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Down to Earth The Growing 'Tadbir' Culture

By A S M Nurunnabi

Tadbir is a versatile word in Bangla. In its innocuous form, it means effort for achieving success. But in the context of our socio-economic ramifications, it has acquired connotations, such as lobbying with built-in quid pro quo, palm-greasing or euphemisms for bribe or graft. It is open to question whether the phenomenon has become part of our national culture. In fact, there is hardly any sphere in life where the phenomenon does not operate in lofty strides.

According to social scientists, it has roots in economic factors arising from insufficiency of wherewithal of its operators.

In the Dhaka city, the government secretariat offers a convenient field for witnessing its operations for a variety of objectives. Since anti-path towards normal duties has also developed into a sort of culture with the office functionaries, *tadbir* mongering gets an added impetus.

The movement of a file, however, important or urgent it may be, suffers from inertia from the stages through which it has to pass. The concerned functionary holds up the file in the hope that a *tadbir* player will soon appear to pursue the file. When an understanding is reached with the player, the file resumes its movement to the next higher stage where a similar deal may be repeated. The play may continue till the file is

finally disposed of and the *tadbir* party gains its objective. This is the general pattern of operation of *tadbir*, with a few exceptions, in every field of work.

The *tadbir*-mongers form a distinct class by themselves. Since the secretariat, which is a protected area, is the heart of administration, and no ordinary person can get easy access to the offices there, he needs the help of a suitable person capable of doing him the favour, at a price, of enquiring about the progress of his file. Here a professional *tadbir*-monger comes forward to help. In other words, such *tadbir*-mongers may be called touts if a blunt expression is used. As such touts perform the role of middlemen, they tend to create a distance between the concerned people and the officials, who are competent to deliver the goods, and thereby make improper gains. It is alleged that people concerned with activities in government offices and courts are virtually regulated by these touts.

Moreover, it is difficult to detect the modus operandi of certain classes of touts. Various kinds of deals are conducted through them. It is said that most of the visitors that through the visitors' room in the Secretariat are 'professional' touts or persons seeking to make *tadbirs* on their own in some office or another within the Secretariat.

It is also said that there is a steady demand for the services of such *tadbir*-mongers, because most of the ordinary people are not acquainted with the mechanism of work in the Secretariat. For such people, the help of a 'professional' is necessary and the latter sometimes takes resort to trickery and deceit to establish credibility.

The fields of activities of the city touts cover a wide range — banks, customs department, income tax offices, T&T office, and passport office. They are also active in other areas where there are prospects of illegal gains, such as matters like purchase of land lease of houses, and getting connections for electricity, gas, and water supply.

The horizon of the city touts has been steadily expanding. Some of them are said to be operating from well-furnished offices. They, as a class, are more dashing and enterprising with claims of political influence behind them. They manage to get easy access to the high-ups in the administration's hierarchy and conduct themselves in a flamboyant style.

The role of the *tadbir*-mongers has become so dominant that none can get anything done without their agency. Their omnipresence is an ominous fact of city life and they seem to have come to stay with their tentacles spreading to all spheres of activities.

Shaukat Osman buried

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Amir Hossain Amu and Abdul Jalil, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdul Hasan Chowdhury and poet Syed Shamsul Huq were among others who attended the namaj-e-janaza.

Earlier, the body of the eminent writer was brought to Bangla Academy premises and later taken to the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday morning to facilitate people from all walks of life to pay their tributes to him.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina came to the Shaheed Minar at 9 am and placed wreath on the coffin. She also stood in solemn silence for one minute to pay respect to the late litterateur.

Sheikh Hasina, accompanied by ministers and Awami League leaders, also placed wreaths on behalf of her party.

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia also condoled the death of eminent litterateur.

In a condolence message yesterday, Begum Zia prayed for the peace of the departed soul and expressed her sympathy with the members of the bereaved family.

