

A Case for Private Support to Private Universities

by Dr Philip R Heckman

Education is an expensive labour-intensive exercise, never known to survive purely on a market basis anywhere in the world. If the non-profit universities of Bangladesh must pass all the costs to the students in tuition, the system will die...

WHEN the National Parliament of Bangladesh passed the Private University Bill on 5 August 1992, its intentions were very clear. It wanted to encourage the growth of non-government higher education to assist in the national task of educating and training the young people. It is accepted without argument that the funnel from those eligible to go on to higher education and the fortunate few who are able to continue is too severe, and the country is wasting its largest and most visible resource, its young people. So, the Act in 1992 encouraged the assistance of non-profit partners to assist and educate a share of the youth population at no cost to the government or to taxpayers.

There has been an encouraging response. A number of universities are chartered, more are waiting approval and several are beginning to serve significant numbers of students. All of these new institutions are dependent on operating income from two sources, tuition payments by students and charitable gifts of individuals, corporations or foundations that believe in the long-term benefits of a better-educated population. The charitable gifts should be publicly encouraged. Yet a government directive written almost at the same time as the passage of the Private University Bill eliminated tax incentives for such contributions. On the one hand the public action encouraged independent universities, on the other they discouraged their prosperity.

One problem is a national and cultural difficulty in understanding, in fact really believing, the motives and intentions of non-profit organizations. For obvious reasons, too many people and too few resources, there is a general view of life as a struggle to do well, to amass assets, influence and property. Even people who can fully understand the legal concept of non-profit, do not really believe that a large number of people would give away their

money and invest their energy, in fact, their lives, without some complicity, some hidden plan for future gain. So, there is always the need to emphasize again:

- Yes, it is correct that leaders and trustees are not paid.
- Yes, employees get salaries, but almost always less than if employed in private business or government.
- Yes, money and assets can be accrued, but they are never profit, and never distributed. They are frugally managed to educate more students or educate them better.
- Yes, the contributions received are voluntarily given and offer no tangible rewards to the giver.

Once that distinction is understood and believed, the obvious question is, "Should not these organizations and their donors be encouraged by public policy?" In one sense, donors have voluntarily increased their expenditures for public purposes. Tax deductions that encourage such gifts will increase their expenditures further.

What I've written so far is based on my own sense of persuasion tactics, things that I feel strongly, but I don't think I've ever written down.

A. Begin with something that both parties agree is an existing issue. In this case who will disagree that it is costing Bangladesh to deny education to so many who are capable and willing?

B. Remove the most serious stumbling blocks of language and understanding. In this case, I suggest that the non-profit organization must not only be understood legally, but also philosophically and emotionally. There is a segment of every society, this one included, that will voluntarily give their assets, even their lives, to improve the lot of others.

If we can persuade a listener that (a) we have a national problem in education and (b) that independent non-profit organizations cannot receive personal benefits and are truly servants of

society, the focus should turn to the present. What should we do next?

I suggest that the tone, particularly by anyone from IUB, is one of confidence. This confidence is based on five years' experience since the passage of the Private University Bill.

If we can demonstrate that a number of families and students are willing to pay higher tuition to cover education costs without government subsidy; and it is now clear that we can — We should prosper, grow and serve many more students.

If we can show that there are families and students who want to receive all or a large part of their education in their own country; and it is now clear that we can — We should keep and educate them at home.

If it is clear that the experience at the small independent university is more structured, less political, less dangerous, and potentially more productive; and it is now clear that it is — We must present the option in increasing numbers.

This is not well presented, but the point is clear. Five years ago we had hopes. Now we have evidence. However, the whole concept and the pioneer universities are in their infancy. They need broader support, physical plant improvements, endowments, stability and durability, all without government appropriations. Independence of operation is crucial to the concept and government assistance to the university would have to be rejected, if offered.

However, it is obvious that education is an expensive labour-intensive exercise, never known to survive purely on a market basis anywhere in the world. If the non-profit universities of Bangladesh must pass all the costs to the students in tuition, the system will die, and the government must again grapple with hundreds of thousands of youth every year. Generous donors are not a luxury, they are necessary and they must be lured and encouraged from all quarters. A tax deduction as incentive for contribu-

tions may reduce the national tax revenues, but many believe it will not. There is no argument on the other side, a large, healthy non-profit independent higher education system would reduce government expenditures.

