

# The Daily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S.M. Ali

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## Godspeed to Test Debut

THIS is not a moment for exhortation. Nor is it for darkening our mood through a recap of Bangladesh cricket's heart-breaking debacles. Rather it is an occasion to refresh our cricket from any pallor of the past and break the mental barrier of babyhood to step into the adult world of Test cricket. If indeed we have to go down the memory lane today then we better revisit the brighter spots - the ICC Championship Trophy lifted in 1997, win against a formidable Pakistan side in the World Cup 1999, and the Test status conferred on us last June.

So much for the festive mood, so much to feel part of the ceremonial ambience marked by the august presence of ICC observers, former coaches for Bangladesh side like Gordon Greenidge and Amarnath, and as if to rhyme with the historic occasion, Steve Bucknor of West Indies and David Shepherd of England are umpiring our debut in Test cricket.

Christening is obviously the initiation into Test cricket and it is only now that our baptism through fire begins. And what a baptism ceremony are we into. Not only is it the maiden Test match we are playing in world cricket and it is also our first test of mettle in the five-day version of the game. The whole lot of our cricketing ammunition - skill, stamina, big game temperament and capacity to play to a game plan - will all be arrayed against those of India, a prestigious name in world cricket. Our records in three or four-day matches show that we ran out of steam as in South Africa. So we need to do something special to prove our five-day staying power.

There is always a first time with a difficult outing and once we cross that hurdle we shall be in a position to adapt to the challenge of Test cricket. The Bangladesh team must know that their compatriots do not expect them to perform a miracle against a Tendulkar-Ganguly-Dravid-studded Indian side. All we want is that they play to the best of their abilities in all departments of the game and show the promise of truly and squarely living up to their new-found status as Test-playing nation.

The cricket world would like to be reassured that conferment of Test status on Bangladesh was entirely based on the latter's deserving it rather than attributable to a so-called act of cricket diplomacy on her part as some detractors would have liked to believe.

We felicitate the Indian cricket authorities on their gesture to play against Bangladesh in the inaugural Test just as they did against Zimbabwe after it had earned Test status.

Hopefully, our Test-playing experience with India will have propelled the beginning of some tangible improvement in our cricketing infrastructure along with an impetus provided to competitive, longer version cricket at the district, divisional and national levels across the country. The clinching factor will be a strong base at home.

## Friday Mailbox

### "Compensate Her for the Loss"

Sir, I am extremely shocked to read the news item concerning the theft at the ZIA International Airport of the savings and valuables of Zarina Khatun which she was bringing home in a suitcase from Abu Dhabi. In this regard, I endorse Daily Star's views wholeheartedly and echo the demand mentioned in the editorial that someone will have to take responsibility for the pilferage of the money and that the victim needs to be adequately compensated.

What prompted me to write this letter is to inform the readers that I, myself also became a victim of similar nature. On 7 October last, I flew to London from ZIA via Dubai. When I reached my destination, I was horrified to find that my suitcase was ransacked and all my gifts and valuables had been missing. Immediately, I wrote a letter to the Emirates office in London detailing the pilferage and claiming appropriate compensation. The Emirates' customer relations manager duly replied me saying that in accordance with their 'Conditions of Carriage', the carrier was not liable for pilferage of money, jewellery or any other valuables which are included in the passenger's baggage with or without the carrier's knowledge. I was advised to contact my insurer, if there was any, who would be able to assist me in this matter. Unfortunately, I did not have any cover for my baggage and I had to forget about the whole episode.

I am very much certain that the theft had been committed at the ZIA immediately after I had checked in. I would, therefore, not only advise the passengers traveling abroad to be more careful about their luggage but also would request the authorities concerned at ZIA to be more vigilant in handling the baggage so that such incidents never occur again.

Anis Ahmad  
Dhaka-1214

Sir, This letter is to express our sincere appreciation for your timely editorial *Compensate Her for the Loss* (DS, 6 November). You have vindicated the feeling of anguish, resentment, contempt and frustration of the society in a succinct manner by boldly stating that "We are not going to stop merely by commenting emotionally on the misdeed," which unfortunately has become the norm of the day.

In this regard, may we put a suggestion for your consideration that you continue to display Zarina Khatun's wailing face with caption on the front page of your esteemed daily to rekindle our collective conscience, till the victim is compensated and the guilty party brought to book.

