you.

A: I can't remember now.

Q: Was Havilder Ashraf Ali with you at the house at road number 31?

A: Not among 25 of us.

Q: Was there anyone outside the 25 at the house at road number 31?

A: No.

Q: Where did you go from the

house of road number 31?

A: To Ganobhaban on August 16 afternoon. All of our unit went to Comilla on the night of August 17.

Q: Were you closed on August 17?

A: I don't know the meaning of "close". We went to Ganobhaban and from there to Comilla.

(Judge Kazi Golam Rasul said the meaning of close is that you are withdrawn).

Q: How long did you stay at the house of 31 number road?

A: For one month.

Q: Was there "lota-kambal" (pot and blanket) at the guard room?

A: There were beddings at the guard room.

Q: Of whose beddings?

A: Of six beddings.

Q: Was there any guard for the guard room?

A: I couldn't understand the question.

(Court: Was there separate guards for the guard room?)

A: The guards of the house looked after the guard room.

Q: Was there any rule to submit the arms at the guard room?

A: The arms were with us in our own responsibility.

Q: Was the main gate of Bangabandhu's house opposite to the door of the guard room?

A: No.

Q: Was the gate seen from the door and window of the guard room?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you have any business?

A: No.

Q: Do you get pension?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you have any other source of income?

A: I cultivate land.

(As Akbar commented it means he has become farmer from a gunner, Judge Kazi Golam Rasul wanted to know what is the meaning of gunner. Accused Hon Capt (ret'd) voluntarily stood up from the dock and informed the sepoy of artillery are called gunners as they operate guns).

Q: Do you cultivate lands of other people?

A: Not. It's not necessary.

Q: Where all of the eight of your group gunners?

A: There were one havildar and one nayek.

Q: When did you start duty on August 14?

A: My group started duty from 6 am. My first shift was from 8 am to 10 am.

Q: Two of you had discharged duty at the same time. Who was the other person?

A: Gunner Mannan.

Q: Were all the six gunners of your group under Gani from beginning to end of your duties at that house?

A: Yes.

Q: Was the another group under Havilder Quddus from beginning to the end?

A: Yes.

Q: Who was the guard commander from 8 am to 10 am on August 14?

A: Havilder Gani.

say that whom of them you had seen first?

A: I didn't know them.

Q: Where had you been posted from 1976 until your retirement?

A: Savar, Bogra and Chittagong.

Q: Where is your pension office situated?

A: At Halishahar in Chittagong.

Q: Where were you since August 15 to November 3 in 1975?

A: Please explain the question.

(Court: You went to Comilla on August 17, 1975. How long did you stay there?)

A: I stayed there till December, 1976.

Q: You were not at the guard room. You didn't see anything. You have given false witness.

A: This is not true.

Examination by advocate Sharfuddin Mukul, defence counsel for accused former minister Taheruddin Thakur.

Q: Where do you live. Your dress does not indicate that you resides at village.

A: I reside at my village home in Bhupur thana.

Q: The place where Jamuna Bridge is being constructed?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there pucca road communication between Dhaka and Bhupur?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you file any case with the thana or court?

A: No, Sir.

Q: Was there any officer to assign your duties?

A: Yes, a JCO (junior commissioned officer).

Q: Were the ammunition distributed from the house at road number 31?

A: Not, from the guard room.

Q: Had your duty distribution been written?

A: Yes.

Q: This is not true that you were at the place of occurrence after your duty.

A: I was there.

Q: You are giving false statement after being influenced.

A: This is not true.

Q: You were sleeping from 2 am to 4 am on August 14.

A: No, correct.

Q: Your statement to the IO says that you mentioned about 18/19 guards posted at Bangabandhu's house. Who have made the mistake?

A: I mentioned the number as 25.

Q: You told about nayek Yusuf. It would be nayek Yunus.

A: Not true.

Q: With this the cross-examination of prosecution witness-6, Sohrab, was completed as the state defence counsels for the absconding accused questioned him earlier.

The court wanted to know who would be the next witness. Special PP Ramjan Ali informed the court that it would be Lt Col (LPR) Bashar.

The Judge Kazi Golam Rasul also wanted to know from Sohrab if there were two groups each comprising eight then where were the rest nine?

Sohrab told the court that 16 guards in two groups had discharged duty at the house of Bangabandhu. The rest were at the house at road number 31.

Later, the court was adjourned till 10:30 am Wednesday.

—UNB

Verbatim texts of further cross-examinations shall be published as and when they are received.

To the Editor

No-one trusts them ... I do

Sir, There is still hope for Bangladesh taking off towards a tiger economy. The DS of Aug 4 published a revolutionary photograph of two top leaders, one each belonging to the two major political parties, side by side, of the same size, on a wall, in a students' hall of the Dhaka University. This is a fundamental shift in attitude; even if accidental.

This is an encouraging sign in these days of political stalemate and deep bipolarity which has unfortunately divided the nation; let us hope, not for long. We must develop the art of tolerance, respect, consideration, and consensus, by cleansing our hearts first. We are still fighting amongst ourselves.

The students have once again done and shown something unique, which the political and other leaders could not

accomplish in many years. There is hope and trust in the younger generation.

A Senior Citizen Dhaka

Government flats for sale

Sir, Construction and sale of flats by housing companies is a brisk business these days in Dhaka. Both purchasers and housing companies stand to gain in the process. The purchasers are spared the pain of construction and the companies are making handsome profits.

But in many cases, the purchasers are deceived by the companies by selling one flat several times to several people. As a result, saving of a lifetime goes down the drain and the affected people are simply ruined.

Hence it is suggested that standard flats should also be constructed by PWD or RAJUK on their lands and sold to the

public on easy instalments. The main purpose here should not be profit but welfare of the people. Government officials may be given preference at the time of sale. It is expected that competition between public and private sectors would improve the quality and reduce the cost which would help the general public.

Will the Ministry of Works ponder over this? Saleh Ahmed Choudhury Dhaka Cantonment Dhaka.

Intellectuals' Monument

Sir, The government has declared that a monument will be erected at the yard located in Rayer Bazar, Dhaka where the intellectuals were assassinated in a planned manner by the collaborators on the eve of independence of the country in 1971. The spot is of special interest for our citizens as they

are inspired by the ideologies of the martyrs. But the location, being on the outskirts of the city and encircled by slums, is a difficult destination for interested visitors. No motorised vehicle can reach the place. One has to put on a combat dress to reach the spot lying in the marsh on the bank of the river Buriganga. Construction of a road from the Physical Training College, Mohammadpur point to the proposed site of the Intellectuals' Monument is very much essential to link the place of historic interest with the city road system.

We would, therefore, request the Minister for Public Works to kindly arrange for urgent development of the road from the Satmasjid Road to the Monument, along the eastern side of the Physical Training College.

Kazi Zillur Rahman House # 80, Road # 2 Mohammadi Housing Society Dhaka-1207

Q: Did you hide there?

A: I took shelter as there was heavy firing on the house.

Q: Did you take shelter so that no attacker can see you?

A: So that bullet can not hit me.

Q: Where you not afraid of attackers?

A: I didn't think about the attackers. I was afraid of shots.

(Court: Give answer to his question)

A: Obviously, I was afraid of the attackers.

Q: You have given false statement.

A: This is not correct.

Examination by advocate Habibur Rahman Mondol as his senior advocate Haji Nazrul Islam, defence counsel for Lt Col (ret'd) Sultan Shahriyar Rashid Khan, was absent.

Q: Did you see Brig Sakhat Hossain and Lt Col Abdul Hamid at that house during the incident?

A: I can't recall. There were many army officers.

Q: So, you will not be able to