

DHAKA SUNDAY AUGUST 25, 2002

Dengue to last eight more weeks?

Patient management needs improving radically

T first last year's warnings to fend off infestation of Aedes by spraying larvicide and adulticide in the breeding season went roundly unheeded. Then when the first cases of dengue would be reported and the incidence started falling into a pattern there was the customary ostrichlike refusal to see the danger coming. Furthermore, unscientifically relying on the relatively better luck in two consecutive years since the worst dengue onslaught in 1999 some even saw fit to purely notionally dismiss the incidence as being seasonal! How could the DCC expect an innocuous seasonality of dengue appearance when it had not done the basic work of spraying out of existence the Aedes eggs and larvae in the first place?

It might sound like we are wasting our time on a rear-view of some preventive action that had better taken place but did not happen. After all, it has struck us as a fait accompli and that's how we have to face it now. Yet it was a matter of an opportunity lost to contain the Aedes and that's where omissions and commissions need to be identified and the responsible asked to account for what went wrong. This will have a positive bearing on the future.

So, we now have an emergency situation where the Army's help is being sought to alleviate it. They are coming up with mobile beds to open dengue wards so as to respond to the onrush of the patients hitherto frustrated by an acute shortage of accommodation in the major hospitals. It has been such a tidal wave of patients that any available space in the city hospitals may need to be turned into a dengue ward.

Patients at the district towns are having to be referred to hospitals in Dhaka due to lack of diagnostic and treatment facilities in the local medical centres. There must be a crash programme for rapid capacity building in the divisional and district level hospitals. They will have to be self-contained in terms of managing the patients on a domiciliary basis, Dhaka hospitals being already hard-put to cope with the rush of patients.

It seems we shall not be past the hump until after late October. A leading entomologist Dr Monzur Choudhury 'apprehends' a longer period of Aedes breeding beyond the usual cut-off month of September based on a plausible assumption that the adult Aedes population is large enough to procreate with frequent rains in tow. Our preparedness must be at a level that squares up with a predictably longer term threat scenario.

Rein them in at once

Their arrogance eroding ruling party credibility

WICE on the same day, on the same stretch of the Dhaka-Munshiganj highway, the same group of Jatiyatabadi

Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders and activists resorted to vandalism, beating up transport workers and even firing gunshots. The student cadres of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), caught in a traffic tangle near Charsyedpur in Narayanganj on their way to Munshiganj at around noon, found scapegoats in the local transport workers to take out their anger on. Then, in the afternoon, on the way back, when the JCD men found the highway barricaded by disgruntled locals in protest against noontime antics, they once again went on a shooting spree. This time around, they were almost overwhelmed by the angry crowd; however, they shot their way out. At the end of it all, 20 people were injured, eight of them admitted to different clinics and hospitals with bullet wounds. Also, traffic movement on the Dhaka-Munshiganj highway remained suspended for hours on end, causing extreme inconvenience to long-distance passenaers

However, the district Chhatra Dal chief has denied any link to the incident. This is representative, more or less, of the arrogant mental

Laden appears to be winning in creating distrust amongst the two old friends. Saudi Arabia and the US. American Ambassador to Saudi

The question is of leadership

indicates that Bangladesh has the DR. MOHAMMAD OMAR FAROOQ

elusive

cycles

it?

Since the inception of sociology of

history as a field of study pioneered

by Ibn Khaldun, there is a great deal

of interest in understanding such

desh, we seem to have a vicious

cycle without any positive dyna-

mism and as part of this cycle, we

seem to be making lower lows, to

borrow from market terminology. In

such descent of our nation, one

can't but wonder where is the bot-

tom, if any, and how do we reverse

frequent and massive natural

calamities, lack of resources and

other factors induced Dr. Henry

Kissinger to tag Bangladesh soon

after its inception as a "bottomless

basket." We, the Bangladeshis,

never felt such humiliating charac-

would rather hope that we have

proven him wrong, at least in eco-

example, referring to this character-

ization, Zaidi Sattar and Frederick

Temple, both with World Bank,

Reduction in Bangladesh" [May 22,

2002]: "Time has proved him wrong.