Yawer Sayeed  
Aims of Bangladesh  
Dhaka

### Maiming the youth of a nation

Sir, There is some truth in the opposition's allegation (DS report, Nov 1) that the youth of the country are being targeted by enemies in and

Views expressed in this column are the writers' own. The Editor may or may not subscribe to those views. The Editor reserves the right to decide which letters should be published

# Circling the Wagon

Even if some policy decisions are taken to put restriction on certain types of films or programmes on the ground of their being puerile or salacious, there is no way that a wholesale ban can be announced on satellite based cable channels. Here the local film industry can hardly argue from a moral high ground as most of the films produced in Bangladesh beat the worst of foreign films hollow in terms of obscenities, violence and outrageous fantasy.

videos available not only entertained a large number of people gathered before a TV, they also revealed that many of our film makers were copying the foreign films merrily without the knowledge of the viewers and also the censors. Perhaps because of this guilt-feeling the filmmakers did not mobilise themselves and march off to the office of the authority concerned with slogans of protest. It would have been natural for them to at least point out the pirated copies of foreign films that were being rented out by video shops at every street corners. Their silence even on this score was puzzling.

As they mulled over the predicament a new and a more potent threat made its appearance, this time in the form of satellite dish and cable channels. The rapid development in the information superhighway that almost brought the whole world into the drawing and bed-rooms of even middle-class families took them by surprise. Not only interesting sitcom, dramas, video games and musicals were being telecast non-stop over a large number of channels but films, old and not so old, from Hollywood and Bollywood were also attracting viewers of all ages. Some films even outdid them with scenes of violence and raunchy sex. Utterly perplexed, they could not make up their minds about what should be done. After a long interval when foreign language channels were joined by Bengali ones from both sides of the border they have now fallen back on the only defence tactics with which they are familiar, protection through imposition of ban. So almost with Pav-

lovian reaction a delegation from the beleaguered industry again dutifully went to their past saviour. They met the authority with funeral gloom and after the usual hand-wringing and breast-beating told their tale of sorrow and loss. The authority, as usual, gave a patient hearing to the pampered constituency. But both the authority and the protesters know that this time they do not have the "usual suspects" to deal with but are up against a force

programmes on the ground of their being puerile or salacious, there is no way that a wholesale ban can be announced on satellite based cable channels. Here the local film industry can hardly argue from a moral high ground as most of the films produced in Bangladesh beat the worst of foreign films hollow in terms of obscenities, violence and outrageous fantasy. They should thank their stars that the majority of our population, particularly their

though they won a few battle in the past, the war is now lost and over. It is pointless and futile for them to circle the wagon.

The more they do so in desperation the more will their behaviour resemble that of the Luddites who fought against new inventions in the UK in the eighteenth century and lost. The march of technological progress is inexorable and possesses awesome power. Even if some in the society may suffer adversely during transition the great majority stand to benefit. Trying to adjust and adapt to the new order is the key to survival and ensures sharing of the blessings that new technology brings. To resist is to postpone the peaceful and relatively less painful transition. A higher price to be paid and a greater inconvenience to be suffered await those who refuse to accept the inevitable. Some may even perish in the technological Darwinism.

Not all is however bad news for the protectionists. On another front they scored a resounding victory after concerted agitation before which the government gave up at the end. The surrender by the authority was abject in so far as the case represented by the protectionist lobby was weak and their argument spurious. It was hardly convincing to insist, as was done by the protesters, that a single foreign book publisher in collaboration with a Bangladeshi firm posed threat to the entire book publishing industry in Bangladesh. Nor was it credible that the joint-venture firm could subvert our culture and ideology. It defied all reasoning as to how could a single company spell

## IN MY VIEW

Hasnat Abdul Hye



which is not only fortified by high-tech but almost elusive to catch hold of. China and Singapore are known to have imposed some kind of censorship on satellite generated TV programme. But their inveterate censors are not able to play even cat and mouse with the Internet which is so private that Big brother cannot come anywhere near it, not to speak of breathing down its neck. Hooked up through the cyberspace with Internet a PC owner can download and see any film or programme using appropriate software. Then there are the easily available CDs of films that fit into the PCs. The last nail in the coffin of censorship thus has already been struck. What is more, it is irreversible.

