

The Ramna atrocity: A time for reflection

DR. SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

SHOCKING is no longer a word strong enough to depict yet another act of atrocity that snuffed out the lives of several innocent people while injuring many more when they went to Ramna Park to celebrate Pohela Boishakh. This day is very significant to the lives of Bengalis because, in a way, it defines a unique people, a unique culture. Bengalis hold Pohela Boishakh dear to their hearts because embedded in it is a lifetime of struggle depicting all that the nation stood for, fought for, and gave blood for.

But all that suffering, all that heritage, and all that rich history of a glorious people who stood against oppression, injustice, and tyranny seems to be fading fast; in its place is rapidly taking root a blind indifference that even ignores the very essence and value of life that a hard-earned freedom was supposed to honour, respect, and protect.

The disregard for Bengali lives is not new. The British whetted their appetite on Bengali blood with conceit and reckless abandon dating back to the East India Company days, and the bloodthirsty barbarism and the incomprehensible inhumanity of the Pakistanis can never be forgotten. But Bengalis rose against these dastardly people

and to their ways to win a freedom that was supposed to bring sanctity to the meaning of life and liberty. Yet, the post-liberation story is not one that Bengalis can be proud of because it neither upheld nor guaranteed the respect and protection for Bengali lives that was ardently

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sought. Unfortunate and regrettable as it is, Bengalis seem to have turned upon themselves with an animal passion and harsh brutality that often rivals the atrocities of their vanquished predecessors.

Historians will attest to the vicious cycle of destruction of life, liberty and property that has engulfed the lives of the common and peace-loving Bengalis. What is depressing is that the perpetrators of these crimes come today from among the ranks of Bengalis, and

they roam the streets with impudence and inhabit the society without any fear of consequence for their heinous actions. Their disdain for the law, the liberty, and the life of the people is also all too evident and well documented in uncountable events. A case in point is Tipu Sultan,

the young investigative reporter, whose very survival is now in question. And yet these incidents continue to remain unresolved by those responsible for restoring and maintaining a just and orderly society. One almost senses that individuals and groups in various positions of influence and authority willfully perpetuate this injustice and disorder in society because they gain from it immensely.

Now we are witness to this renewed and blatant attack at

Ramna Park that strikes at the root of a rich and gracious culture. Not only does this vicious attack numb the mind, it also heightens a sense of helplessness and uncertainty, and leads to another quantum loss of faith in what the nation stands for and where it is headed. It also provokes many questions, not only about who could have done this and why, but about the very meaning of freedom and how can it be wrested back. With such questions also pervade a sense of doubt in those who are entrusted with the affairs of the nation and with bringing about a just and stable society. Such doubts lurking and growing in the psyche of an entire nation are as ominous as a gathering storm, the fury of which, when unleashed, wreaks nothing short of total destruction. These doubts must be quickly but justly removed by bringing about a resolution to the particular incident and similar incidents that took place in the past. Bengalis must demand such resolution with one voice. Left ignored or unattended, it portends grave consequences for national unity and harmony because it can find expression in undesirable ways and with dangerous ramifications.

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Developing the depressed areas

G M F ABDUR ROB

HEAVY concentration of people in the big cities especially in Dhaka and Chittagong poses a grim picture and is a big concern for the nation. The burden on civic amenities and environment has gone beyond the tolerable limit. Government khas land and vacant private land in those cities have become target to develop ghettos which ultimately become breeding grounds for anti-social activities and terrorism. Government's demolishing of ghettos in those areas from time to time in piecemeal manner is no answer to the problem and concentration of rural migrants who again find place somewhere under the protection of local leaders and mastans only to be exploited. Unless the government shows awareness to the multitude of problems associated with the concentration of people and take corrective steps on priority basis to halt the influx in the big cities, it will in no time be a perennial source of headache. The problems that will ultimately crop up in a gigantic manner will be difficult to resolve.

Under the circumstance, the government must frame policies for sustainable dispersal of population and endeavour to halt rural-urban migration. The policies must be based on finding jobs in and around depressed areas or small cities/towns. In order to attain it the government effort should concentrate on decentralisation of industries and setting up more industries under its initiative and patronisation. Such step is needed not only to reduce the pressure of population in big cities but also to develop the depressed areas for economic rejuvenation of the region. This need is more felt in the country's northern and south-western regions where the economy is almost in a state of peril.