The progress achieved to date

OLITICALLY, the net losers

of the 9/11 attacks on the

WTC and the Pentagon are

Saudi Arabia and the US plus

Taliban. However, Pakistan's Gen-

eral Parvez Musarraf and Israel's

General Ariel Sharon are the net

winners. General Musarraf survived

his coup just like his predecessor

General Ziaul-ul-Hug owing to US

led war on Afghanistan. General

Sharon could dislodge the Oslo

peace process and let loose a

massacre in the occupied territories

of Palestine. Ironically, Osama Bin

DR. ABDUL MOMEN

Inadequate infrastructure,

In the political context of Bangla-

potential to win its war on poverty ... " They identified several key areas N Wall Street, the capital of where Bangladesh has made signifglobal capitalism, a search is icant progress on--to find a bottom for the

It would be a great solace for us recent phase of the stock market to be able to say that we have cvcle. Not too long ago, the stock proved Henry Kissinger wrong. market values were skyrocketing. However, there is a reflective guesthanks to the "irrational exubertion in the same essay by Sattar and ance" that accompanied the cyber-Temple. "The largest concentration revolution. The market seemed of the poor is in South Asia. After unstoppable. Now, everyone with China and India, Bangladesh has an interest in the U.S. stock market the largest number of poor people. is desperately searching for a Sadly today Bangladesh has almost bottom, which has so far been as many poor people as its entire population at the time of independ-A nation's history also goes ence." If Bangladesh now (i.e., in through cycles of ups and downs.

includes these non-economic factors. Whether we have proven Kissinger wrong in terms of the noneconomic problems that are holding as a hostage the country's present and future, we seem to be really bottomless, until we could prove otherwise

Without delving too far back in our history as an independent nation, there were several new lows hit in recent times. Has the nation forgotten one of the most shameful cases of crimes in Bangladesh? During the Awami League/Sheikh Hasina regime, a report surfaced, regarding one of the leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) ransom, or killing hardly shocks our country anymore. Yet the ghastly nature of that crime sent a tremor through our national sentiment. We have since rebounded from hitting this new low for our society, low in terms of our vulnerability, insecurity, and inhumanity. Haven't we? But, we should probably ask whether this type of incident was altogether unexpected. With the Shihab incident, did we hit our bottom in our descent as a nation? Our psyche has taken enough hits that we are almost desensitized to any possibil-

ity of optimism. On June 8, 2002, the nation hit a new low when Sabigunnahar Sony,

a second year BUET student, was

caught and killed in a crossfire

between two rival factions of

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) on

the BUET campus. The nation was

shocked again. But was it unex-

pected? In our nation of "democ-

racy" there is no intra-party democ-

racy and, therefore, the disputes get

resolved in basically one way in the

culture and tradition of organized

packed with the full power of guns people like the ousted VC should and ammunitions as in "Wild Wild West", except that the ending of the episodes is usually unscripted and

tragic On the heel of this comes the Shamsunnahar Hall incident. Every time our country hits a new low, one's heart fills with hope that we probably have hit the bottom, only to be further disillusioned and disanpointed. But no low is too low for us and no low seems to be our bottom. If anyone tries to make sense of

what happened at Shamsunnar Hall, it would be a waste, because it is senseless. I have mentioned this before and I repeat, this coalition

government with all of its constitu-

ents, and BNP at its leadership, is

no different than the previous gov-

ernment of Awami League.

Actually, taking responsibility at

the appropriate level is not part of

our culture. Otherwise, by now, at

least we would have had our home

minister resign. Maybe even the

leader of the current government

embarrassed enough to take mean-

ingful responsibility. Now I am

probably dreaming. Sorry. There

isn't anything at all that could hap-

pen that would ever cause someone

in power to take responsibility for

his/her party's actions, let alone

his/her own actions. The reality is

that if we want to be serious, then

Removal of VC was a must.

not have been vested with such responsibility to begin with. That people like such VCs are appointed and expected to pursue

the narrow, parochial (and even criminal) political line of their respective party is a responsibility of the highest political leadership. Our political culture sanctions it. Our political leaders condone or, worse, patronize it. That this VC still held onto his position for a few days after the incident is hardly a surprise. That JCD cadres served as 'cohorts' of the police against the agitating students should not be surprising, either. Even if the iudicial inquiry is done and "exemplary punishment"

meted out, do we expect similar problems to disappear?

