

FOCUS

Education in Quandary — the Road to Harakiri

"E DUCATION makes a people easy to lead but difficult to drive, easy to govern, but impossible to enslave" (Lord Brougham). Probably keeping this in mind the very first thing the authoritarian rulers, past and present, say, from Bangladesh to Burundi, resort to is the systematic destruction of sound education by various overt and covert means. Because, sound education is said to be the foundation of a nation. Since education is key to consciousness, spurring and flowering of democratic values, secular outlook, innovation and application of science and technology and removal of poverty the authoritarian rulers are apt to strike at its very roots for keeping the people under subjugation as well as for the perpetuation of their hegemonic and dictatorial rule.

This traditional mindset of authoritarianism is being evidenced in Bangladesh since its very emergence, for during nearly thirty years of the country's independent entity democracy was never allowed to blossom in its full glory. As in the game of musical chair one set of autocrat replaced the other, some with the coating of fake democracy while the other with the mantle of Khaki (uniform) and martial laws. One thing was, however, common in their style of rule — they played havoc with the country's education system which happened to be their very first victim. The cumulative effects of three decades of planned destruction of education have now brought the nation to the brink of anarchy, chaos and ruin. For example the public examination systems have now become a total farce. Instead of their becoming a fair competition designed for meritocracy, they have been reduced into free for all in mass cheating and adopting unfair means with the connivance and patronage of political leaders having official clouts, teachers, guardians and unruly mobs. The way this year's SSC and HSC examinations were and are being conducted has broken all past records of irregularities and in its turn raised in public mind the question whether there is any need for the education Boards or holding of any further public examinations in the country.

The administration respon-

Through the conspiracy and machinations of vested interests our education sector has almost been destroyed. Knowingly or unknowingly the nation has been pushed into a systematic process of self-annihilation or harakiri. It will be the task on the part of all patriotic elements to stand resolutely against the conspiracy.

by Mansoor Mamoon

sible for the smooth conduct of such examinations complained of its helplessness in the face of political influences meaning pressure from the high ups belonging to the party in power. The Education Minister has openly scoffed at the newspaper reports of mass cheating, terming it as 'exaggeration' and blatantly claimed that 'some unfairness' are not unusual. When at the recently concluded World Education Forum at Dakar, Senegal the very same Education Minister of Bangladesh, called for quality education, it not only sounded hollow but also contradictory and hypocritical in nature at the same time. Can toleration of cheating in public examinations give effect to quality education? When there were widespread leakage of question papers of SSC Examinations in 1997 the Education Minister instead of taking punitive measures against the culprits, enforced embargo on the newspapers on publication of the leaked question papers.

According to existing law of the land, taking or abetting in unfair means or cheating in examinations is a serious crime. But is there a single instance of law taking its normal course? This year an overwhelming number of examinees along with sizeable number of teachers were expelled in the SSC and HSC Examinations. How many of them have been charge-sheeted? The answer probably will be — none so far. If this be the rate of toleration, adoption of unfair means in the examinations will simply burgeon and become unbridled (in fact it has already become so). There are also allegations of tampering with the results of the public examinations. Even merit list can be changed through kickbacks and illegal gratification. Examinees of one newly established intermediate college under Dhaka Board in a remote village with its principal and teachers having very little or no teaching and other requisite experiences secured as many as

six top positions in the HSC Examinations held in 1999 much to the surprise and consternation of reputed well established educational institutions in the capital city. But there was no probe from the Board authority as to how this 'miracle' could have been achieved by this hitherto unknown college? The Board first cancelled the venue of this college for its own examinees for adopting unfair means but later had to retract from its decisions under political pressure, as per newspaper report.

This inertia on the part of the authority has reportedly contaminated even the BCS examinations with the virus of cheating. Different independent and national bodies have alleged that corruption has corroded the country's education sector and the situation is fast reaching the nadir.

Apart from mass cheating, the standard of education in all tiers starting from the primary to university levels has fallen abysmally low. According to a recent survey, a staggering number of teachers in both primary and secondary levels can not express themselves in correct Bangla, not to speak of English. Neither are they properly trained. In Bangladesh it is generally believed that teaching as an avocation is the last option of a job-seeker. In the World Education Forum at Dakar emphasis has been duly laid on quality education, particularly at the primary level. But the quality of the overall primary education in Bangladesh has dipped so low that it simply beggars description.