There is, here and everywhere, widespread confusion about the cost of public services. Without a thorough analysis we confuse cost and price. I understand that the tuition fee at Dhaka University is very low and has not changed materially since 1921. That is not cost, that is price. The cost of an education at Dhaka University is arrived at by determining the total cost of institutional operation and the size of state grants and appropriations to meet that cost. To determine the cost per unit, per student, it is necessary to divide the number of graduates each year (not those attending, but those graduating) into state grants.

We will then know what it costs to educate a student at a state university. Who pays the cost is another matter. Everyone supports low tuition so that the best prepared students are not denied. But we seldom compute the cost to every tax payer in the country, including some of modest ability. It is highly possible that the emerging independent universities can, under the same analysis, demonstrate that they educate their graduates at less per unit than Dhaka University. And the issue of who pays is more defensible, the student and family, the consumers, pay the majority. Why should we put a system like this at risk by discouraging potential donors.

The Private University Bill began a national movement that must be nurtured to do what the Bill intended. We need a return of tax deductions for charitable gifts.

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BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of Fifteenth Prosecution Witness

Following are the excerpts of Wednesday's cross-examination of PW 15 Commodore Golam Rabbani by Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman, the defence counsel for accused Lt Col Syed Farooqur Rahman. (His cross-examination was incomplete on Tuesday):

Q: You were on way to Bangabandhu's house in the backdrop of firing there.
A: Yes.
Q: The ADC needs to be with the President in all his programmes as part of his duty.
A: Yes.
Q: While in a programme with the President, the ADCs must be in uniform.
A: Yes.
Q: Your duty was till 8 am on August 15. There was no such programme till that time for which you required to be in uniform.
A: Correct.

Q: As for the duty with the President, you were required to go to Bangabandhu's residence, Ganobhaban and Bangabhaban as Bangabandhu used to work in those three places.
A: Yes, I required to go to all those three places but Bangabandhu rarely used to go to Bangabhaban.
Q: A section of military was available in all those three places for the security of the President.
A: Army and police used to be available there.

Q: JCO level officers were in those places as spot commander for the army units.
A: No.
Q: JCOs or NCOs were there.
A: Who was the spot commander at Bangabhaban?
A: I can't say.
Q: In your ordinary prudence, didn't you feel the need of taking army troops or arms along with you as firing was taking place at the Bangabandhu's house.
A: We didn't feel the necessity as we thought opposition student groups might be blasting crackers as Bangabandhu had a programme at Dhaka University on August 15 morning. And also for that reason, we were in civil dress.

Q: Were you in a military vehicle.
A: No, in a car of Bangabhaban.
Q: Did you think of verifying the situation before leaving Bangabhaban for the Bangabandhu's residence.
A: No, the Military Secretary had contacted and we were instructed to go there.
Q: How did you come to know about the incident at Bangabandhu's house?
A: I heard that AZIZ was told by the MSP (Military Secretary to the President) and Sharif Aziz informed me about the firing and asked me to get ready to go there.

Q: Why didn't you apprehend anything even after getting information from the place of occurrence?
A: Brig Mashrurul Huq (MSP) informed Capt Sharif Aziz about the information he got from security. I guess so, because I heard about the firing from Capt Sharif.
Q: How was the security network of Bangabhaban and Ganobhaban?
A: I don't know what was the MSP's source of information about the place of occurrence.
Q: How long are you in the DGFI as a director?
A: About a year.
Q: When did you join the DGFI? Before or after this case was filed.
A: Before the case was filed. In September 1996.
Q: Your desk handled this case.
A: My desk does not deal with this case. I am the director of the research and analysis desk.
Q: Did you do any research or analyse this case?
A: No.
Q: When you were inducted in the service, you took the oath.
A: Yes.
Q: What is the essence of the oath of induction?
A: To defend the country,

the government and the Constitution.
Q: You took the oath and that means you will have to uphold it even at the cost of your life.
A: Yes, even to the peril of my life.
Q: Did you know that Martial Law was promulgated in the country after the incident?
A: Yes, it was announced on August 15, but was not implemented. The proclamation was made on August 20, 1975 with retrospective effect from August 15.
Q: Before the incident, you used to serve under the BKSAL government.
A: Yes.
Q: Did the BKSAL government continue after the incident?
A: No.
Q: Did you make any attempt for the continuation of BKSAL government?
A: No, because I was a small fry.