Leaders of different political parties, intellectuals, academics and journalists also went to Shaheed Minar to pay their respect to the late litterateur who fought against communalism throughout his life.

Under the leadership of Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, the pro-VC, the proctor, officers, teachers, assistant proctors, house tutors, provosts and syndicate members went to the Central Shaheed Minar and placed wreaths on the coffin of the late litterateur.

Former Chief Justice Kemal Uddin Hossain, Banister Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed, architect Mahjabin Islam, former Finance Minister A M A Muhi, writer Humayun Azad, Syed Hasan Imam, editor of daily Sangbad Ahmedul Kabir, poet Nirmalendu Goon and Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury visited the Shaheed Minar and paid their homage.

Leaders of Dhaka University Teachers' Association, Sainmilita Samir Krittik Jote, Mukti-jodda Sangsad, Bangabandhu Parishad, Jatiya Kabita Parishad, Mahila Parishad, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Social Bank Employees Union and Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee also placed wreaths.

Qulkhani of Shaikat Osman will be held at Dhaka University Teachers-Students Centre (TSC) after Asr prayers tomorrow.

On the same day, a condolence meeting will be held at the TSC auditorium at 4 pm under the aegis of Mukti-jodda Chetana Bastabayan and Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Jatiya Samannoi Committee, says a press release.

A condolence meeting at national-level will be held at 4 pm on May 19 at the Central Shaheed Minar.

For the holding of the May 19 condolence meeting, a 201-member national committee has been formed with poet Shamsur Rahman as its convenor. Seven coordinators of

the committee are — Syed Hasan Imam, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Moniem Sarkar, Dr Hossain Mansur, Dr Hanunur Rashid, Asaduzzaman Noor and Gulam Kuddus.

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria condoled the death of Shaikat Osman saying that he was an ever vigilant sentry of the nation and the spirit of independence. He was considered as a symbol of national conscience. His death is an irreparable loss to the nation, Kibria said.

Former president and Jatiya Party Chairman Hussain Mohammad Ershad in a message of condolence expressed his deep shock at the death of Shaikat Osman.

Bangladesh Workers Party, Masterda Surya Sen Parishad, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Goshthi, Bangladesh Humanist Society and the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) in separate messages condoled the death of the eminent litterateur.

BSS adds from Calcutta: Internationally-reputed Indian film-maker Mrinal Sen expressed his grief and shock at the death of Shaikat Osman.

"Shaikat Osman breathed his last at a mature age, but it is a very painful feeling that we will no more see his unique style of movement, speaking and writing," Sen said in a condolence message.

Describing his personal feeling on hearing the news of the demise of Shaikat Osman this morning, he said, he brought down some books by Shaikat Osman from the racks to feel the touch of the litterateur.

"Then I uttered the memorable quote of Walt Whitman — if you touch this book, you touch man," Sen said paying his rich tribute to the memory of Osman.

Orion Infusion

From Page 1

the company's upcoming lucrative offers, which were rapidly pushing its prices up from about Tk 150 to as high as Tk 750.

The whole affair of Orion Infusion raises the question whether the company was involved in market manipulation. And yet, SEC had never investigated the affairs of this company.

Its balance sheet had been doctored and lucrative dividend offers were made which could jack up its share price if the market was in a normal mood. When share price of a company is substantially higher than its rights offer, it is fully subscribed.

With the rights share money, Orion then would have its loans rescheduled and get working capital. It could then release its dividend money already used as working capital in the company and pay it to investors.

However, Obaidul Karim denied any manipulation by the company. As proof he said the company declared its dividend on January 4, 1997, when the market started falling. He also said during the stock market bubble, there were rumours about different companies and he had no hand in it if any information about his company prevailed in the market.

"If I had an ill-motive, I would not have declared dividend in the first place," he said. "This declaration of dividend has put me in the present situation."

Castrol executives arrive today

By Staff Correspondent

Two senior executives of Castrol, the world's leading lubricant company, are arriving in Dhaka to sign an agreement with a local company for lubricant marketing.