The health of the university education is also far from satisfactory.

Two universities — namely the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology at Sylhet and the Chittagong University have remained closed for nearly half of a full academic year bedeviling the future of at least seventeen thousand students. The ground for their long closure is flimsy in nature — the Shahjalal University over the

controversy of naming of its academic buildings and dormitories and the Chittagong University because of the ruling party student wing's clashes with the opposition backed students' groups. Imagine the quantum of national wastage in a poor country like Bangladesh! The Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) is groaning under the culture of shifting examinations and the consequent session jam. The Jahangir Nagar University acquired notoriety for raping of the female students in their scores by the ruling party activists and muscle-men. In Dhaka University extortion by ruling party aligned student leaders often lead to bloody clashes. Inside the campus of the Dhaka University a Nazi-style torture cell was discovered to the horror of peace-loving citizens.

Campus have long been turned into battle grounds of rival student bodies. Gun-running and blood-letting have, as if, been included in the syllabi instead of new millennium's demand for research in genetic engineering, robotics, knowledge based economics etc. University teachers are divided into different political camps and reportedly even incite the students to engage in bloody combats. Sub-standard private universities and other educational institutions are doing brisk business with no set rules as their guidelines and with no fool-proof system for monitoring their mode of teaching and keeping vigilance on their efficacy. Coaching centres have sprung up like mushrooms all over the country. In the frenzy of commodity fetishism education has been tragically turned into a profitable market-oriented commodity luring the students to easy way 'success'. Gullible students are becoming unsuspecting victims of unrecognised universities and institutions which are dishing out what has been so aptly described as 'dead letter degrees' which fail to reach their destinations in the job market.

Three different types of educational institutions — vernacular, religious and English medium alongside Cadet Colleges are being run side by side with no uniformity among them. This highly discriminatory type of education system is against the very spirit of the country's constitution (as well as democratic dispensation) which in article 17 clearly said:

"The state shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of —

(a) establishing uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law;

(b) relating education to the needs of the society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens for those needs;

(c) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law."

It will be pertinent and interesting to note what the ruling

Awami League had pledged before the nation in its election manifesto prior to 1996 parliamentary elections. In point 10 of the 21-point Election Manifesto under the heading "Education and Human Resources" the AL had promised — "An initiative will be taken to launch a national movement with the people's participation in it to free the nation from the curse of illiteracy within ten years. A primary school in each village will be built and arrangement will be made for technical and vocational training at each thana (sub-district). Religious and madrasa education will be further developed and modernised... A change will be brought in the education system in the light of Dr. Kuddus-e-Khuda Education Commission Report and an education policy based on science and technology will be drafted.

Measures will be taken to free the campus from terrorism and remove session-jam."

The AL is in power for nearly four years and its election pledges have largely proved to be mere hyperbole, despite its extra-loud contention of giving the highest allocation for education sector in the national budgets. This claim was also used to be regularly made by the past governments. The stark reality is that no government till now cared to give a sound education policy. It is in fact that education, the most important and vital sector for national uplift, is having no policy at all during the last three decades. Against this backdrop, students in their thousands are leaving the country for higher education abroad. In India alone, over a hundred thousand Bangladeshi students are reported to be currently enrolled. Those who have means are proceeding to Australia, Canada, USA, UK etc. This is causing serious brain-drains and depriving the country of the services of the quality manpower.

But in the sixties it was the other way round. Students from South-east Asian countries — namely Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, which set the example of economic miracle — used to flock to different educational institutions here for higher studies. So high had been the standard of our education system. Three decades of willful neglect have turned the table the other way round.

One of the reasons for leaders belonging to almost all political parties are indifferent to the problems confronting the education system is that their sons and wards, in the majority of cases, study abroad. Hence they do not seriously bother about the fate of the students from the poor and the middle class families.

Who benefited from the consequent low standard, anarchy, lawlessness and chaos in our education sector? It has, therefore, been rightly said that in order to destroy a nation the very first thing will be to destroy its education system.