We need to reject and resist the criminalities that are going on in the name of politics. The society needs to insist on a new political culture of non-violence. non-partisanship. and respect for the rule of law. Unfortunately, while those in authority and power dragged us to another new low with this Shamsunnahar Hall incident, those that damaged private or university property are not our future hope, either

We need leadership with a relevant vision and direction, a kind of leadership that can inspire us and help re-channel our energy, hitherto mostly reflected in our anger, frustration and hope of a better future, into a firm and clear-headed commitment to a culture of construction. not destruction; of creativity, not anarchy; of rule of law, not lawlessness; of hope, not despair; of integrity, not opportunism; of result, not

sloganeering The accountability must rest with the HIGHEST level of leadership individually and party-wise

Dr. Farooq is an associate professor of economics and finance at Upper Iowa University, USA

We need to reject and resist the criminalities that are going on in the name of politics. The society needs to insist on a new political culture of non-violence, non-partisanship, and respect for the rule of law. Unfortunately, while those in authority and power dragged us to another new low with this Shamsunnahar Hall incident, those that damaged private or university property are not our future hope, either. We need leadership with a relevant vision and direction, a kind of leadership that can inspire us and help re-channel our energy, hitherto mostly reflected in our anger, frustration and hope of a better future, into a firm and clear-headed commitment to a culture of construction, not destruction; of creativity, not anarchy; of rule of law, not lawlessness; of hope, not despair; of integrity, not opportunism; of result, not sloganeering.

2000) has almost as many poor people as its entire population at the time of independence, and if in thirty years we would have as many poor people as the entire population now. have we really proven Kissinger wrona?

Bangladesh quite possibly has a reasonable potential to break out of terization was appropriate. We the vicious cycle of poverty. But there are very difficult constraints that are non-economic. To convert nomic matters, which had prompted into reality the potential of Bangla-Kissinger to mete out such a tag. For desh to win the war against poverty, Sattar and Temple do acknowledge, "it will take strong political leadership, good policies and sustained comment in "Approaches to Poverty commitment", all of which are noneconomic factors. The real challenge or battle for Bangladesh

"celebrating" his completion of "century of rapes" at Jahangirnagar University. Didn't we hear about "judicial inquiry" and "exemplary punishments" from our politicians at that time? Was there any follow up when the country, in our search for a bottom, stooped to a new low because of this type of crime previously unheard of?

crime was committed when Khandakar Shihab Ahmed (13), son of a spinning mills owner, was kidnapped after school hour for a not-so-high ransom demand of 20 lakh Taka; subsequently his body was found, hacked to pieces. There was more shock in store for the nation. Kidnapping, demand for

Earlier this year, an appalling

crime. "Judicial inquiry", "exemplary punishment" weren't those cliché repeated? But once again, were those events unexpected? Our political arena is ravaged by interparty and intra-party violence, with complete and virtually unconditional blessing of the party machinery and leadership. The violence is literally

'Saudi Arabia: A friend or a foe?'

a Rand Corporation Report [CNN, Aug 6, 2002] for the top Pentagon advisory panel titled 'Saudi Arabia: A Friend or Foe' is a clear evidence to this effect. The report recommends the Bush administration to give an ultimatum to the Kingdom to stop all support for terrorism or face seizure of its oil fields and financial assets'. the nerve of its economy and existence. Such report, no doubt will create shivering among many Saudi investors.