The policy for decentralisation of

industries to the depressed areas is more a social and economic need rather than an entrepreneurial opportunity. Therefore the machinery of the government should be involved for sustained development of the economy of the region. This

ent institutions tend to look with predictable disfavour at anything which threatens their own "autonomy". Success will come only if all those concerned keep their minds firmly set on the idea of self-sustaining growth and abjure all

Unless the depressed areas are developed economically to sustain growth, the movement of population will continue to the big cities for their survival. But the cost for the city dwellers will be very high to the peril of civic amenities.

would require long term planning by the government to develop depressed areas into "growth zones".

No policy will do away with the problems unless it established not just a number of new industries but the nucleus of new industrial complex which will have a natural power of self-sustained development and expansion. The government policies should aim at making these areas attractive for employment where people, instead of tending to migrate to large cities shall prefer to live in their own place. The increasing unemployment problem in the country's northern and south-western region is very much a result of the barren principle of keeping some kind of work going somehow with total absence of government initiative and policy planning. The resultant effect is most of the workless thousands flocking in the big cities like Dhaka and Chittagong.

If the government means business and wants to develop depressed areas of the country then constitution of a Development Council is a prerequisite which will ensure industrialisation in the "growth zone". A new central committee of ministers concerned should be set up to be involved in the activities of planning and execution. The bureaucratic authority of differ-

resistance to change.

Increased public spending will be required to give special support to the "growth zones" or "growth points" covering cost of roads, hospitals, housing, education and so on in the depressed regions in order to give impetus to local development. Expert views will produce constructive ideas about the best ways of achieving desired result. Government shall continue to pursue a strict policy of steering as much new industrial development as possible away from areas where the need for employment is less pressing. The overriding need is to diversify development to broaden the economic base.

What many planners and economists would like to see is the development of industrial estate at a few selected "growth zones" throughout the north and south-western region. This would mean the acquisition and development of new sites and new facilities backed by government assistance to the maximum, regardless of the status of the area. The government programme of building good roads, bridges, hospital buildings, residential accommodations, gas and coal fired power stations and improving ports of the region must go on along with the development programme. This requires virtual integration of related depart-

ments to remove obstacles in the way of implementation. Until this is done, the temptation to concentrate industries in and around Dhaka and Chittagong is to be overcome by government regulations.

An entrepreneur thinking of establishing new industry will invariably look for wide choice of sites and infrastructural facilities. He will naturally want to go to an established area where specialised service industries and public facilities are already developed. Therefore, a policy of allowing new industry to be established in the country's northern and south-western region requires developed infrastructural facilities there. Besides a clear judgement can be reached by the government on the efficacy of financial inducement. Planning of the whole range of programmes could help to reinforce regional development.

In the face of hard realities, a powerful consensus of opinion is the growing need for the uplift and industrialisation of depressed regions. Government should be committed to its dominating role in the development of economy of the region. Like in any major business the programmes should be manned by experienced and dashing personnel to work for an overall economic development if delay, inefficiency and wastage are to be avoided. The administrative body at each level should coordinate with the regional planning and administrative authority in the implementation of projects.

Unless the less developed or depressed areas are developed economically to sustain growth in the region, the movement of population will continue to the big cities for their survival. But the cost for the city dwellers will be very high to the peril of civic amenities. So the authorities should act now, before it is too late.

Globalisation, WTO-style 'Free' trade or livelihood?

PRAFUL BIDWAI

writes from New Delhi

ON April 1, with uncertainty clouding its economy, India moved into high-risk trade globalisation by lifting quantitative restrictions (QRs) on imports of 715 items, the last batch of a total of 10,000 trade duties.

This was celebrated by "free traders" as the final burial of the "Licence Permit Raj". India, they say, made its brand-new "Tryst with Destiny" when it woke to "life and freedom, and to Kraft cheese, Tyson's chicken wings, Armani suits, Gucci shoes, Davidoff cigars, Rolex chronometers... and second-hand cars" (The Economic Times), i.e. a consumer paradise.

However, India is likely to lose much more than it gains through "free trade". Some of its poorest people—marginal peasants, landless Dalits and workers in small enterprises—will be hit. Such wholesale destruction of livelihoods is far too frightening to contemplate, leave alone compensate through marginally increased competition.

One doesn't have to be a swadeshi nationalist or a protectionist to say this. Indeed, the new trade regime is also protectionist, perversely, of the wrong things.

It will allow unlimited imports of

most goods from pencils to cars, garments to liquor, rice and vegetables to electronic appliances. It won't cheapen inputs for India's crisis-ridden agriculture or small industry. But it will put India in the league of Fourth World states (e.g. in Latin America), which long ago stopped fussing about rich-poor disparities.