Through the conspiracy and machinations of vested interests our education sector has almost been destroyed. Knowingly or unknowingly the nation has been pushed into a systematic process of self-annihilation or harakiri. It will be the task on the part of all patriotic elements to stand resolutely against the conspiracy.

Though much waters have already flown in the rivers Padma-Meghna-Jamuna, it is better late than never. SAVE EDUCATION. SAVE BANGLADESH.

Education: The Great Betrayal

We can succeed but only when all of us, official and nonofficial actors alike, work together and support country leadership to make it happen... We believe that the world's children deserve nothing less.

by James Wolfensohn

SINCE the first world forum on education in Jomtien, Thailand, 10 years ago, we have failed to deliver the prize of education for all.

Countries like Uganda, where much has been accomplished in basic education with a combination of political will and leadership, good governance, extra money and more efficient use of existing resources, show what could have been done. Yet globally today, 125 million children are out of school, when we had all promised one another at Jomtien that in 2000 there would be none.

There is no doubt that universal education is a challenging goal to meet, made even more so by the past decade's large-scale political and economic transitions, the spread of conflicts and natural disasters, population growth, and the widening of the "digital divide."

Yet education means empowerment opportunity and development. More than that, it can mean life and death for the world's poorest people. It is time that we recognized the scale of the education crisis and allowed no complacency or empty pledges with respect to school enrolment and quality of education. Each day that a child is denied the chance of a quality education, it closes the door to the future of that child — and, cumulatively, to his or her family and nation. The exclusion of millions from quality education is as morally unacceptable as it is economically wasteful.

Viable, practical solutions are needed. We believe it is the responsibility of national and local governments to invest in their greatest asset: their human capital. Education must be at the core of every nation's development and poverty reduction strategy.

Success will depend on strong partnerships among developing and developed countries, international agencies like those of the United Nations and the World Bank, and civil

society. Debt relief must be targeted to basic education and other services that give people a hand up. Aid to basic education must be expanded and improved.

This requires a new form of global partnership, a "virtual" alliance on education that can mobilize money and ideas more quickly and involve many more actors than in the past. Businesses, nongovernmental organizations, teachers' unions and other groups in civil society must work more closely with donors and government agencies. Ministries of finance and development must be partners in this effort along with ministries of education.

Dakar can point the way forward, but it must be about action, not rhetoric. We, on behalf of the World Bank and the Global Campaign for Education (an alliance involving non-governmental organizations from around the world, including Education International, a global association of teachers' unions) want the forum to put in place a fast track action plan for a first group of countries, that are committed to achieving universal education goals much sooner than the year 2015, and have viable strategies to do so.

This will send a powerful message that such aims are achievable and can be accelerated. It will also signal that there is the political will from a number of countries, and from regional and global players, to work creatively together.

We can succeed but only when all of us, official and nonofficial actors alike, work together and support country leadership to make it happen. We should pledge that no country with a sound plan to achieve education for all its children will fail for lack of help and money. We believe that the world's children deserve nothing less.

The author is President of the World Bank.
Courtesy: THE DAWN of Pakistan

Time to be a Cricketing Nation

As we are finding rays of hope in cricket, we want to do something more special and continue to stun the world. Only words will not help flourish the game but serious efforts have to be undertaken to fulfil the ultimate dream of millions.

by Aziz Amirul



Bangladesh is about to receive test-status which is now a matter of time, thus we have to change our motives, attitudes and infra-structural policies fast, keeping pace with the game's advancement throughout the world.

crowd had some leading contribution for the overall fruition. This was the officially organised maiden "cricket week" in the 200-year history of world cricket, and Dhaka being selected as the venue of such a memorable match, a major celebration of the week-long cricketing extravaganza, we surely can feel proud and hon-

oured for our outstanding organising capability and modest welcome reception. It can be mentioned that Mr. Jagmohan Dalmia, the President of ICC repeatedly praised Bangladesh's deep commitment for the cause of the noble game and he further assured to exhibit our country as a role-model to the international

cricket arena. Clear hints from Mr. Dalmia, besides Wasim Akram and others reassured us of receiving test-status in cricket within a year, at the most.

