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Tips for leaders



PHOTO: AFP

Here are some tips from a veteran voter (in three countries-remember the name of my country changed several times!) for our esteemed (to become esteemed) political leaders. A micro bit of sacrifice is required to try out some of these grassroots free advice to increase the span of the half-life of the individual political leader (politicians are radioactive hence the half-life has to be calculated).

Look into your political power factor (PF) rating. If you do not know it. You are a dummy! Your leadership leads or laps?

Ask your technical friend to explain to you the term "Power Factor" as used by the electrical engineers. There was a news item recently that PDB and associates were installing banks of capacitors in the electricity transmission networks to correct the PF. To reduce technical systems losses. It means that the voltage and current are not in phase or in tune. Also get a briefing on various types of systems losses (SL).

Be sure that as a leader you are not lapping behind the changes taking place in society. And you (and your party, if you have one) must be mentally and logistically prepared to handle

changes. Our political leaders have created negative changes in many areas of the society for decades. These have to be rectified, first internally (party) and then externally (the electorate).

Then you must be aware of another more serious type of SL-the human systems loss. In Bangladesh, this is greater than the technical SL: due to corrupt practices. There are unethical dealings, immoral conduct, black deals, acts of terrorism, graft, bribe, coffee money and many other types of evil activities which are noticed in others but not within one's own self!

Have detailed sessions at your adda-khana and come up with DFA (draft for approval) for formal presentation at the formal party meeting. Be sure the press knows about it. It would make you more popular (with the right type of voters).

The government is not the party and the party is not the government. Governance is a political issue as it is for all citizens of all shades of opinion and political leaning. If you are in the cabinet or working for the government, forget your party while speaking officially. While working for the party, forget your official designation. Mixing up

the two is confusing and undesirable. It should not be necessary to know who were running the government. As the government is anonymous. The mindset has to be changed. It is not a debatable issue. There is too much of name dropping. Result? Our history is sapping!

In local national politics the "boundary conditions" are vague and unclear. The voters must be made aware of these boundary conditions. But the politicians do not talk about it. Some analysts call it "band-width". It means where to stop theoretically and practically. The behaviour pattern of the politicians is unpredictable. Why so? What is wrong in sticking to some life-long principles? And if necessary suffer for one's own principles. How many political leaders inflict self-punishment upon themselves?

Avoid misuse of power and/or influence. It is difficult to resist temptation. But you are a leader and have a strong character! Question: do have-not societies tend to have more have-not leaders?

Alfizulfi
On mail

Americans show their face

I am neither 'appalled' (like Blair) nor 'deeply disgusted' (like Bush) to know the way the Iraqi detainees are treated by the great civilised Americans. Let's see what the CBS News revealed.

One of the images shows a hooded and stripped prisoner standing on a box with wires attached to his genitals. He was told that if he fell off the box, he would be electrocuted. Other pictures showed nude prisoners lying on each other being forced to simulate oral sex before the grinning American soldiers.

Fortunately, Al-Jazeera did not telecast all these. In that case, the westerners would dismiss it as computer-generated frauds. This is the same Americans who wrote "F**K IRAQ" in their air base in huge letters during the war. The attitude towards the 'Moslems' has always been like this. More harrowing incidents will come to light as time passes. May God give us the strength not to be 'appalled' and 'deeply disgusted' at those.

Joy, Dhaka

approach. Speeches, ceremonies, anniversaries and attending meetings are big news in Dhaka (BBC may copy). On the other hand, frequently the headlines start with foreign news. Let us admit our governors and the society cannot generate enough news in 24 hours! Of course there is *halal* news and most of the remaining might be *makruh* or *haram*! This chapter is missing in the journalism text books!

There are other irritants. The reporters have a tendency to sermonise. In a visual media (as in a TV cricket commentary as opposed to the oral radio medium) there is no necessity to point what the viewers can see on the screen. Too many tutorials!

Opinion or analysis? What is the difference? Opinion emerges from the analysis, and the latter is based on facts which can be verified. There is sycophancy in news presentation.

Try to hide that BTV is government controlled (it is not difficult). The speakers blow up too many adjectives, and drop too many names. How to include five dozen ministers within fifteen minutes? Have a separate programme after the bulletin, with 40 seconds per minister!

Now the telephones are going to be tapped. I wish, I could, as a curious citizen, listen to the official instructions issued confidentially to the news desk!

A Mahasen
Dhaka

A private university

I read in a private university, but in our country we think that the system of a private university is not developed enough. But the standard of our university is good.

The teachers of our university are competent and friendly. They try to make our lessons easier for us. If we face any problems, they try to solve them to the best of their ability. The teachers are trying to develop us as skilled and worthy citizens. We enjoy our classes too.