telephoned his Saudi counterpart HRH Prince Saud Al-Faisal and assured him that President Bush did not view his country as an emerging enemy [Arab News, Aug 7, 2002]. However, the message of distrust is evident in the report and in the process, there is no doubt that the US policy is helping the Saudi dissident, Osama Bin Laden and his terrorist network to achieve his stated goals to undermine strong trust and confidence that existed

continued investing in the US market. They are still the second largest importers of the American products in the region. Although the Saudis are introvert in nature, they still cherish their stay in the U. S. They are nostalgic about it and they have no ambiguity to appreciate the American system of government and day-to-day life. By and large, they prefer American products and brand names and they are proud to use it. They are simply

public is equally bewildered to observe that 15 out of 19 terrorists of September 11 that hijacked four planes were reportedly holding Saudi passports. Secondly, in Pakistan, 9 out of 10 terrorists that were handed over to the FBI or the US security authority by General Musarraf government were either Saudi nationals or Teliban. In addition, the leader of the Al-Qaeda organization. Bin Laden is a Saudi by birth whose citizenship since

he failed to find why the Arabs hate his Middle East policy and why the world ridicules his 'man of peace' The fact of the matter is, ill feeling towards the US especially in the Arab world including Saudi Arabia is primarily due to America's 'partisan' Middle East policy. Only one question pivot around in the region and it is: 'how come the Bush administration is so blind'? America is great but how come could they be so naïve and devoid of reasons, morality and ethics when the Israeli issue comes before them? How come they are so partisan in implementing the UN resolutions with regard to Israel that floated and Human Rights conventions and

To ensure security and peace throughout the globe especially in the Arab world, one does not need a 'war on terrorism'. Rather one needs a fair and just foreign policy that could resolve the overdue Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Once this is over, there could be end of hostility between the Arabs and America, end of all sorts of Islamic terrorism without a war of mass killing and without a bullet or F-16. Time has come to realize this.

ignored all the UN resolutions, all crime against humanity, they ask.

The Daily Star

makeup of many a young ruling party activist. They have scant regard for the rule of law or the convenience of the common people. Even worse, they seem to believe so long as they have access to party leaders, they can commit excesses and get away with impunity. Unfortunately, neither the law enforcement agencies nor the ruling party high-ups have ever tried to prove them wrong. While the police have denied any knowledge of such incidents of JCD highhandedness, the local BNP leadership may have accepted the version given by the perpetrators.

So, we are dealing with a problem that can only be redressed by the ruling party and punishment to perpetrators of this particular incident could be a good starting point. First, however, the government has to acknowledge that there was disruption of law and order on Friday. They should immediately talk to the aggrieved transport workers and locals and try to get to the bottom of Friday's incidents along with an evaluation of the police role. Meanwhile, the top leadership of the ruling party could probe the incidents through the party channel and reprimand those who committed the act of roudism.

Arabia, Robert Jordan is correct to state that 'certainly the events of September 11th were intended by Osama Bin Laden and the other terrorists to affect our relationship. That was their intent' [Saudi Gazette, August 4, 20021.

The solid trust and unquestionable friendship that existed between Saudi Arabia and the US for last 60 vears or so is being shattered owing to 9/11 attacks. Over the years, the Kingdom has gone extra miles to uphold the friendship and at all critical times: it helped the US in achieving its covert or overt goals. But since 9/11, there is fear of mistrust and dark cloud hanging over them. The recent publication of

do something for his/her country,

rather it's his/her conscience which

is more important here. If the con-

science is clear, anyone can do well

for his/her country from thousands

miles away, especially at this age of

technology

Zafar Had

"Great Army"

On e-mai

The US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, however, prom l v р t distanced himself from the report and stated it "did not represent the views of the government, it did not represent the views of the Defence Policy Board'. Commenting to the CNN, the former U. S. Defense Secretary, William Cohen stated that the Saudi Arabia had been a trusted friend for years and such leveling is unjustified. He further stated that they might assist the administration in its efforts to overthrow President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, if not openly but quietly. Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State,

between the two governments for years. Bin Laden's goal was also to minimize the US influence in the Arabian Peninsula and the recent Rand Corporation Report appears to accentuate the process.

Rumsfeld is correct to state that the account of the briefing leaked to the Washington Post left a 'harmful' misinformation. No doubt, this is a very damaging report. Until now, the impact of 9/11 was not very significant other than reduction of Saudi travel to the US and less visibility of Mattawas, the religious police, in the local Malls. In spite of 9/11 and the sliding Dow and NASDAQ averages, the Saudis

surprised as lot of restrictions has been imposed on their travel to the US without realising that it is almost impossible for a foreigner to visit their own land due to multiple restrictions and red tape. Because

of these restrictions, many Saudis could not enjoy their vacation in the US this summer and it might have cost the American economy to lose few million extra dollars.