Q: The programme you had witnessed at Bangabhaban, did you feel it was a return of the Awami League government.
A: No, it was a government of the majors... I understood that there was a change in government and it was the government of some army officers.
Q: Were the three chiefs of the Armed Forces were present at the oath-taking ceremony of the new cabinet.
A: Yes.
Q: Was there anyone from the Rakkhi Bahini.
A: No.
Q: The new cabinet was formed in front of you.
A: Yes, I was present at the oath-taking ceremony.
Q: Those who took oath were either ministers or officials in the BKSAL government.
A: Yes, many of them took oath.
Q: Was there any court of enquiry about the incident at the Bangabandhu's house?
A: I don't know.
Q: You did not enquire about the incident.
A: No, I was not authorised to do so.

Q: Was the flag hoisted at Bangabhaban on that day (August 15)?
A: I don't remember. But, normally the flag would have to be hoisted.
Q: There was no condolence message from India.
A: I don't know.
Q: You had cooperated with the new government formed after the BKSAL government.
A: I did not cooperate, just carried out my duty.

Q: Have you told the IO that as an experienced staff I was directed to cooperate in organising the oath-taking ceremony?
A: Yes.
Q: You have no direct or personal knowledge about the incident.
A: No, but I came to know about it at a latter stage.
Q: You were kept blindfolded and Farooq, coming there after few hours, had contributed towards your safety.
A: Yes, he released me.
Q: Did you know Capt Bashar (PW) at that time.
A: No.
Q: Did you know Shahadat Hossain Khan who was then a captain?
A: No.
Q: Does the DGFI maintain vigilance on night parade?
A: I don't know.
Q: Did you know the group of army which was in charge of security before the group on duty at the time of incident?
A: No, I don't had connection with them.
Q: Did you know Farooq before the incident?
A: No, I came to know him after my blind-fold was taken off.

Q: You knew that the incident will take place. For that, you did not uphold your oath at the cost of your life.
A: It is not true.
Following are the excerpts of the cross-examination of Commodore Golam Rabbani by Abdul Razzak Khan, defence counsel for arrested accused Lt

Col (ret'd) Sultan Shariyar Rashid Khan:
Q: How many daily newspapers were there before the incident?
A: Four.
Q: There was multi-party system in Bangladesh before the 4th amendment of the Constitution.
A: I don't know. If BKSAL was a one-party system, then there was multi-party system before that.
Q: When Bangabandhu became the President.
A: In January, 1975. Before that he was the Prime Minister.
Q: Who was the President before Bangabandhu?
A: Mohammadullah.
Q: Syed Nazrul Islam was the Vice-President.
A: Yes.
Q: Tajuddin was the Prime Minister during the War of Liberation.
A: Yes.
Q: Later on Tajuddin was dropped.
A: I don't remember.
Q: All newspapers were subscribed for the President House.
A: I can't say. It was a matter for the Press Secretary.
Q: You used to regularly read many newspapers.
A: Yes, but only one or two.
Q: Military Secretary and ADCs are the personal staff of the President.
A: Yes.
Q: As the personal staff of the President, did you contact with any authority for the burial of the assassinated President?
A: No.
Q: Bangabandhu regularly used to attend his office at Ganobhaban.
A: Yes.
Q: He had a full-fledged secretariat at Ganobhaban.
A: Yes.
Q: What was the position of Tofael Ahmed?
A: Political Secretary to the President.
Q: Who was the Principal Secretary?
A: I don't remember. Ruhul Quddus was the principal secretary and after him, somebody else became the Principal Secretary.