Maifeel Afroza
Chittagong

The Greatest Bengalee

After thirty-three years of our independence, while any Bangladeshi media or organisation has failed to conduct anything to select the greatest Bengalee of all time, it was a laudable initiative by BBC that it organised an opinion poll in this respect. The media, intellectuals, general people and BBC listeners followed the survey with keen interest and attention. Like all other regular listeners, I also listened to the programme with much attention and sent my opinion to select the greatest Bengalee of all time. I have also read several newspaper reports to find out how many listeners participated in the whole survey and how many listeners gave their opinions to select each of the twenty greatest Bengalees, but failed to get the exact numbers. As a regular listener of the BBC Bengali Service, I sent my query twice by email to "Prativajonashu (listeners' question hour) programme" but the BBC Bengali Service didn't respond to my query.

If everything was done according to the rules, then why can't BBC give us the full picture?

Zillur Rahman
Gandaria, Dhaka

Huge trade deficit

Fact is stronger than pious proposals through the diplomatic channel. In Chittagong recently (DS report April 22), the India envoy was told by CCCI that the trade deficit between the two countries was to the tune of one billion dollars deficit against

Bangladesh.

And India is all the time pressing for land transit routes to NE India, and putting paper obstacles to export of suitable Bangladeshi products to India which are in great demand, specially in Eastern India.

Being born and educated in (former) Calcutta during the British days, I can claim to some extent to be familiar with the Indian psyche. India is acting like a big brother, as the surrounding nations in Saarc are much smaller. This negative attitude has to go. Friendly 'paper' relation is not worth the paper it was written upon.

How long the gift of the gab will continue? Where there is a will, there is a way. Apply school-day proverbs, before tackling issues which need PhD expertise!

Md. Abad
Dhaka

Humility in politics

Our politicians do not wash their own linen in public, but do not mind carrying out this laundry service for their opponents. The environment pollution is very high in Dhaka according to official monitoring. But political pollution is never mentioned by the regulatory and monitoring agencies, for reasons not clear to the electorate.

They are also shy; they never discuss the political systems losses before the voters: noticing that these types of losses are widely publicised in regard to all the other sectors: and donor project funds come pouring in like the monsoon rains. Where is the catch?

When the politicians work, they do it quietly (and privately?). Without attracting much attention. It seems unnecessary to attend the parliamentary sessions. Why this fishy mode? But they are loud when not working, and keep the audience enthralled with their perverted oratory, based on malice. Goodwill in Bangladesh is at a premium, and a scarce commodity, and money cannot buy it.

Systems losses in politics work in three dimensions: length, breadth and thickness, without any bar and gender discrimination. It is active vertically, and then spreads horizontally. It flows and permeates like the flooding by monsoon rains. It might indicate that the politicians work at the sea-level, remembering that our land is only fifteen feet (average) above the sea. That is why the fish come in and swim around (the origin of the term fishily?). Hence our political pundits are never dry, operating at base water levels. We

are drenched in "evil will" (antonym of goodwill!).

What is strange is that our *chasi bhaies* and sisters also work at the same level, but the communication -- between the elected representatives and the humble and simple voters is very high. Where is this invisible wall? Our wily politicians are not very communicative or informative, with high noise level and garbage content in their messages. Where is the message for the nation?

There is a difference between working dynamically, peacefully, and forcefully. Unfortunately, these days force is being used to get ahead of competition: and that too without the umpire or referee. This competition is in a different market, which is not formal. By nature, Bengalees are rather informal. Sometimes this works against national interests.

The tender culture has hardened, and it has been politicised to an amazing extent, narrowing the field of competitors to an exclusive list of short-listed names.

Office-leadership is another of our weaknesses. But these days it pays handsome dividends. Just be in the committee and you do not need small change. Running a labour union is a lucrative side business, with the main focus on street agitation, hartals, and greater movements. Who save we are not colourful?