The government dishonestly claims it had no choice under the WTO but to lift the QRs. It had one

That is the cruel logic of "free trade". We must resist it before it turns our elite into compulsive consumers of chemicalised packaged foods and exclusive cosmetics, while starving the millions.

more year. It itself advanced the date through a bilateral deal with the United States as the price for Mr Clinton's visit last year.

The official "back-up" argument, that the WTO agreement was inevitable, or desirable in the long run, is wrong. The deal is heavily tilted towards the industrialised countries. Five years ago, WTO promised the Third World a \$500 billion trade bonanza. It never materialised.

The government was so keen to lift QRs that it simply ignored many WTO-compatible options. It could

have put some of the 715 items on a "prohibited" list (which has 520 entries). It could shift many to a "special" list of imports by designated enterprises, or announced flexible tariffs.

The government went headlong into QR lifting, without safeguards or preparation. It wants to double exports in four years, but devised no strategy, barring "special economic zones", which have failed in India. It wants to send agricultural produce

to far-away lands. But it won't allow Punjab farmers to sell in Orissa, even Haryana.

The new policy has a shameful, sleazy bias for liquor, cigarettes and automobiles. These are the only large-industry groups in the pompously termed "War Room" created to monitor 300 "sensitive" items like rice, jowar, bajra, wheat, tea, etc.

The "luxury" items will enjoy much greater protection than essential commodities. The duty on cars will be a prohibitive 180 percent, as opposed to 45 percent for foodgrains. On liquor, the basic duty will be 150 percent, plus high countervailing duty.

Importable cars must be under three years old, right-hand drive, with a speedometer in kilometres. They can only be brought in through Mumbai. A two-year-old car will cost 75 percent more than a new vehicle!

There couldn't be more blatant protection for the "domestic" car industry itself heavily dominated by multinational corporations. But industries which face serious threats from dumping, e.g. synthetic textiles, dry-cell batteries, toys, watches, aren't in the "sensitive" list.

Even this bias for shady lobbies pales in comparison to the threat to agriculture. Already, imported palmolein and soyabean oil have spelled ruin for India's oilseed-growers. Many farmers have abandoned mustard as totally unremunerative. The phenomenon is affecting even pulses, the main protein source for the people.

Farmers last year compelled the government to raise duty on palmolein to 80 percent. But a one-sided agreement with the US "binds" India to 45 percent duty on

soyabean oil. No wonder imported oils are flooding India.

This phenomenon could spread to staple cereals. The world market in grain always fluctuates. Price fluctuations in a single year could wipe out Indian cereal growers altogether. To be ruinous, such downward price movements don't have to endure long. Farmers have no staying power!

Imports can be easily manipulated and regulations bypassed. Excessive imports will hurt. "War Room" failures will cause havoc. After the Tehelka and stockmarket scams, recent sugar-urea scandals, and raids on tax officials (from the same Indian Revenue Service!), the public can have little confidence in "War Room" safeguards.

The QRs are being lifted in the name of the "consumer" as if s/he were different from the flesh-and-blood farmer, worker, artisan... the people. But indiscriminate imports could quickly erode foreign reserves and upset the economy.

Exports won't make up the slack unless the infrastructure greatly improves. That's unlikely. Today, manufacturing is growing at a poor 2.9 percent. The capital goods industry is turning sick. Export composition remains classically "colonial", dominated by primary commodities, garments, diamonds, etc.

However, the government, stuck on the colonial track, wants a five-fold increase in agricultural exports, including cereals. Non-food exports, e.g. flowers, herbs, or fruit, are hard to promote. Many cut-flower growers have been put out of business by Dutch auctions. Maharashtra's strawberries can hardly sell in a market that demands uniformity of look, long shelf-life, and low price.

Diversion of land to non-food crops will undermine what's left of India's food security. This is unacceptable. It is obscenely immoral to export foodgrains when the Indian people don't have enough to eat. Nutritionists put minimum annual foodgrains needs at 300 kg per capita. India's annual food availability is only 200 kg. It is shameful that the government should even think of exporting grain instead of feeding the people.

That is the cruel logic of "free trade". We must resist it before it turns our elite into compulsive consumers of chemicalised packaged foods and exclusive cosmetics, while starving the millions.