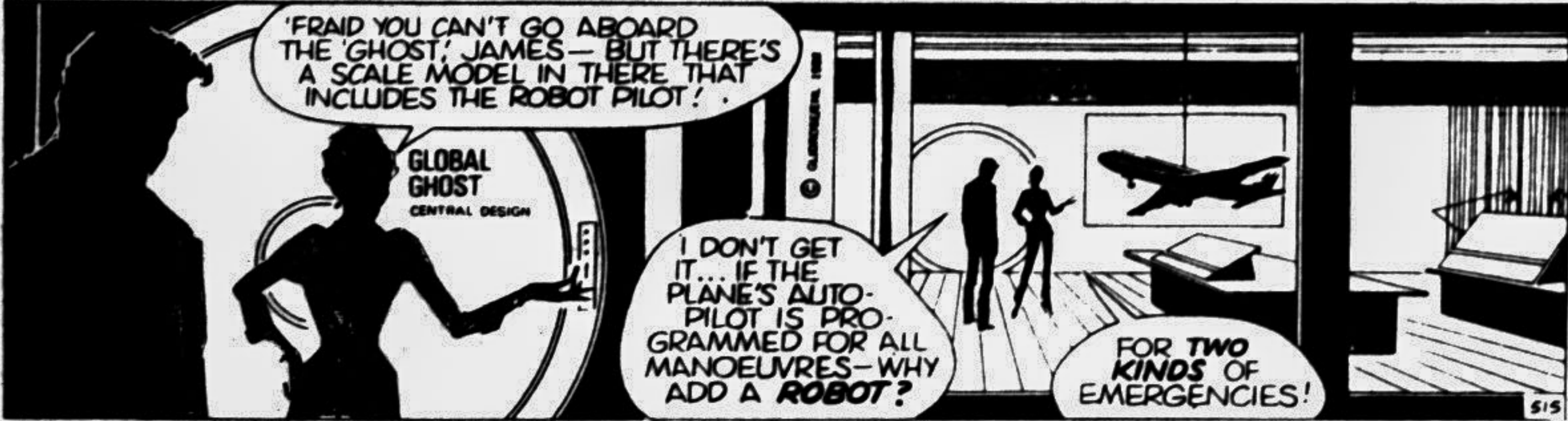
Q: No reaction came to the press from the Vice-President or any of the cabinet members of Bangabandhu after the incident.
A: I can't say.
Q: Military Secretary used to supervise the overall security of the President.
A: He used to coordinate.
Q: Army, police, military intelligence and special branch of police had individual role in ensuring the security of the President.
A: Yes.
Q: A standing force of army was kept at Bangabhaban for the security of Bangabandhu.
A: Yes.
Q: They used to exchange information for effective security arrangements.
A: I don't know, because I did not deal with the security.
Q: You were captive in the hands of security people who were on duty for the protection of Bangabandhu.
A: I can't say who were they. One group handed us over to another group.
Q: You said you were in captivity. This was a false statement.
A: It is not true.
Q: The Chief Justice had administered the oath of Khan-daker Mushtaque Ahmed.
A: I don't know. I was not there.
Q: When were you last in Bangabhaban?
A: Lastly, I was with Justice Sayem till September, 1976.
Q: Justice Sayem was simultaneously the CMLA.
A: Yes.
Q: Sayem handed over power to Ziaur Rahman through a proclamation on November 29, 1976.
A: I can't say, because I was not in the country at that time.
Q: Brig Mashrurul Huq became the Chief of Protocol in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after August, 1975.

