

Ashura for Peace

THE Tenth of Muharram has some weighty messages for the humanity at large. The day takes us back in time to the bank of the river Euphrates where occurred one of the blackest episodes of cruelty and treachery in human history.

Emotions well up into a spate of universal mourning while the entire Muslim world recalls the sacrifices made by Imam Hussain and his family in the early years of Islam.

Ashura signifies the triumph of virtue over evil for Muslims all over the world. Also, it inspires us to engage in an all-out effort to establish the principles of peace, justice and fair-play in the society.

Commercialised Politics

THE Independent Review of Bangladesh, prepared by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, has aptly summed up the popular perception of the national politics these days. Over the years, the political culture has undergone a metamorphosis.

The key element here is money, plenty of it, in absence of any system that requires audit of funds of the political parties. The one system that we have on putting a limit to electoral expenditure is violated more often than not.

However, the ideal situation that we envisage would never come about unless the leadership in both parties feels the need for and is willing to bring about a positive change.

We Back the IGP

NO sooner had the truck drivers' 72-hour strike ended than the Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation called for an indefinite strike to protest the comments of the Inspector General of Police.

In recent times the number of road accidents in the country has increased to a great extent resulting in loss of human lives. Much of these have occurred due to faulty vehicles as well as untrained drivers holding fake licence.

We would like to make it absolutely clear that we support the view expressed by the IGP and insist that existing laws must be applicable to offenders without fear or favour and the government should not succumb to the undue pressure by the Federation.

PM's Visit to US: Was it Necessary?

by Mansoor Mamoon

While the PM was enjoying her leisure in the United States the South-South Conference was being organised in nearby Cuba. The Prime Minister could have very easily participated in it considering its importance and relevance for Bangladesh.

IN the present-day globalised world, characterised by intense competitions among nations for economic edge, it is no harm on the part of a state from a developing country like Bangladesh to hop around in the international arena if it is in the larger interests of boosting trade, attracting foreign direct investment and above all, for bolstering the image of the country.

Washington, received from a state women's college a prize named after a Nobel laureate lady novelist (Pearl S Buck) and attended a speech session at the Harvard University.

Why is this anomaly and who is to be blamed for this difference? Does not the Prime Minister feel the slightest prick of conscience that even with the imposition of a virtual curfew like situation and red alert security by posting of thousands of law enforcers and members of paramilitary forces her government could not properly ensure the security of the US President, who did not feel safe to stay overnight nor to visit the Martyr's Memorial at Savar and visit some typical NGO-backed villages?

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legue of a federated US state or a mundane speech elaborating the contributions of a dynastic rule and polemics against the opposition before a motley gathering of teachers and students of a university? What impact all these are likely to have bilaterally or multilaterally for Bangladesh?

the group of 77 by the rich countries of the Group of 7 (OECD countries) with the United States at its head. Three hundred and forty multi-nationals and transnational companies of the Group of 7, most of which are US based, now account for 40 per cent of the global trade.

Indo-Pak Ties after President Clinton's Visit

Many analysts believe that Indo-Pak relations have not shown anything in the positive direction since the visit of Mr. Clinton because the sentiments in both sides are too bitter to disappear overnight. Still, continuing US interest on the issue may have a sobering effect.

US PRESIDENT Bill Clinton's visit to India and Pakistan appears to have failed to bring about any improvement in the traditionally bitter Indo-Pak relations.

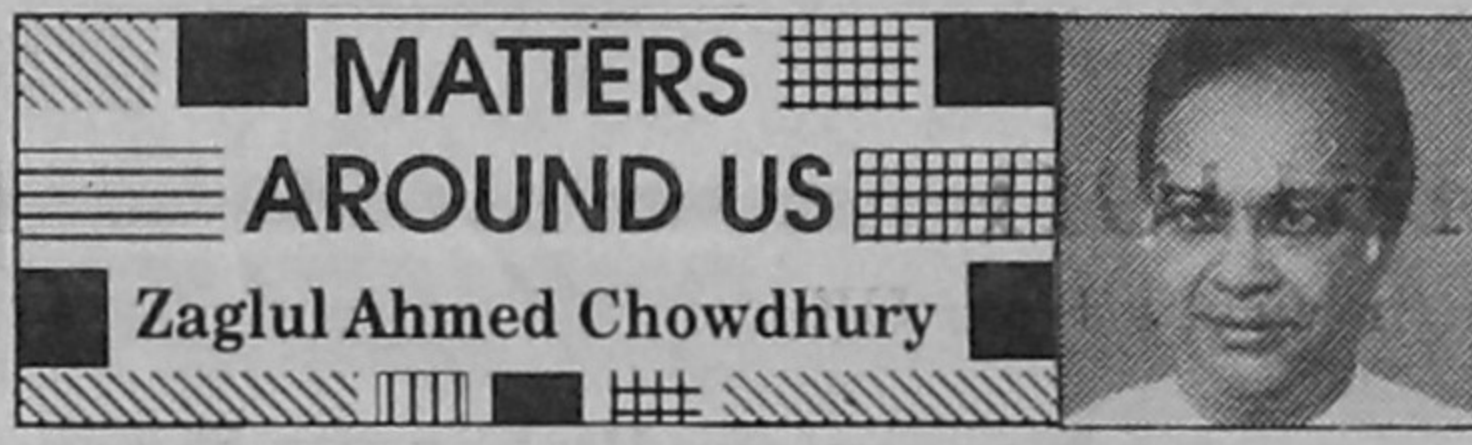
long time to re-schedule the visit as much of the dust raised by the atomic explosions settled down despite the fact that two countries are still bearing the brunt of the explosions.

the two countries and as such some kind of sobering effect was expected on their ties following American president's visit.

