

The Quest for a Credible Political Leadership

The demagogy, political gimmickry or sloganmongering are now motorway to nowhere. On the contrary, it is the managerial skill, dynamism and an X-ray vision with ability of seeing through the fog of time which would enable a leader to steer his nation through the turbulence of globalised politics.

Light at the Tunnel's End?

The BJP is apparently back on course to be forming the new government in India. Not quite with a bang though, the numerical constraint being only technically circumvented rather than conclusively overcome.

They conveyed such an assurance in writing to President K R Narayanan who has been insisting upon committed support from smaller groups to avert any sudden demise of government.

However, even with Jayalalitha's crucial support, the BJP-led coalition is not poised to be within a striking range of power.

In such a scenario the BJP-led coalition will be a fragile government. That being the case, the Congress and the UF may be just waiting in the wings to try and clamber to power.

Even so, the tenuous nature of a BJP-led coalition is a built-in feature that cannot be simply wished away. So, the Congress is apparently keeping its hopes to lead a future coalition with the UF alive.

The electorate produced a hung parliament but hardly envisioned that the smaller regional parties would be so much of a key player in the formation of a government.

Shabby OPDs

The purpose of a hospital is largely defeated if its Outpatient Department is mismanaged. The patients in need of referral healthcare are always greater in number than those taken into the various wards of a hospital.

Time and again the print media has delved deep into the problems besetting the public health sector but to no avail.

A report in yesterday's Daily Star poignantly indicated how the ESP (Essential Package of Service) under the Fifth Health and Population Programme eluded OPD as an area of darkness.

No Relief

There may be doubts whether 81 criminals in every 100,000 of the population is a revelation but there is no doubt that crimes related to sexual assault on women have increased manifold.

The success of a healthy society lies in its ability to outweigh the proportion of criminality with good sense, tolerance, reason and enlightenment.

THE emergence of Bangladesh was both preceded and followed by a series of extraordinary circumstances — protracted civil unrest, the worst cyclone of the history, the first ever general election, non-cooperation, genocide, war, famine and finally the violent overthrow of the first elected government culminating in the assassination of the nation's founding father — all of which dearly cost this already impoverished country in more than one way.

Prior to independence, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the last of the vanishing breed of national liberation leaders, successfully led his people to their cherished goal of freedom but both his towering personality and the prevailing political flux did not allow the growth of an alternative leadership.

It was manifest from the events that followed. In the wake of Awami League's phenomenal popularity after 1989 mass upsurge when it occupied the country's entire political space, the most of the party's new entrants simply rode the bandwagon without much conviction.

Traditionally a crossroads for humanity in the region, Pakistan's fertile land and economic potential has become a haven for migrants, not the least being the Muslims of India, who battered and benign neglect at best, have been streaming to Pakistan in more or less a constant flow.

Why is the census necessary? To start with, unless the leaders of the country know exactly what the population is and how they are located and/or dispersed around the country, how can they manage the nation, what to talk about taking socio-economic initiatives and the planning of development activity?

Over the past 50 years, the rural majority has been transformed into an urban majority, this fact has to be reflected in democracy and governance thereof. At the present time, the rule of the minority over the majority is a travesty of both democracy and justice.

Did Botulism kill Dr. Nasim Biswas? Sir, The cause of the untimely death of Dr. Biswas is yet to be identified. According to the newspaper reports, he had dinner at a wedding party on Wednesday night. Then he suddenly developed vomiting which was followed by respiratory paralysis.

ship in this country. Now came a different brand of political leaders who strutted on the centre stage of our politics for next two decades.

Their regal life style of unbridled hedonism remained unaffected although the conditions of the bulk of the population worsened according to all available socio-economic indicators.

It was not surprising that the culture rapidly flourished over the years. The political ambit was instantaneously crowded by the people that included obscure activists from far left and extreme right as well as fire brand revolutionaries to octogenarian obscurantists and shrewd opportunists.

Yet even in our country the politics was once considered a noble pursuit imbued with the spirit of service. In olden days the politics used to be a patriot's sacred commitment for the people in a polity.

economic initiatives and the planning of development activity? Further in this age of insecurity it is very necessary to have correct documentation of the inhabitants of dwellings in order to deny terrorists safe houses. Whether one is planning anything in the health, education, telecommunication, transportation, welfare sectors, etc., without actual data nothing is possible because at best planning is made on rough estimates.

Similarly, given the ethnic composition of our nation the present ruling elite in at least two of the provinces, Balochistan and Sindh, do not want it as they feel that the ethnic Baloch and Sindh respectively, will become minorities in their own provinces.

One major faction opposed to census will be criminals who will fear quick location of their safe houses as police officers at the Police Stations (Thana) society will go with it as the inordinate influence they command over the law enforcing agencies diminish.

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PERSPECTIVES by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

services in chaos as long as their wards could be schooled abroad and their health was taken care of in Bangkok or Singapore. The law and order of the country crumbled but their high connections ensured them their immunity.

in the return of AL to power after long twenty-one years that the party with its credentials of principled politics of pre-independence days would bring back order in highly distorted political practices.

about computerised information about the inhabitants in their area available at their fingertips. Political parties that rely on militants to enforce their fiat will also be unhappy with this exercise.

Admission seekers with money Sir, The present system of admission test of Honours First Year at Dhaka University is completely a faulty one.

Donating blood Sir, Blood donation can build up spiritual relationships among men, women, families, and even nations.

Honour M Fazlur Rahman Sir, Mr M Fazlur Rahman was a one of the eminent educationists of our country, with immense and valuable contribution. Mr Fazlur Rahman, during his span of career of over three decades, worked as Professor, Principal of key institutions of our country, later as Director of Public Instruction and Chairman of the then School Text Book Board before being moved over as Member of the then Central Public Service Commission. His glorious career was enriched by his com-

leaders at various tiers enjoying tremendous mass appeal. In the ranks of political parties there are still muted few who genuinely mean well-being of the people and tenaciously guard their integrity.

Given the will and determination a potential leader can always be made. After all why can't the honesty be combined with quality, populism with knowledge, enthusiasm with initiative and conviction with capability?

Parameters of the National Census

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AS I SEE IT

Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi

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It is a real wonder how this country has been managed till date with virtually unimaginary statistics. How can planners access the board really organise their initiatives without facts and figures? In this modern age, these facts and figures have to be available in real time i.e at the touch of a finger on the computer.

able, the government may become the greatest offender in invading the guaranteed right of the individual for privacy. This may make the government into virtually a "big brother", manipulating and thus controlling the destinies of the citizens.

In every field of governance data is needed, nothing is more disturbing to Pakistan than illegal immigration. This artificial influx tends to create schism that lead to disunity. For a country on the verge of disintegrating psychologically, if not physically, the national cohesion provides a modicum of cohesion.

OPINION

Mobile Fun

Apparently written in a humorous approach, the letter of Mr O J Shams (DS Feb 20, 1998) captioned "Telefun" ventilated plight of numerous hapless mobile phone owners of Grameen variety.

Instead of depending on village Fariyah (middleman) small farm products built at once ascertain the obtaining prices of produces ruling in distant Hat/Bazar.

Then came the snag logging the "highway". Heaven fell on the owners because connection could hardly be made from mobile sets even after strenuous efforts — longer trying ran out of its energy source making it dead. The incentive offered for charge-free incoming calls turned out to be a hoax as too few calls matured. In the process, the mobile phone lived up to its name in so far as its mobility was limited to that of the owner who moves with it from one place to another in course of his day-to-day business.