The executives are Henry Willmington, Regional Controller, Castrol Asia-Pacific, and J T Lee, Managing Director, Singapore Pte Ltd.

Sharif

From Page 1

India's nuclear tests, the State Department said.

Talbot held talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other senior leaders in Islamabad earlier to try to dissuade Pakistan from launching an arms race.

We did not receive assurances one way or the other with regard to their testing plans, state department spokesman James Rubin said.

But Rubin added that the US envoy had made 'very, very clear' to the Pakistani leadership 'the seriously negative consequences that would ensue from testing.'

"These are difficult times," Talbot told reporters in Islamabad after 90 minutes of talks with Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, who has been outspoken in his criticism of what he had called US complicity in India's surprise nuclear tests earlier this week.

A spokesman for Khan described the talks as a 'listening session'.

US President Bill Clinton sent Talbot, State Department Assistant Secretary for South Asia Karl Underfurth and other senior officials to try to persuade Pakistan not to carry out veiled threats to explode its first nuclear device.

Gazipur JP

From Page 1

committee. They damaged chairs at the council premises.

The JP secretary general left the podium without resolving the crisis.

Abdus Sattar was elected the president of the district committee.

Among others who were present at council include JP president member Hassanuddin Sarkar, Azam Khan and Matu Rahman.

Dipu murder

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Ahmed, Police latter arrested him and lodged a case.

JCD leader Dipu was killed on November 26, 1994 by a gang near the PATC gate adjacent to the campus as a sequel to a clash between two factions of JCD.

Saiful was one of the accused in the killing and was ousted from the campus along with his accomplices following the murder.

Hacked to death

From Page 1

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

Mizan's body was handed over to his family yesterday after its autopsy at the DMCH.

Selina Begum, mother of the victim, filed a murder case with Shabulbagh thana yesterday. None was arrested in this connection till last night.



AP File Photo: President Ronald Reagan cuts-in on a dance between Frank Sinatra and Nancy Reagan in this photo dated February 6, 1981.

Singing legend Frank Sinatra dies at 82

LOS ANGELES, May 15: Frank Sinatra, 82, the dashing teen idol who matured into the premier romantic balladeer of American popular music and the "Chairman of the Board" to his millions of fans, died Thursday night of a heart attack, reports AP.

Sinatra, who had not been seen in public since a heart attack in January 1997, was pronounced dead at 10:50 PM in the emergency room of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, said his publicist, Susan Reynolds. Sinatra's family, including his wife, was with him when he died.

A private funeral was planned, Reynolds said. "Ol' Blue Eyes" was a master craftsman and ranked as one of the most influential singers in this country's history. In more than 200 albums, his music led the evolution from Big Band to vocal American music.

Frank Sinatra was remembered at the Cannes Film Festival.

Siddhirganj-Maniknagar power line restored

Officials and employees of Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday restored the 132-kv Siddhirganj-Maniknagar power line, a PDB press release said in the city last night, reports BSS.

The number one line of the 132-kv Siddhirganj-Maniknagar power line was snapped from the connector on Thursday.

The PDB took up the matter immediately and supplied all necessary materials and equipment to repair the line.

Shazneen

From Page 1

Chairman of Transcom Ltd, Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, was found dead in her bed room with more than 20 stab marks in her body.

CID sources said the investigators were examining the statements of confessed killer Shahid. He often gave confusing information while on CID remand for 12 days since he surrendered to Chittagong Metropolitan Police on April 27.

Delhi won't hesitate

From Page 1

Indian government today viewed as "completely unacceptable" the statement adopted by the United Nations Security Council.

"We are surprised by this, because the Council has never thought it necessary even to take cognizance of the many hundreds of nuclear tests carried out over the last 50 years, including in 1995 and 1996," a Foreign Office spokesman told reporters at a briefing here.