Saudi nationals are law abiding and they were never been anti-American like many other nationals, both Arabs and non-Arabs. No effigy of American President or the American flag ever been burned in the Kingdom. Therefore, the American been rebuked and a large number of captives in the Guantanama military base are Saudis. Moreover, the madaris or the religious schools that were established in Pakistan and Afghanistan reportedly with the Saudi financial contribution and through Jamati Islam party produced maximum numbers of jehadis to fight in Afghanistan or in other places across the world. Therefore, many mistakenly try to link up Saudi Arabia with terrorism.

President Bush declared 'war on terrorism' after 9/11 and successfully campaigned that the terrorists were out there to destroy American democracy and freedom. However,

EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

Mr. President, to ensure security and peace throughout the globe especially in the Arab world, one does not need a 'war on terrorism'. Rather one needs a fair and just foreign policy that could resolve the overdue Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Once this is over, there could be end of hostility between the Arabs and America, end of all sorts of Islamic terrorism without a war of mass killing and without a bullet or F-16. Time has come to realize this and act on it faster than ever to have a world without war and terror.

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TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE

"Letters to the Editor" and the readers' right Have you ever noticed that The Daily Star "Letters to the Editor" page has become a real interesting one and a great place to ventilate our frustration, anger and critical views?

During these days of worst law and order situation this letter page is one place where any one and everyone is welcome to speak their mind without any fear and criticise the government and also the opposition, the bureaucrats as well as the mighty Army! Even the international leaders or organisation are not spared-- remember the Ataturk debate. World Bank letters?

What I enjoy most in this page is the debate. You would never be able to imagine which topic the readers would choose and initiate the most exciting debate. For example, who would have thought of such a lengthy debate on Tagore song?

I have only one request to make to the Editor and the Page in-charge. Except for editing the grammatical error please let go all the letters uncut and please don't end any debate. It is the only page, which the readers can claim to be their own. And we are extremely grateful to The Daily Star for providing us with such an excellent, well-designed and exciting page. I ask other readers to give their

view on this page and also regarding my request of not ending any debate. Since it is our page, let's convince the Editor that it should be the readers' right to start a debate and end one Jafar Chowdhury

Gulshan, Dhaka "Absentee expatri-

ates"

"Absentee expatriates" by "The Watcher" (August 23). The writer was kind of dismayed at free flung of expatriates in this column.

It seems that looking everything away. This should not be considered

"hypocrisy"; rather this is reinstatement of umbilical tie with their beloved country. Migration of labour is nothing new in world history. People have been migrating to different countries for livelihood over the centuries. And this is not correct that whoever is living in a foreign county (for livelihood), has plunged into the ocean of "Milk and Honey"

"expatriate life" should not drive one to make rash conclusion on the true feelings of expatriates. A major share of our economy is attributed to the hard-earned money by the expatriates also. Therefore trademarking all the expatriates (whoever

is writing his or her concerns in this column) as hypocrites is unwise and rude

This letter is in response to the letter

negatively has become our national culture. "The Watcher" has been totally myopic towards the smouldering patriotism of the concerned expatriates for their native country. He forgot that amid myriad of business, these people never forget to know the whereabouts of their country from thousands of miles

This is in regards to the letter by Mohammed Zaman on "Great Army". He points out that India with its countless domestic insurgencies and two hostile nuclear-armed neighbours spends about 5% of its budget on the military. If that is correct then how on earth does Bangladesh with none of those threats justify spending 10%?

A better measure of defence expenditure is as a percentage of GDP. In the case of Bangladesh Frustration over one's own

country and misconception on military spending is about 2% of Gross Domestic Product. That percentage is higher than:

Germany, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Norway. But that's just in the EU.

New Zealand spends 1.1% and that is going to fall further now that they have abolished their unnecessary air force.