A: Yes.
Q: The Martial Law, which was promulgated by an announcement on August 15, 1975 with retrospective effect, was withdrawn by Ziaur Rahman in April, 1979.
A: I don't remember.
Q: The Martial Law continued since August, 1975 until it was withdrawn.
A: Under the gun point.
Being pressed by the defence lawyer that ML continued until it was drawn, the prosecution witness said he cannot say.
Q: You went to Bangabhaban at about 3:30 pm to 4 pm, and then the oath-taking ceremony of the new cabinet was held.
A: Yes.
Q: All the three chiefs of the Armed Forces used to visit Bangabhaban regularly.
A: They used to go when ever they were called. But chiefs were changed.
Q: Did chiefs of police and BDR used to visit.
A: Yes.
Q: When was the programme of Bangabandhu scheduled at the university?
A: So far I remember, it was after 10 am.
Q: The situation at the university was chaotic on August 14.
A: Yes.
Q: Mine sweepers were deployed at the campus.
A: I don't know.
Q: All the security agencies were kept on high alert.
A: I don't know. It was not my responsibility.
Q: All the agencies were in combined duty at the Police control room.
A: I don't know.
Q: General Osmany was appointed the Defence Adviser.
A: Yes.
Q: You had seen him coming to and going out of the Bangabhaban.
A: Yes.
Q: Major Shariyar was appointed as staff officer to Osmany.
A: I don't know.
Q: Chief of Defence Staff post was created and BDR Chief Major General Khalilur Rahman was appointed to that post.
A: Yes.
Q: Shariyar was his staff officer.
A: I don't know.
Q: Did you ever go to hospital to visit Sheikh Kamal, who was wounded by bullet.
A: No, And no such incident occurred during my tenure.
Q: Shariyar Rashid was a freedom fighter.
A: I don't know.
Q: Were you a freedom fighter.
A: No, I was a repatriated officer and came to Bangladesh in 1973.
Q: Did you have to face any authority before giving statement to the CID on October 4, 1996.
A: No.
Q: You have given false statement against Shariyar.
A: I said the truth. He might have got appointment from the Army Headquarter as staff officer. He used to stay at Bangabhaban.
Q: Who became the Military Secretary to the President after Brig Mashrurul Huq.
A: Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, now a Major General and Ambassador of Bangladesh.
Q: You had seen Shariyar residing at Bangabhaban.
A: Yes.
Q: You told some hearsay about the accused here.
A: It is not true.
Q: As Defence Adviser General Osmany's office was at Bangabhaban.
A: I can't remember exactly. The defence counsels for Taheruddin Thakur, Lt Col (ret'd) Muhiuddin Ahmed and Hon Capt (ret'd) Abdul Wahab Joardar declined to cross-examine the PW 15 as he did not mention their names.
Earlier, the PW was cross-examined by the state defence counsels for the absconding accused.
Further texts of cross examination will be published as and when received.

Tom and Jerry



James Bond



Khaleda Zia, Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson, attended the installation and charter night ceremony of the Lions Club of Dhaka Glydia at a city hotel yesterday. — Star photo

Bangladesh-US military justice seminar ends

The second Bangladesh-US military justice seminar, jointly sponsored by Bangladesh and US armed forces, concluded at the Armed Forces Medical Institute (AFMI) auditorium at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday, reports BSS.

The five-day seminar was attended by the officers of the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force, Bangladesh Rifles and Bangladesh Police, an ISPR press release said.

Representatives from the Faculty of Law, Dhaka University, office of the Attorney General, Judicial Administration Training Institute, Bangladesh Bar Council, Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Bangladesh Institute of Democratic Rights, the US Embassy in Dhaka, delegates from the US Naval Justice School, Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, the Asia Foundation, Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights participated in the seminar.

Metropolitan

Weather

Moderate rain forecast

Moderately heavy to heavy fall is likely at places over Chittagong, Barisal, Sylhet and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office also forecast moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind at most places over Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna, Sylhet, Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions.

The coastal regions of Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Pirajpur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Barisal, Bhola, Noakhali, Comilla, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar may experience south or south easterly squalls at the speed of 60-70 kph.

Day temperature is likely to fall by 1-2 degree Celsius across the country.

In its outlook for subsequent two days weathermen predicted increase in rainfall activity.

Meantime, Rangpur experienced the highest 93 mm rain in the last 24 hours till 6 am yesterday. Chittagong had 41 mm shower, Rajshahi 29, Cox's Bazar 21 and Dinajpur 12 mm during the period.

Country's highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest 21.8 degrees at Rangpur.

The sun sets today at 5:51 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:48 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.0	26.5	94	92
Chittagong	27.6	25.2	94	92
Rajshahi	31.8	24.0	92	95
Khulna	34.0	25.5	77	-
Barisal	31.4	25.6	81	95
Sylhet	34.5	25.0	71	80
Cox's Bazar	26.5	24.8	92	95



Awami League, Lalbagh Thana unit, brought out an anti-hartal procession during hartal hours in the city yesterday. — Star photo