But we must not forget that now through these high successes and reputations, our responsibility towards cricket has become more heightened and all should have to work unitedly to further improve the conditions and standards of the discipline here. We are no more regarded as new-born babes, rather a rising force with commendable role to play in the near future for the benefit of cricket-globalisation programmes. As a non-test playing nation, it is quite an organising achievement for us to be able to host successfully experimental maiden meets like the "Mini World Cup" and "Asian Test Championship" besides the "cricketnext.com cup", all in the Dhaka big bowl within a span of three years. As our Honourable Minister for Sports, Youth and Cultural Affairs rightly told the media-men about the restructuring of the Cricket Board resembling those of the test playing nations, we are thus, awaiting a golden future with high hopes and aspirations.

To take part in the first-ever cricket week (ICC, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chalked out

different attractive programmes starting from April 2 till 8. Besides, the match between the Asians and the Rest of the World, another notable event was the day-long Under-10 cricket tournament held at the Kalabagan cricket ground in the capital, an inspirational and fruitful one. Sixty-six kids participated divided into six teams, named after half a dozen world greats, where Graeme Pollock eleven emerged as champions beating Sir Donald Bradman team in the fifteen overs-a-side final. Besides, painting and quiz competitions, U-19 coaching clinic in six divisional headquarters, seminar and a colourful rally marked the busy week.

Bangladesh is about to receive test-status which is now a matter of time, thus we have to change our motives, attitudes and infra-structural policies fast, keeping pace with the game's advancement throughout the world. Without further delay, rebuilding and solidifying of the grassroots level activities has become an emergency. Instead of a single day-long tournament at Kalabagan, we need such programmes all year round in every nook and corner of the country, spreading the message of cricket among all. A semi-professional strategy among the leading clubs should be introduced immediately with players receiving fixed salaries from the Board. Flying in expensive foreign test players for the sake of winning titles by influential clubs will do little good, if local youngsters remain sidelined as substitutes season after season hampering their price-less career. In fact, this selfish mentality of the officials should come to an end to save the future of cricket. The present poor performance of Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting, who this year got a futile combination of Ijaz Ahmed, Hashan Tillekkrane and Ruwan Kalpage, strongly proves that world famous faces cannot always bring success for locals.

Instead of bringing test stars as players, short and medium-term clinics for youngsters on individual departments like batting, bowling of different types and wicket-keeping, can be run by the Board and leading clubs, engaging former international professionals.

As we are finding rays of hope in cricket, we want to do something more special and continue to stun the world. Only words will not help flourish the game but serious efforts have to be undertaken to fulfil the ultimate dream of millions. One wishes every possible success in the forthcoming "Asia Cup" and would like to caution all concerned to be aware of any matter involving "match-fixing" and "bookies", the hottest issue molesting current world cricket. Though today winning the World Cup for us is a childish daydream but who knows, a day may arrive, when through proper policies and actions, the endangered Royal Bengal Tiger of the mangroves will re-incarnate among our golden boys to rule the world of the "cherry and willow".

Directorate General Defence Purchase

Ministry of Defence

New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

Re-Tender Notice

1. Sealed tender in foreign currency are invited from bonafide manufacturers/dealers/suppliers/indotors (Enlisted Firms in DGDP) for supply of following items for Bangladesh Navy.

Sl No	Name of items & qty	Selling date	Opening date	Tender no	Tender value
a	Portable Fuel Oil Transfer Pump Qty — 01 in No Portable Lub Oil Transfer Pump Qty — 01 in No Lub Oil Transfer Pump Qty — 01 in No	11 May 2000 to 24 May 2000	25 May 2000	6239/NP-4	Tk 150/00

2. Tender schedule with detailed specifications/conditions will be available on payment as per I/T selling rate (not-refundable) during office hour between 0800 hrs to 1300 hrs. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hrs and opened at 1005 hrs on the specified date of opening in the presence of tenderers (if any).

ISPR/Army/2000/402
DFF-10789-7/5
G-861

Lt Cdr BN
For Director General.