Pakistan. Although the latter is an internal matter of Pakistan, it has adversely affected bilateral ties to a magnitude more than anticipated.

General Musharraf as rabidly anti-Indian while also questioning the legitimacy of his regime. For Pakistan, the new regime has to demonstrate tough postures against India compared to Sharif government against a background of an impression that Pakistan lost the Kargil war.

on the sanctity of the LOC along Kashmir. On the other hand, Pakistan wants useful and serious talks on Kashmir and also stresses an East-Timor-like referendum in Kashmir.



Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury

To the Imam Values were More Valuable

by Kazi Aulad Hossain

Finding no other alternative Imam decided to fight to the last and while fighting valiantly he fell down when a spear from the enemy side pierced his body on the day of Ashura, that is, on the 10th day of the holy month of Muharram. Thus, passed away the greatest man of that age some 1300 years ago while fighting for a just cause.

SOME five thousand years ago it was in the lunar month of Zilhadj that Hazrat Ibrahim Khalilullah (Friend of Allah) one of the few great Prophets Benign Allah has graciously been pleased to send down to this world.

into between him and Imam Husayn, Muawiyah's accession turned the caliphate into kingship. The said agreement envisaged that after Muawiyah's death Hazrat Imam Husayn would be the next caliph of the Islamic state.

It may be mentioned here that Muawiyah was the first caliph of the Umayyad period and contrary to the usual practice of choosing a caliph through election followed during the period of first four pious caliphs all successors of Muawiyah were nominated and this practice of nomination continued for nearly ninety years (661-750 CE) till the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty and rise of the Abbasides.

He immediately despatched 4,000 cavalry soldiers under the command of Umar-bin-Sad with instruction to lay a siege to the encamped party of the Imam so that no one from his party could have any access to the water of the river Euphrates flowing nearby.

He could, as has been indicated above, lead a so-called happy life if he simply accepted allegiance to unscrupulous Yazid. To him values were more valuable than his own life, values preached and propounded by his grand father and first four pious caliphs (khulafa-e-rashideen).

him requested the cavalry commander to allow him to go to the place wherefrom he came or proceed to Damascus to discuss the whole matter with Yazid to find out a just solution of the matter failing which he could be allowed to fight in an open field while leading the loyal soldiers of the caliph.

To the Editor ...

We must cooperate with the Home Minister

Sir, Your editorial, "Home Minister's Welcome Directive" (DS-Apr-10) supporting the latest decision of the Home Minister's (HM), "Directive to remove sheds along road..." by 11 April, is praise worthy. And I feel that we should cooperate with the government on such effort.

are a continuous threat to public safety as well. Hoodlums waylay here, planting informants who in turn assist the gang in committing crime and in escaping from the scene. Most of these structures are used for training new recruits and for 'chandabazi' (toll collection). The Home Minister should ensure that police, the main executioner of his directive, would move fast to uproot these bad elements immediately to prove that his directives have been carried in toto. This should not be allowed to die down the police-public (including media) cooperation, only for the police's lethargy in action and plagued by favouritism/corrupt practice/partisan role. I hope the Home Minister understands, a failure in this undertaking would mean extent of his sincerity towards the nation.

anyway" (April 01) was published in this column which narrated about the wayside sheds extended next to the Uttara Police Station. Now about ten-days' after that letter published and after the HM's directive to police, to my dismay, the said structures are still having the police favours. In fact, the police should have uprooted the unauthorised sheds next to the PS first, to gain public confidence and to deter others.

are being appointed to teach in these schools. In these institutions those holding Masters degree in Physics are teaching English. The Economics teacher is also unable to explain relevant concepts in English, which is a necessity in this education system. However glossy the exterior of these institutions may be, the standard of education, the vital thing, is indeed poor.

It is ironic, but it looks like that, the politicians have to go back for some homework, before eagerly offering their services for public welfare. The public cannot undertake this tutorial; the politicians have to come back with the minimum qualifications. Unfortunately, here, the politicians do not seem to learn quickly from experience; due to subjective approach to public affairs.

and the maintenance side is obviously poor. Then from where the vote of confidence will come? It appears that the nation cannot depend on evolutionary politics, as too much time has been wasted. Time is the essence, and it will wait for none.

English medium education

Sir, The number of English medium schools in our country are increasing rapidly but the same cannot be said about their standard. This is owing to the fact that sub-standard teachers

Political dialogues

Sir, The peoples' reaction on political dialogue between the two major political parties of the country (DS, Jan 26) was interesting. However, some observations are in order.

Arbab Quadri, House No 92/A, Road 7/A, Dhanmondi

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