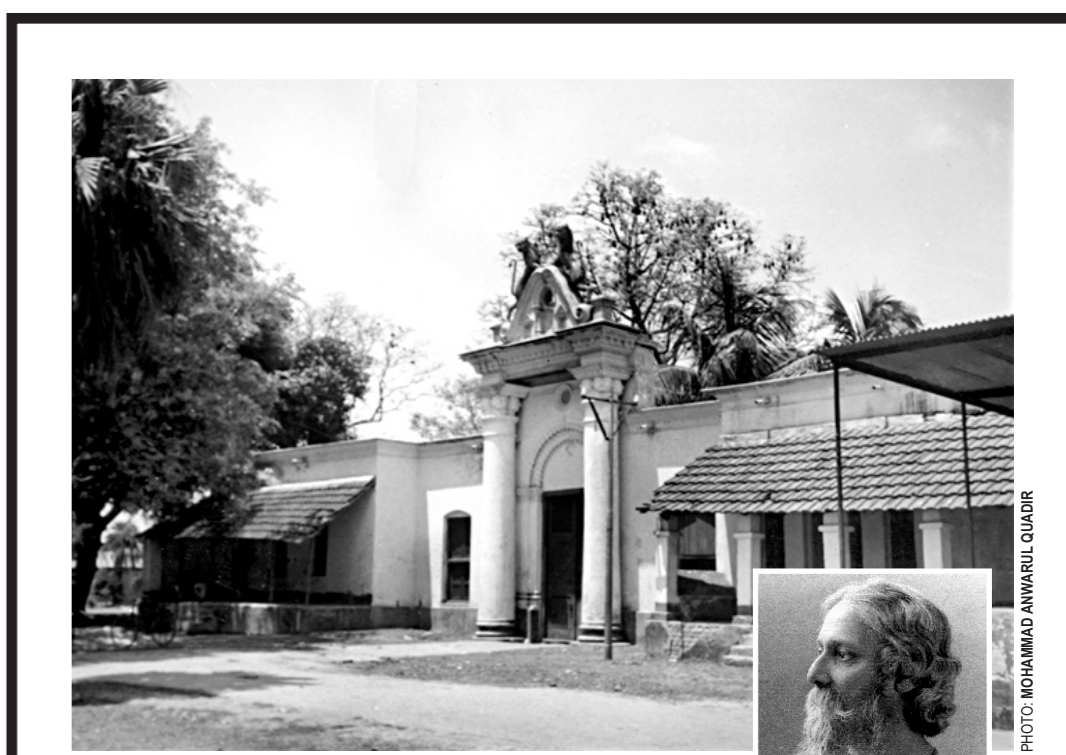
AA, Dhaka

Breakdown of institutions

Officially it cannot be denied that the established institutions providing various public services have broken down, due to nepotism and corrupt practices. Few instances can be quoted where the public work is going on as in the good old days. A citizen cannot get his work done speedily and as per rules, regulations and procedures. The VIPs do not talk about it, and divert attention to development projects (which are never completed in time).

What is most disconcerting is that in such adverse situations, the elected political representatives' public speeches fall short of expectation. The format, style and content have not changed. How such fossilised minds can render efficient public service?

We seem to be stuck with out-moded political styles, we, the voters are directly responsible for this state of affairs, as we do not exercise our choices rightly. Then the top leaders cannot control their



The old Katcharibari: Surviving memories

Tagore and Patisar

Patisar is the name of a small village under Atrai upazila in Naogaon district, which should have received wide publicity like Shelaidah and Shajadpur, because of its long association with the world famous Nobel Prize winner for Literature--- Poet Rabindranath Tagore.

The village stands on the banks of Nagar (---), a small river, which becomes dry in summer. In the rainy season, the village looks like a small island on a vast sheet of water all around it, which presents an excellent panoramic view.

It opened a new vista of scenic beauty which inspired the poet to write many of his poems at Patisar. He extolled this scenic beauty in "Chinnapatra" many times.

Tagore first came to Patisar in 1895, when he was entrusted with the management of the Tagore estate. The poet again visited the place in 1896 and last in 1937 on the occasion of Punah ceremony at Patisar.

The historic Katcharibari still evokes the memories of the poet. But no attempt has yet been made to preserve his memories.

This old Katcharibari should be turned into a museum.

The poet established the first agriculture bank at Patisar in the erstwhile Naogaon subdivision, with funds taken from his Nobel Prize money in 1920, to enable his tenants to get loans on very easy terms.

Mohammad Anwarul Quadir
Naogaon



PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ANWARUL QUADIR



Brutal abuse of prisoners by occupation forces in Iraq

VILE

Iraqi prisoners face 'sadistic' abuses

"Acid terrorism"

If you throw acid on someone, you will be punished with a life sentence or could even be sentenced to death. But laws are not enough. We need public awareness to stop this barbaric practice.

If the police are sincere, it is easier for us to tackle this social malady. We do not want more deaths from acid terrorism. Something should be done to solve this problem. We are looking forward to that. We want a terrorism and corruption free Bangladesh.

Saiful Islam (Masud)

International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC)

Child education

Now-a-days there are lots of English medium schools in Dhaka city. In each school there are lots of difficult textbooks. Sometimes it becomes impossible for a child to cope with his/her study. Then the parents also have to suffer for that child. Schools give lots of home tasks and sometimes they are a big burden for the children.