BCIC International Tender Notice

বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিলায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির প্রতীক

Managing Director, Karnaphuli Paper Mills Limited, 92, Sadarghat Road, Chittagong invites sealed quotation on C&F (C) Chittagong basis under any suitable source of financing for the following items under two envelope system:

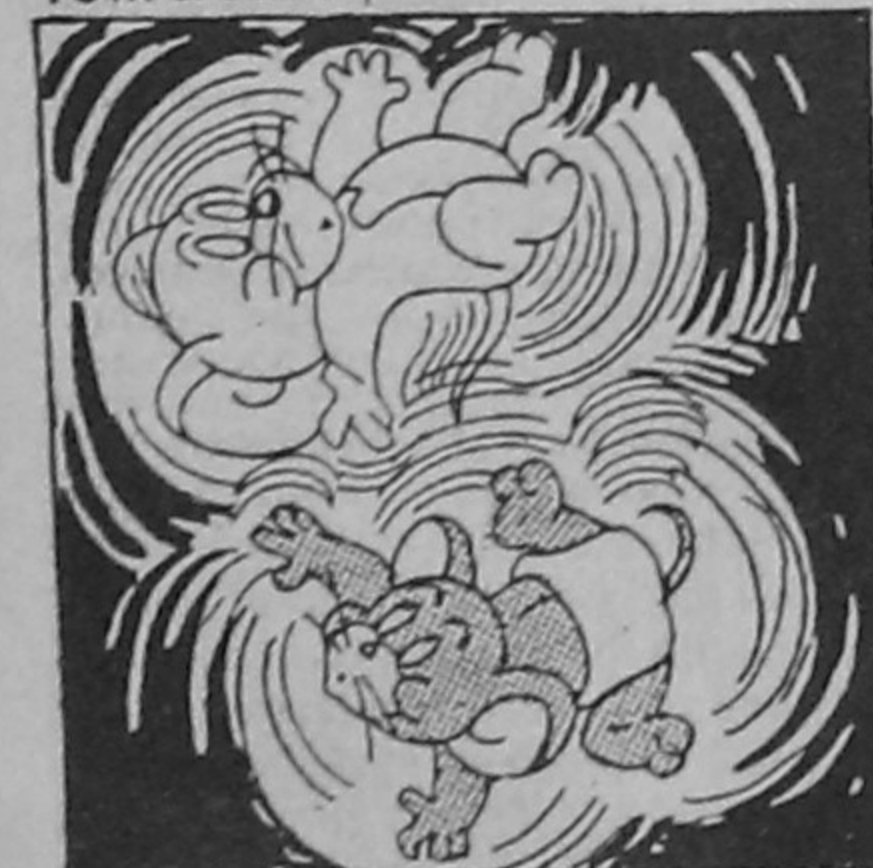
Tender No	Materials	Opening date	Cost of tender
1. F/36A/MPIC-01/35/99/POP	Photo Electric Replacance Photometer-1 Set	5.6.2000	Tk. 250/-
2. F/46A/MPIC-01/16/2000/POP	Super Chrome Crete-10 MP	5.6.2000	Tk.100/-
3. F/63/MPIC-48/72/2000/POP	Un-bleached Soft Wood Kraft Pulp (Sheet/Slab)-750 ADMT	5.6.2000	Tk. 500/-
4. F/65/MPIC-46/64/2000/POP	Dandy Roll Cover- 6 Nos.	7.6.2000	Tk. 25/-
5. F/72/MPIC-03/61/2000/POP	Sodium Sulphate (Anhydrous)= 1500 Kgs	7.6.2000	Tk. 25/-
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The quotation duly supported by 1% (min. Tk. 1000/-) earnest money will be received upto 11-00 AM in the mentioned date and will be opened immediately thereafter in presence of the tenderers, if any. Tender document on cash payment may be obtained from (a) Dy. Chief Accountant, Karnaphuli Paper Mills Ltd., 92, Sadarghat Road, Chittagong and (b) Controller of Accounts, BCIC, BCIC Bhawan, 30-31, Dilkusha Com. Area, Dhaka on all working days. No tender document will be sold on the date of opening.

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TOM & JERRY



James Bond



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SEE THAT



By Hanna-Barbera