A Colombo report says, Sri Lanka supports neighbouring India becoming a nuclear power and opposes international sanctions against New Delhi.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said today, India's new membership of the elite nuclear club does not trouble Sri Lanka, although the Colombo government would like to see total nuclear disarmament throughout the world.

"We are not opposed to or against India becoming a nuclear power," the minister said, adding that it was not possible to have a completely nuclear-free world in the near future.

Meanwhile, in Birmingham, UK, US President Bill Clinton urged his G8 partners to take a

strong stand against India's nuclear tests, but Britain said they will not announce any imposition of sanctions.

Clinton argued repeatedly today in pre-summit bilateral meetings that the group of eight must issue a statement as strong and unambiguous as possible on India's resumption of nuclear tests this week to help persuade Pakistan against following suit.

But a spokesman for British Prime Minister Tony Blair said that the summit would not be announcing a joint imposition of sanctions against India.

The G8 would express 'anger and dismay' at what India has done, spokesman Alastair Campbell said.

He said it would be a response that 'does not raise the temperature,' although he shared Clinton's concern to persuade Pakistan to make a more cautious response than they might.

The United States and Japan have announced sanctions, but their G-8 partners have been reluctant to follow suit.

Canadian officials said that trade sanctions would not be useful since Indian trade accounted for only a small proportion of gross domestic product.

3 missions to be closed down

From Page 1

gum Development Cooperation," he said.

Belgium is one of the first European countries to open a resident mission in Dhaka in 1973. Brussels is the headquarters of the European Union and the NATO. Bangladesh's export to Belgium was worth 140 million dollars last year.

The Belgium mission in Dhaka is operating at the CDA level since its opening, but in 1996, a full fledged resident ambassador was appointed.

Dhaka has a high-profile resident mission in Brussels, headed by an ambassador, which also represents the country to the European Union.

The Embassy of Brazil in Dhaka will also cease to operate effectively by the end of this month.

Earlier, Mario Cesar De Moraes Pitao, Minister and Charge d'Affaires of Brazil, con-

veyed his government's decision to shut down its mission citing austerity measures and budgetary constraints. Pitao, a career diplomat and a familiar face in Dhaka's diplomatic circles has already vacated the Chancery and his official residence, and is now operating from a private guest house at Gulshan.

Brazil which was one of the first Latin American countries to recognise Bangladesh, opened a resident mission in 1974.

Dhaka opened a resident mission in Brasilia in the early seventies and continues to have ambassadorial level representation in Brazil.

Charge d'Affaires of Hungary Gyula Pastoz said that their government sent a letter to the Bangladesh mission in Warsaw on April 7, informing its decision to wind up the resident mission in Bangladesh. "We are

Hasina goes to Rangamati today

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit the hill district of Rangamati today to inaugurate a Betar Station, reports UNB.

She will also open a TV relay station, address a public meeting and visit a Buddhist monastery, Rajban Bihar, during her day-long stay in the hill district.

This will be the first visit of the Prime Minister to Rangamati after signing the peace accord on Chittagong Hill Tracts on December 2 last year.

Earlier, Hasina visited Khagrachhari to inaugurate the arms surrender ceremony on February 10.

Inter University officers threaten 15-day strike from June 21

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Inter University Officers' Federation (BIUOF) has said it will observe a 15-day strike from June 21 if its four-point demand is not met immediately, says a press release.

The BIUOF, at a meeting at the Dhaka University administrative building yesterday, urged the authorities to accept their demands immediately.

BIUOF observed a week-long strike last month to realise its demands.

The demands include, raising of retirement age from 60 to 65, officers' representation in different bodies including the Senate and the Syndicate and an end to 20 per cent cut from the officers' pension money.

Engineer killed in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, May 15: A young engineer was killed by miscreants at Ghatogia village of Shibpur thana on Thursday night, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Monir Hossain, 28, son of Haji Sabir Uddin. He came back from Australia two months ago.

Monir went to his village home from Dhaka on Wednesday but he had been missing since 8 pm on Thursday.