Even if some policy decisions are taken to put restriction on certain types of films or

patrons, the working-class, still do not have access to cable TV and therefore faithfully throng to the cinema houses to be forefaded with the garbage produced by them. But this may not last long and their rearward action to keep them captive cannot succeed forever. As regards the viewing of films on PC using required software and CD the freedom of viewers is unlimited and the secrecy impenetrable. Even pirated films in CDs are being bought and sold with such ease that copyright holders are at a loss as to what can be done beyond exhorting foreign governments to protect their intellectual property. In this high-tech game high-minded censors became superannuated long ago and they should now retire with dignity. The protectionist lobby of film industry should realise that even

# Why Can't We Have the Bangladeshi Dream?

A national dream is therefore important, which lodged in the hearts of every citizen, must run like a thread from the heart of the father to that of his son. It's not enough to be patriotic, because its passion merely tells that one is in love with one's country. It's not enough to be nationalistic, because its zeal only tells that one is in love with one's love of the country. The dream alone tells us the inner mystery of both, that one loves one's country because one is in love with one's own self.

INSCRIBED on the inner wall of Washington Monument in Washington DC is a celebrated quote from the American poet and philosopher Carl Sandburg, "The republic is a dream. Nothing happens unless first a dream." Does it mean that there is an oneirism rooted in every republic, a kind of prophetic divination that emanates from the collective dream of its population? Do revolutionaries immo-

late themselves to attain this dream, or patriots give their lives to sustain it? And what transpires in the rite of passage when the republic changes hand from present generation to posterity?

What is that dream inlaid in the political sensitivity of a republic, which shatters when the republic is in danger and strengthens when it prospers? Is it the same dream politicians embellish during the election years but forget to deliver, which nevertheless pulsates in the hearts of people? During the Great Depression of the 1940s, the American Dream was under criticism as the crisis of that time had prompted people to revisit its success and failure. Whereas earlier in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the most profound American novel of its time, Gatsby's dream was connected with his "Platonic conception of himself," with the dream of the discoverers of America.

The dream is thus inherent in every citizen, who tries to stay connected in the ontological scheme of things, which matters for him. Historians who speak of Machiavelli only as an immoralist overlook the extent to which he was a man with a dream, a republican dream. Rousseau recognised this when he spoke of *The Prince* as a "handbook for republicans." Machiavelli's dream was to see revived in modern Italy a republic as glorious as that of ancient Rome and he suggested that it could be achieved only by

means of a revolution that had the strength of will to liquidate its enemies. Machiavelli was the first to link ideology with terror, but he did it in the desperate bid to justify his dream.

The American playwright Eugene O'Neill describes life as a bad dream between two awakenings and everyday as a life in miniature. In that manner, every man is a slice of the world, his existence embodying its miniature. The ecology of that individualistic world is the stuff of his dream, and when that dream is big enough to encompass the

breath-taking revolutionary career lasted for only two years, wanted to die as a supreme protest against a world of blood and tears. In his bewitched mind, Kalyaev had a dream that the world would someday become free from all exploitations and conflicts and he wanted to mark its beginning by shedding his own blood first.

That explains the passion, which heralds the martyrs towards their sacrifice. If our martyrs died for our freedom, what dream must have anointed

their deaths while we continue to live in the benefits of their sacrifice? Did they die so that we could succumb to greed and corruption, and cut our own fellow beings like dicing up carrots or radishes? Did they bite the enemy bullets so that we could become a contentious nation, fighting over everything from father of the nation to future of gas reserve?

Oneirism is based on the belief that dreams are messages sent to the soul by gods or the dead, most often as warnings. In the highly developed oneirism of ancient Greece, Egypt, and Babylonia, the class of diviners or seers responsible for dream interpretation often had great political and social influence. The best-known instance of oneirism preserved in ancient literature is the biblical account of Pharaoh's dream of seven fat and seven lean cows, explained as foretelling of years of plenty to be followed by years of famine.

If the dreams of our martyrs were messages from their ancestors who were dead, what are the messages from the martyrs to us? If we observe the Independence Day, the Language Day, and the Victory Day, how do these observances signify our own existence? What legacy have we got from our ancestors and what legacy do we hope to bring to our children?

The answer is that our ancestors died in order to secure our future, and that is the least we can do for our children. But we also owe it to our ancestors to

leave behind a better world for our children like they had done for us. Is that what we are doing in our scramble for material progress, when in the mad rush to secure the future of our respective children, we are jeopardising the future of the children of others?