Excerpts from the 'declassified' main report of Hamoodur Rahman Commission

POLITICAL BACKGROUND-XX

THE same remarks apply to the insistence of the Peoples Party that no Constitution could be made without its concurrence, although Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had obtained an absolute majority in the National Assembly and was also confident of gaining the support of minority parties of West Pakistan. The Peoples Party had succeeded in obtaining a majority of the seats of the National Assembly only in two of the federating units in West Pakistan, namely, the Punjab and Sind. If the Awami League could not represent the whole of Pakistan in spite of its absolute majority in the National Assembly, then on the same reasoning the Peoples Party could not speak on behalf of all the four federating units in West Pakistan. In other words, once the democratic principle of majority was rejected, the consensus insisted upon by Mr Bhutto had to be of all the five federating units of Pakistan, but that was not the demand made by the Peoples Party. It is clear to us therefore that the Peoples Party was not justified in demanding concession from the Awami League before the meeting of the National Assembly, nor was it justified in demanding postponement of the National Assembly session, for the ostensible purpose of wanting time for educating public opinion in the Western wing with regard to the implications of the Six Points. The only proper course for the party was to participate in the meeting of the National Assembly and to advocate its point of view on the floor of the House.

We cannot also help feeling that the Chairman of the Peoples Party displayed lack of political foresight by failing to make a proper assessment of the intensity of the reaction likely to be created in East Pakistan by the postponement of the date of the National Assembly. He frankly conceded before the Commission that he did not expect that East Pakistan would react so violently. Mr Bhutto had made little effort to establish his party in the Eastern Wing, and did not have any real sources of reliable information in that Wing. The press and the government controlled news media gave little or no information to the outside world of what was happening in East Pakistan. Nevertheless when he visited Dacca in January 1971, for parleys with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he must have formed a personal assessment of the tensions which were building up in that province owing to delay in the summoning of the National Assembly. He could not have failed to see that this delay was being interpreted by East Pakistan as a deliberate move, on the part of the military regime, to deny to the majority province that share in the governance of the country to which it was entitled on the basis of the election results. In this context, it has to be said that Mr Bhutto failed to show proper understanding of the mood in East Pakistan, and of the consequences of his insistence on postponement of the National Assembly. His threats to the members of the smaller parties of West Pakistan were equally misconceived and ill-advised.

The fact that Mr Bhutto had also offered an alternative suggestion, at his meeting of the 28th of February, 1971, at Lahore, regarding the waiving of the time limit of 120 days does not in any manner detract from the remarks we have just made, as Mr Bhutto was fully aware that for one reason or the other General Yahya

Khan had come to regard the time limit prescribed by the Liaquat Memorandum as sacrosanct. Mr Bhutto had not raised the point at an earlier stage, and accordingly it is difficult to say how seriously it was meant to be taken. If indeed it was a considered alternative offered by the Peoples Party, then there is no explanation why it was not put forward before the then President or the nation at the various meetings, and press conferences held by Mr Bhutto in this regard before the 28th of February, 1971.

Inherent in Mr Bhutto's demand for a consensus on the framing of the Constitution was the two majority theory, namely, Awami League in East Pakistan and the Peoples Party in West Pakistan. This theory was also the basis of the demand made by the Peoples Party for a 'grand

coalition' at the Centre. It has been suggested that General Yahya Khan was also sympathetic to this demand and had recommended it to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We have heard criticism of this demand on the ground that in a democratic parliamentary form of government it is the right of the majority party to assume power, and a majority party, however large, has no right to insist that it should also be associated with the government. Critics of the Peoples Party have vehemently condemned Mr Bhutto's remarks addressed to Shaikh Mujibur Rahman (Ham Yahya, Tum Waham i.e. We here and you there, meaning thereby that Peoples Party should rule in West Pakistan and the Awami League in East Pakistan).

Tomorrow: POLITICAL BACKGROUND-XXI

Dr. Rubaiul Murshed

All health information to keep you up to date

Facts about lung cancer

How is lung cancer diagnosed?

1. History and physical examination: As in any disease, before the doctor diagnoses, he will first take the medical history and examine the patient. Subsequent investigations will be taken to confirm the diagnosis.
2. Chest X-ray is valuable in the diagnoses of lung cancer.
3. Sputum cytology.
4. Bronchoscopy.
5. CT scan (Computerized Tomography).
6. MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging).
7. Thoracotomy: An operation is done when the surgeon believes that the cancer is present and investigations cannot locate the site of the cancer.

What treatments are available

Surgery, radiation and chemotherapy are the three main methods of cancer treatment. The type of treatment depends on the size, extent of the disease, the type of lung cancer and the general health of the patient.

Tomorrow: Around the world.