Even Indonesia with one of the "The Watcher" has to realise that most corrupt and abusive militaries it's not important for each and every spends 1.3%. expatriate to come back in order to

Wait a minute, I found someone who spends much more than us, Zimbabwe leading with 3.1%. Kim

Dhaka

Mr. Joyonto is right when he says (22 August?) "Typical of Bangladeshi's we can't set our priorities right"

* * *

The first class government officers misappropriated more than taka 11,200 crore in last year alone as the recent report of Transparency International showed (Published on 10 July 2002 in all newspapers) This amount is almost three times more than the budget of our army this year (taka 3300 crore). But Mr. Joyonto wants "the money poured down for our military should instead be diverted to the police". Really we cant set our priorities right! Faisal Hasan

Dhaka

* * * This is in regards to a letter in your Friday issue about the BAF handing over part of the Tejgaon Airport to the EPB for a permanent exhibition space. Do you really want to see one of the few open spaces left in Dhaka to be handed over to the EPB? A permanent Trade Fair means a mela every week. It will be dirty, dusty and run for the profit of EPB officials. It will also be damaging to the department stores, as their business will be

robbed. The Tejgaon Airport can be the Central Park of Dhaka. One of the prime locations of the city. Don't let the EPB and the BAF destroy it.

Azad Dhaka

"English medium

students in trouble" Our young boys and girls will go abroad for higher studies, some of them will take up jobs with very high salaries than they will actually get here and even settle in those countries. Moreover, they have to compete with others as well. So why would they go to Bengali Medium schools instead of English Medium schools? Bangla will not help them achieving their goal.

It is not true that the students of

English Medium schools cannot speak or read Bangla properly. Many of my relatives studied in the best English Medium schools and some of them are still studying there. But they can fluently speak in Bangla and are well versed in Bangla Language. Highly qualified teachers teach them Bangla in those schools. They encourage the students to read books by famous **Bengali writers**

Yes, we need to learn other languages too, but we always have to remember that Bangla is our mother tongue. Ours is one of the richest heritage and culture in the world

Igbal Ahmed New Eskaton Road, Dhaka

Separation of the iudiciary

Our Law and Justice Minister Moudud Ahmed, while exchanging views with the lawyers in Chittagong (August 17), has reiterated that the government is committed to separate the judiciary from the executive to establish an independent judicial system in the country.

May I have this opportunity to tell the honourable Minister that probably after fifty years from now the Law and Justice Minister of that period will make the same commitment on behalf of his government. Though I will be happy if my prediction is

proved wrong For the last 30 years we have been hearing this commitment from the government as well as from the oppositions. The oppositions make the commitment in such a way that whenever they are elected, they will separate the judiciary from the executive bench in no time. And

when they ascended to power they again made the same commitment This process of making commitment to separate judiciary from the executive is going on and on.

We would not like anymore to listen from the people in power what they want to do. We actually want to listen from them what they have done

Faruque Hasan Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Korean EPZ

am all for free trade and globalisation. All I want is that there be a level playing field.

Take the Korean EPZ for example. It is an excellent idea being promoted by Youngones. The Youngone Corporation has made its fortune in the RMG industry in Bangladesh. Truthfully they have generated a lot of jobs as well. Their arments factories in Savar and Chittagong EPZ are massive operations as a matter of fact theirs are probably the best in this country.

But what good has all this really

done for us apart from generating some employment? All the profits are being taken back to Korea by their Korean bosses.

Another example would be the Sri Lankan owned factories. Another one is the Chinese owned Actor Sporting in Dhaka EPZ or the Spanish owned cap factory in Mirpur.

Did you know that Bangladesh is the largest exporter of caps in the world? Does it matter? 100% of that is made in Korean factories for profits that never see the light of day in Bangladesh

The RMG industry is one of the main stays of our economy. Bangladeshi factories have been developing by leaps and bounds since 1983. The government in its scramble for foreign investment is allowing foreign companies to set up in Bangladesh at the cost of our own

development. Foreign investment should be encouraged but in sectors where we are uncompetitive or weak. Not in the ONLY sector where we are

care? Emile Dhaka

strong. The BGMEA is silent and so are the Commerce Minister and the Industries Minister. Does anyone