A national dream is therefore important, which lodged in the hearts of every citizen, must run like a thread from the heart of the father to that of his son. It's not enough to be patriotic, because its passion merely tells that one is in love with one's country. It's not enough to be nationalistic, because its zeal only tells that one is in love with one's love of the country. The dream alone tells us the inner mystery of both, that one loves one's country because one is in love with one's own self.

Thus the dream connects a citizen to his country, and prompts him to believe that his fate is deeply entwined with that of it. And like children learn how to dream from storytelling, adults learn how to tell their stories from the dream. We don't have any stories to tell because our lives are inured to nightmares. Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin said that true literature could exist only where it was created not by diligent and trustworthy officials, but by madmen, heretics, dreamers, rebels and septs. What is common between literature and republic is passion. We have the passion of every kind in this country. There are trustworthy officials who work diligently for vested interests; we have madmen, heretics, rebels and septs. What we need is dreamers who will tell us about the Bangladeshi dream and make us feel proud once again as patriots and nationalists.

## CROSSTALK

Mohammad Badrul Ahsan



aspirations of all citizens in a country, it becomes the national dream. The American Dream simply underscores the aspiration that the country must be more prosperous every time it changes hand from progenitor to progeny.

When Russian revolutionary Kalyaev climbed the scaffold at two o'clock in the morning and entirely dressed in black wearing a felt hat, he told Father Florinsky, who had offered him the crucifix, that he had finished with life and was prepared for death. This unbelievably dedi-

their eyes before they decided to give up the most precious thing of their life for the country: their own lives. Che Guevara had refused to settle down with comfort and power because he dreamt of not just one exploitation-free country but an entire world. In his relentless pursuit of that dream, he would be eventually ambushed by the Bolivian police, and die in the shootout while his other comrades including Fidel Castro of Cuba would go on living and enjoying power.

Where is then the dream of our nation, which drew the martyrs to

# Monitoring the Political Climate

Abul M Ahmad

In the under-developed nations, the politicians are not sensitive enough to the lasting value of two-way communication network, but always depend on one-way imposition. The naive electorate cannot be bluffed time and again. Now we are facing the funny situation that the opposition is anti-national! People won't buy this line. Also, the political assassination syndrome is proving to be a stumbling block to better understanding between the politicians and the people.

stabilising stage, hence the focus is rather inwards confined to the skirmishes within the political field. The highly charged, emotionally subjective public meetings by the politicians are more concerned with washing the dirty political linen, than reorientation towards the welfare of the subjugated people. Lots of theories are thrown about at the empty bellies of the masses hovering near the poverty line.

For example, a fossilised political party comes into power after one and a half decades, and tries to find fault with everything done before, thereby disturbing the continuity of the development process (regardless of its quantity and quality). Do we need so many nagging leaders in each party?

Solve your own problems and come to us with clean serving hands, not with debatable agendas to grind, squeezing the voters into polarised thinking, after three decades of independence. Why the pending list is so long, and is lasting too long? The politicians and their leaders are becoming a problem for the naive voters, and this tendency to exploit the innocents is still working powerfully in the different political camps.

The country's number one enemy today is lack of political consensus due to ego-driven charismatic stances; and the political leaders cannot evade their share of the responsibility (or irresponsibility). The differences are not converging,

but diverging day to day; supported by clandestine black arms and money, controlled by hidden godfathers. The egoistic political leaders always consider themselves to be too clever, and fondly imagine that their gift of the gab will carry them along. Oratory and viciousness cannot take a country forward.

Today the political consciousness of the people is so high that it cannot be compared to that prevailing even two decades ago. Planning under static and dynamic conditions are quite different. When it comes to field strategies to face the semi-literate and the illiterate voters (the vast majority), the high flown theories do not hold much water, due to one-way communication

gap (the ideas do not hit them).

In the under-developed nations, the politicians are not sensitive enough to the lasting value of two-way communication network, but always depend on one-way imposition. The naive electorate cannot be bluffed time and again. Now we are facing the funny situation that the opposition is anti-national! People won't buy this line. Also, the political assassination syndrome is proving to be a stumbling block to better understanding between the politicians and the people.

The three points of this divergency triangle has to coincide, before Bangladesh can take off the nation is ready to take off but the politicians are in the way blocking the runway.

They have to solve their problems first before approaching the public. The washing of the dirty linen cannot go on even after 30 years. The issue has to be closed, and the politicians have to come up with the solutions.