Monir's father first found his son's body hanging from a tree this morning when he was returning from a mosque after Fazr prayers.

Police said the miscreants cut the tendons of hands and legs of Monir before killing him.

Fish traders observe one-hr strike

Fish traders observed an one-hour token strike in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The traders enforced the strike from 10 am in all the city markets to press their seven-point demand.

The demands include punishment to the killers of fish trader Anwarul Huq Anu, setting up of police camp in all the markets, removal of all illegal fish markets and setting up of a "fish bank."

Donors' confce

From Page 1

Sanghati Samiti (PCS), recently for his opinion about the development of the area.

The joint group held a meeting on Wednesday to discuss the development need and economic potential of the region.

Bangladesh Office of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) is coordinating the total activities of the joint group.

The government sought donors' participation in the development activities of the CHT immediately after the signing of the CHT peace agreement.

Hailing the peace accord, the donors, led by the UNDP, assured the government of their massive participation in development activities of the region.

The government, in the meantime, has taken up a massive Tk 2149 crore development plan for the hill tracts.

practically not operating as an embassy since March 31," he noted.

Hungary which was one of the first east European countries to recognise Bangladesh and set up a resident mission in Dhaka, is an important trading partner. Dhaka exports considerable quantity of jute and jute goods and tea while Budapest imports large quantities of pharmaceuticals, medicinal equipment, railway locomotives and spare parts from Dhaka.

It is learnt that Dhaka could not show "mutual reciprocity" by failing to open a mission or even a trade office in the Hungarian capital which may have prompted Budapest to wind up its mission.

All diplomatic activities of the Hungarian government in Bangladesh will now be conducted through their embassy in New Delhi.

9 killed, 35 hurt in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

At least nine people were killed and 35 others injured in road accidents in Barisal, Manikganj and Mymensingh yesterday.

Of them, five were killed in Barisal, four in Manikganj and one in Mymensingh.

Our Staff Correspondent from Barisal reports: Five people of a family were killed and another was injured in a collision between a bus and a tempo at Batazore in Gournadi of the district yesterday.

Police and witnesses said, the accident took place when a Barisal-bound passenger bus collided with a tempo coming from opposite direction at Batazore at about 1:15 pm, leaving five passengers of the tempo dead on the spot.

The dead were identified as Azizul Haq, 12, Rezaul, 32, Shaokat, 13, Alam Sarder, 40, and Abdul Halim, 28.

The seriously injured Giasuddin, 25, of Babuganj was admitted to Gournadi thana health complex.

Drivers of both the vehicles managed to flee the scene.

BSS adds: At least three persons were killed and 30 others injured in two road accidents on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Manikganj yesterday.

Two persons were killed and 30 others injured when a Dhaka-bound bus collided with a minibus coming from opposite direction at Pukhuria in Ghorhata.

The dead could not be identified immediately. Police said the injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

In another accident, an 80-year-old woman was crushed under the wheels of an Khulna-bound bus at Mohadevpur in Shibhalaya thana yesterday.

Police seized the bus and arrested its driver.

A man was killed and four others were injured in a road accident in Signboard area under Valuka thana on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway early yesterday, according to UNB.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Mannan, 40, son of Hasan Ali of Alhari village in Trishal thana.

According to hospital sources, five people fell down from a Sherpur-bound truck in which they were travelling along with other 45 people, after being hit by a timber-laden truck coming from opposite direction at around 12:30 am, leaving them critically injured.

Of them, Mannan succumbed to his injuries at the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital at 4 am. Conditions of Shamsul Alam, 40, Nagar Ali, 35, and Farsha, 55, were stated to be critical.

Indonesia: 250 killed

From Page 1

date bestowed on him by the country's parliament.

"If he won't step down peacefully, then we must force him to leave," said a leader within Kosgoro.

It was the first sign of open rebellion within the president's once-mighty political machine that has ruled Indonesia for