

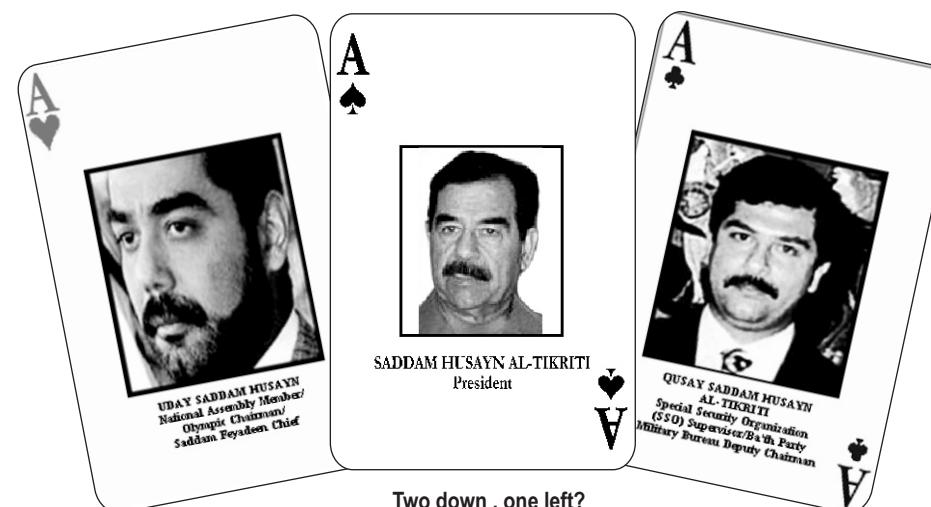
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Death of Hussein sons

I am not a military analyst. But common sense says that capture or kill means kill if you can't capture. General Ricardo Sanchez dodged the question in Wednesday's press conference in Baghdad if enough or any realistic attempt was made to capture them.

What resistance could three or four persons with a few AK-47s put up? It seems the mission was only to kill them. If lives of a former Arab leader's sons are so cheap target their alleged atrocities are not in question here, that should have been the matter to be resolved in a court in The Hague or Brussels -- then what about an ordinary Arab?

Uday and Qusay Hussein were not leading the resistance to the occupation anyway as they themselves were helplessly stranded in rival Kurdish controlled Mosul with virtually no brothers in arms, themselves almost unarmed, as far as resistance is concerned. The resistance came spontaneously from the occupied people. And leaders are created in abundance.



I have two questions: Has assassination now officially replaced the courts now? Are we in the 21st or in the 17th Century?

Ahmed Mohiuddin
Banani, Dhaka

We heard the briefing given by the Commander of the Coalition Force in Iraq, describing the assault on a Mosul house that killed Uday

and Qusay Hussein -- sons of the deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. Heavy weapons were used in the operation and all the occupants died.

This looks like yet another demonstration of the disproportionate use of force that characterises the attitude of the occupation force. The Mosul episode raises the question whether a prolonged siege of the house

could have secured the surrender of these two "high value" targets or not. Lives would have been saved; if guilty, as claimed, fair investigation including fair judicial trial could have been conducted. This was an execution without trial. The world at large and the Iraqi people in particular will never know for sure what really happened.

Zakir Husain, One e-mail

he has earned the title of a partner of the US but it is highly doubtful the Americans have the same view. Far from being grateful the Americans did not hesitate to blame British for the recent fiasco of "intelligence" reports related to the issue of Iraq's alleged purchase of Uranium from Niger.

Yamin Zakaria
London, UK

Dowry: A social crime

The custom of taking dowry is considered as a social crime but the demand or the practice of it is not lessening in our society. Almost everyday there are cases of indescribable maltreatment of daughter-in-laws in their husband's houses. Suicide, murder, desertion by the husband for dowry are daily incidents.

It is a matter of regret that highly educated persons of respectable families are committing this crime

a) I was driving from Dhamondi to Tongi. In Uttara I halted my car for the red signal. Suddenly, a small truck slammed in to the back of my car and caused substantial damage. I got down and found the car badly damaged. I got hold of the driver and took him to the nearby Uttara Thana. The police found the driver being a helper who was driving without a licence and was carrying garment scraps to Tongi. However, with pressure from the police the truck driver agreed to bear the repair cost.

b) I was driving to IDB bhaban to see the computer fair. My wife was beside me. At Begum Rokeya Sarani junction there was a red signal. We were waiting for the green signal. A bus going to Mirpur came from the back and hit my bumper. I got down and found a Sergeant standing nearby. The driver's answer to the police was brake fail. The case was mitigated when I agreed to be happy with

otherwise my car could have hit the car in front. The young driver started apologising for his faulty brake. Later I came to learn that, the younger brother of the actual driver was driving the cab. Finally, the elder brother was called over mobile and accepted the proposal of police to bear the repair cost.

c) I was at Shahbagh traffic island. I was coming back from stadium market in the evening. While I was taking the turn to Farm Gate a small truck carrying vegetables scraped my car in the left side. I chased the truck but all in vain.