TOM & JERRY
DIST. BY ASIA FEATURE

THE NATIVES SEEM RESTLESS.

James Bond
BY IAN FLEMING
DRAWING BY BOBAX

WHAT A TOUCHING PICTURE - THE REDOUTABLE 007 IN THE FOND EMBRACE OF HIS LITTLE RED INDIAN SQUAW FROM THE CIA!

I'M AFRAID THE KGB AND CHINESE INTELLIGENCE CONFIRMED YOUR IDENTITY QUITE EARLY ON - BUT WE WISHED TO WAIT UNTIL YOUR OBJECTIVE BECAME CLEAR.

I GATHER THEY'VE FOUND NEW SCOPE FOR YOUR TALENTS HERE IN SOUTH AMERICA - DOCTOR CAT!

OF COURSE! SO IT MAY SURPRISE YOU ALL THE MORE TO LEARN - THAT YOU ARE BOTH FREE TO GO AT ANY TIME!

By Hanna-Barbera

Biman BANGLADESH AIRLINES
Z/A INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, KURMITOLA, DHAKA. PHONES: 89147/1-9; 89147/30-4. CABLE: AIRBANGLA, TLX: 642649 DAGB BU

Re-Tender Notice

No: 28/2000-2001

Sealed tenders are hereby invited by Biman Bangladesh Airlines from interested manufacturers/distributors/suppliers for the supply of the items mentioned below as per details/specifications mentioned in the schedule.

01. 100% Rajshahi Silk Super Balaka 2x5 Ply Sharee	- 900 pcs
a) Green Color	- 300 pcs
b) Brick Red Color	- 300 pcs
c) Sky Blue Color	- 300 pcs

Tender schedule mentioning full details/specifications of items, terms and conditions will be available from the Manager (Cash & Banking), Head Office "BALAKA" & Accounts Officer (Cash Payment Unit), Admin Building, ZIA, Dhaka of Biman Finance Directorate & office of the Divisional Commissioner (1st 12 Storied Govt Office Building 1st Floor, Room No 206), Segunbagicha, Dhaka on payment of Tk 500/- (five hundred) only non-refundable by applying in own letterhead pad during any working day up to 08.05.2001.

Sealed tenders should be dropped in the tender box kept in Local Purchase Section, Stores & Purchase Directorate, Admin Building, ZIA, Dhaka and Biman Press Building, Framgate, Teigona, Dhaka and office of the Additional Divisional Commissioner (General), Room No 205, Segunbagicha, Dhaka latest by 1130 hours (BST) on 09.05.2001 and will be opened on the same day at 1400 hours at the premises of Stores & Purchase, Directorate, Admin Building, ZIA, Dhaka in presence of the tenderers (if any).

Biman Management reserves the right to increase or decrease the quantity of the items and can accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

GD-345
Dy General Manager (Purchase)

The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd
Gazipur

Corrigendum

International Tender for Turn Key Project to Supply & Incorporate "Approved Covert-Overt Featured Device with High Level Security" in The Cigarette Stamp & Band

Attention is drawn to all concern regarding the tender notice published in "The Daily Star" on 09.4.2001 on the captioned subject. In the national interest the opening date of the tender is rescheduled on 30.4.2001 instead of 8.5.2001.

All other terms and conditions will, however, remain unchanged.

Md Adam Ali
Manager (FPS)

GD-346

Bangladesh Sugar & Food Industries Corporation
Adamjee Court (5th Floor), 115-120, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000

Ref No BSFC/PD-2(3)Car-2001 Dated: 16-04-2001

Re-Tender Notice for Purchase of Sedan Car

Sealed tenders are hereby invited by Bangladesh Sugar & Food Industries Corporation, 58, Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka, from the bonafide local sole distributor/agent for the purchase of 2 (two) nos brand new Sedan Cars of minimum 1500 cc. Tender will be received up to 11 AM on 25-04-2001 in the tender box kept at Purchase Division at 58, Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka and opened in presence of the tenderer (if any) on the same day at 11:05 AM in the chamber of Chief (Purchase). Tender documents with detailed specifications and other terms and conditions will be available from the Addl Chief Accountant (Cash) of this Corporation at Adamjee Court (4th Floor), 115-120, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka on cash payment of Tk 750/- (Seven hundred fifty) only (non-refundable) on all working days between 10 AM to 3 PM. No tender document will be sold on the day of the opening of the tender. Corporation reserves the right to accept/reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

SF-300
GD-343

NAS Iqbal Hussain
Chief (Purchase)