The authorities of the English

medium schools are most of the times not concerned about these problems of children. I also have confusion about the syllabus of some schools. Are the school authorities really sure about their curriculum?

I have seen many parents suffering over their children's education. The parents are most of the time in service and for that they can't give enough time to their children. So, the schools should take care of the young learners.

Hasna Hasan
Lecturer, Department of English, Leading University, Dhaka

BTV's neutrality

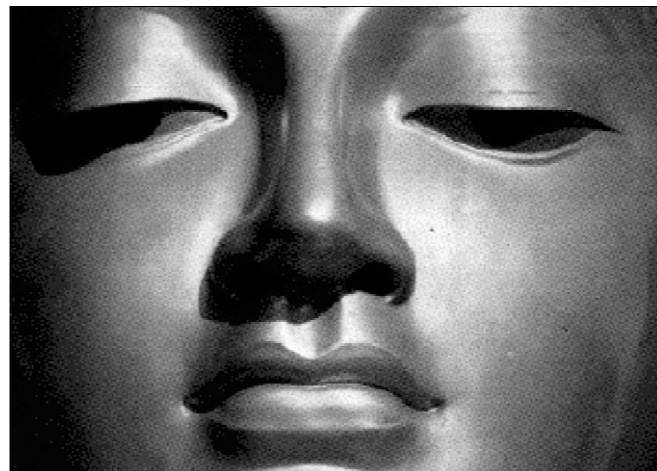
As a lifetime viewer, I'd take BTV's neutral presentation of news with a grain of salt. It is salty, but not spicy enough on both sides! Why the organisation cannot hide its amateurishness and be more diplomatic and discreet in news presentation.

What is "news" and what is not? The presentations have to be balanced to present both sides of the coin. In Dhaka, there are more than two sides, as we still debate our national goals and channels of

Statue of Buddha

There are small museums established in the cantonments. One such museum is the Rifles Museum at Pilkhana. The main objective of the museum is to display the chronological history and tradition of the Rifles. Very recently, I had the opportunity to visit the museum. There is no denying the fact that the museum, though a tiny one, is systematically arranged and neatly maintained.

But to my utter dismay, I noticed that a brass made meditating Buddha statue is displayed there. The statue was captured from the smugglers. The beautiful piece is kept on the floor without the slightest regard shown for it. The Buddhists pay their homage to the statue of Buddha. The sacredness of the statue



is sullied at the museum, hurting the sentiments and feelings of the Buddhists.

May I please draw the kind attention of the Director General of Bangladesh Rifles to look into the matter and

decide to present it to any of the Buddhist monasteries located in Dhaka, and thereby oblige the Buddhist community of the country.

Sangeeta Barua
South Bashabo, Dhaka

instead of decreasing! We are either original or dumb in a noisy way!

A Mawaz
Dhaka

Primary education

We all know that primary education is very crucial for all, because it builds a strong foundation and leads a child forward. But it is regrettable that for some reasons the standard of our primary education is going down day by day. Now-a-days, its condition is very deplorable. The teachers are unable to teach the students properly, because they are being given appointment on political considerations, not merit.

Another thing is that many qualified persons are not interested in teaching, because of poor salary.

The wards of the rich families are sent to good schools in the cities. But what about others? The education authorities should pay due attention to the issue of raising the standard of education at the primary level.

Md. Shamim Khan
Sal-Sabil College, CU

Mr. Jalil's trump card

Mr. Abdul Jalil, the general secretary of the Awami League, is now blaming the journalists for the deadline that he had set! We all know this is not true. But very surprisingly...none of the newspapers blamed him or condemned him for doing so. I read several newspapers last night but found nothing on Mr. Jalil's changing his position on the deadline.

Mr. Jalil should have been

slammed for fooling us.

Romeo Ahmed

Central Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

A drama on liberation war

'E Kaler Galpo', a street drama on the liberation war, was performed on the street side of Nageswari thana sadar of Kurigram district, a northern district on 26 March. It was a *Patho Natok*. People were fascinated by its simple story, perception and good acting.

'E Kaler Galpo' is a drama about wartime and the present scenario. In 1971, as leaders of the freedom fighters stood by the tortured, violated and helpless people as protectors. But now-a-days our leaders do not stand by the threatened and the tortured people. The reason is that people are often oppressed by the thugs deployed by the politicians. Surprisingly, the common people who generally prefer Bangla movies demanded another show of the drama. Following public demand, the drama was again staged for the elite audience.

In this show for the educated, the viewers found only bad (in their perception) things like violation scenes (although there was no such scene, only the expression after violation) and intimate scenes. The educated did not show a good understanding of the spirit of the drama, as did the ordinary viewers.

Zarjis Ahmed

Nageswari, Kurigram