Now my point is whenever I went to the BRTA office for yearly car fitness, the experts checked almost all parts of my car concerning to the roadworthiness. Especially they checked the brakes very carefully. I became happy for their sincerity. But it is disheartening to see a lot of vehicles without headlights, indicator lights, brake lights and proper brake system plying everyday on the roads. How does it happen? The standard of some drivers at times makes me afraid on the road. Most of the drivers do not park their vehicles properly in the appropriate place. Who is responsible for it? Why can't we feel safe on the road? Why can't we cut off the unnecessary foolish driving competition of the city buses?

It is that difficult a job for us to make our communication system like the developed countries? It is a common practice in our country that cars are not properly parked in the proper places. Who is responsible for that? If our police force is inadequate why not shift the responsibilities to the private sectors? Everyday we spend a lot of time on the road for needless traffic congestion.

Under the circumstances can our government take some measures like:

- a. Ensuring proper fitness of all the vehicles.
- b. Only the qualified drivers will drive vehicles.
- c. Unfit vehicles will be closed step by step.
- d. Parking in unauthorised places will be stopped.
- e. Unwise driving competition will not be there on highways.
- f. Directing pedestrians to use the over bridges.

g. Evict hawkers from the footpaths.

h. Employing private security agencies to keep the artery roads out of jam and congestion.

Sultan mahmud

DRA



Mocked morality

The unloved

These days we seem to be experiencing the past again in our export sector. Everyone is worried that after the quota regime ends in 2005, millions of people will be affected in general and thousands will be thrown out of their jobs. Those who are going to be sacked are expected to be women and it's amazing when one remembers that about a decade back many child workers were also thrown out of factories into the street. Is it the past repeating itself or another round of the same past?

I think there is a bit of both. Getting thrown out of jobs is probably the common issue and it would be very silly to expect that the buyers are going to be par-

ticularly concerned about who keeps their jobs and who doesn't. So if they couldn't give a dime about children who could possibly starve because they were unemployed and the families faced extreme hardship anyway, there is little chance that the West will care. But as a long resident of the western world, I have been taken aback by the total lack of concern on the part of the government towards the fate of children.

The situation today is a grim reminder that our governments don't care.

And they don't care about children means they don't care about the future. It's true that poverty pushes many children to go to work but what have we done to

end this poverty and make sure that children who do go to work also get a chance to study and over a period of time, they don't have to work at all. How is it that our political leaders who seem to care a lot about rights don't make a peep when it comes to these working children? No society survives by pushing its children to work for them and use poverty as an excuse. We are doing that. We should look at world for examples and not excuses to go on exploiting children. Children are the most vulnerable and weak so they were victimised. Now it's women's turn? Whose turn will it be after that?

Badsha Mia, Bhuter Gali

Now what?

A falsity can never be hidden. George W. Bush, Tony Blair and John Howard are accused for falsities throughout the world. They not only cheat their countries' inhabitants but also all the people throughout the world. Now it is apparent that they were moving behind a false statement about Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and they started the invasion against Saddam Hossain. The occupation force killed and injured thousands of children, women and innocent people of Iraq.

Mr. Howard already begged pardon to his Australian people and admitted that the decision of sending troops to Iraq was wrong. Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair are trying to escape but their stipulation is crucial among their fellow lawmakers. These two persons should be impeached for their crime and taken to the international court for an illegal war.

CNG pumps



Gas for mass

Bangladesh is spending a huge amount of foreign exchange on importing petrol and other petroleum products which is putting serious pressure on our foreign exchange reserve. But this can be solved before long with a little imagination and planning. The country has adequate gas resources. If we set up sufficient number of CNG pumps in areas where there are gas lines we can save a lot of foreign exchange. There are gas lines in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Comilla, Moulvibazar, Barisal, Feni, Mymensingh and Tangail which all together can account for about eighty percent of Motor vehicles of the country. So if a crash programme is launched by the government for installation of adequate number of CNG pumps that will go a long way in reducing our dependence on imported fuel and reducing air pollution too apart from saving hard-earned foreign exchange.

There is another advantage. Drivers cannot pilfer CNG as they can pilfer petrol. Since CNG is much cheaper than petrol people will naturally be inclined to convert their vehicles to CNG. It may be pertinent to mention here that when initially a few CNG pumps were set up in Dhaka response from public was very poor. But now the scenario is entirely different. Existing CNG pump cannot cope up with demand and the government had to take up programme to set up more CNG pumps.

There is also pressure from foreign gas exploration companies to export gas because locally we cannot utilise sufficient quantity of gas. Setting up of CNG pumps in large number will lead to higher utilisation of gas resources locally. So there are manifold advantages in setting up CNG pumps in all possible places. Both private and public sectors many join hands in setting up CNG pumps. Initially if response from private sector is poor, the government may set up such pumps and then sell it to private companies in installations. So I request Prime Minister's Secretariat and Ministry of Energy to draw a comprehensive plan without further loss of time.

Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury

DOHS Mohakhali, Dhaka

Apart from the personal gift of Blair's "Knighthood" what was actually gained for British nation? As a Capitalist nation wars are never fought for genuine principals other than economic benefit. No one is convinced of the rhetoric of saving the Iraqis with bombs and bullets, whilst ignoring the longer suffering Palestinians, also given the historical track record of Britain in the region. In the 1930s Winston Churchill gassed the Kurds long before Saddam, as he wanted to spread a "lively terror". So did the British firms gain any of the valuable lucrative contracts that went to Bechtel and Halliburton? Or perhaps only Blair will be rewarded personally in the future with some sort of directorship in one of the many multinational companies that are currently collecting the booty in Iraq! In every other sphere Blair may think

too. But they do it differently, in a more refined manner. These people demand and exert pressure not only to have property or cash but also prefer to marry career girls who can earn money for their father-in-law's family. Isn't it shocking that a girl's career is also some kind of dowry?

Though there are laws to prevent and stop this crime, the victims mostly remain quiet for the fear of public calumny. By making another law this evil custom cannot be abolished unless the outlook of the society changes.

Rubab Abdullah
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

Troubles we face everyday

I think, the readers will find my experiences interesting.

taka 300/- only.

c) I was going to Chittagong with my family. After crossing the jams of Saidabad, Kanchpur, and Mognapara we faced a bigger jam at Eliotgonj bazar. We had been waiting on the road for clearance.

Suddenly the bus hit my car from the back. I got down and tried to talk to the driver, but all the passengers in the bus took the side of the driver and requested me to shift the car to the road shoulder for negotiation. But the moment I moved the car from its front the driver fled away with his bus.

d) I was coming from Utara at 9:00 o'clock at night. On the way I had stopped my car at kuril Bishwa road junction for the traffic signal, but no time a black taxi cab hit my car from the back producing a big sound. I got down and found both the cars damaged badly. Luckily, my hand brake was drawn;

Hitler and Mussolini would have felt hurt by seeing the onslaught of these two gentlemen. Mr. Abbas and Mr. Sharon should forget all their hostility and let their people live in peace.

Badal Hasib
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

TV channels of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a small country with minimum electronic media facilities. At present there are four channels in the country, one is state owned BTV and the other three are private channels -- ATN Bangla, Channel I and NTV. The private channels are transmitted through satellites so many people cannot afford to enjoy their transmission,

such an accident. I couldn't stop myself asking the owner of the garage, and I was right, the driver of that damaged vehicle was killed by the impact created by head-on collision. The workshop owner told me, had the driver used the seat belt, there would have been a chance of his survival. At least he could live with minor/major injuries.

Therefore, I would request the authorities concerned to think about it and do something to reduce or avoid deaths caused by car accidents.

Dr. Q.M. Mahatab-uz-zaman
Department of Architecture, BRAC University

Fasten your seat belts



Safe and sober

In Bangladesh the practice of fastening seat belts while driving is rather rare as most of us regard it something quite nonessential! There is no government rule and no awareness has ever been created among people about its necessity. Is it important in Bangladesh? We want to know what the government thinks about this matter. Are we safe enough ignoring the use of seat belts while driving our cars or travelling in taxis?

Yesterday, I saw a small pickup van, which was very badly damaged, in a workshop close to my working place. I was wondering whether the driver and other passengers survived

these committees, and whether there is any law that enables them to dominate other tenants and create problems for them. The committee members often make these rules for their own benefits regardless of the problems faced by other non-committee members. If the committee chiefs are the owners of the building, it would be no problem, but if they are just tenants like us, it raises some questions.

TMK
Lalmatta

Speedy vs regular court cases

Isn't the Shazneen case hearing taking too long? It is more than five years now! It just reflects how our judiciary system works, when it is kept on its own course (i.e. with no intervention by the government for speedy trial, as we have seen in some cases lately). Although, I am sure that every citizen appreciates the speedy trial concept, but would the authorities concerned see how a "speedy trial" differs from a "regular trial" in terms of execution and cost effectiveness.

I believe that a speedy trial's decision (because of the decided time-frame) is not influenced or compromised (i.e. prosecutor/defence lawyers and judges leave no stone unturned before giving the final judgement). Now does the cost differ greatly? If so, how much (in terms of Taka) actually is the government/judiciary system really incurring, in order to convert a regular case to a speedy trial. In my judgement it should not be much (in fact it could be other way round, considering the time span of regular cases now a days!). If so, can't we have the similar speedy trial concept for all our court cases, and not just few sensational ones? This way, by defining time limit to every cases, there would be some sort of bindings on our lawyers and judges also, to actually wrap up a case as earliest.

Mohammad Mehroz Jalil
Dhaka Cantonment

Launch disaster

I have been reading in your paper the reports on the tragic loss of life due to launch disasters and seemingly nothing is ever done to stop this tragic and unnecessary waste of lives. Some many years ago now I remember reading that the Government of our Country had made it priority to install a modern Global Maritime Distress Satellite System (GMDSS) since the International Maritime Organisation had made it compulsory. I do not believe that such a system has ever been installed and wonder how long it will take before the government takes this up before another disaster occurs? Soon I guess, that the IMO will also be asking the government the same question.

Al Fulani
Onee-mail