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Hype about SQ Chowdhury

Recently, there has been a lot of writings about the defeat of SQ Chowdhury and his comments. Where did Mr. SQC go? He went to a conference of the OIC. Now, what is the OIC? Has anybody thought about that? It's just another useles body like the UN. After dividing the single Islamic state -- the Usmani Khilafat-- into some 50 odd countries, the western oppressors have created the OIC to fool the Muslims that they have some unity. What has the OIC done? Has it been able to stop the unjust war on Iraq or Afghanistan? Has it been able to stop the stealing of resources from Muslim lands by the westerners? Has it been able to stop the daily killings of Palestinian children and the demolishing of their homes? Has it been able to save the Muslim Ummah from the aggression of devastating western culture? The only thing it has done is that whenever the Muslims were humiliated our Muslim leaders, who are nothing but faithful servants of their western masters, organised a conference and said "Oh! I See". That's the only job our leaders did in these conferences. A problem is brought up in the conference and they just dismiss it by saying "Oh! I See". The name of the organisation OIC truly justifies its action -- "Oh! I See."

However, Mr. Chowdhury pointed out two facts which are: Turkey is a member of NATO and it is yet to sign the OIC Charter. Nobody has verified these two facts. If these are true then his comment that Turkey's victory was a support for the Jewish lobby may not be totally baseless.

Faizur Mirpur, Dhaka

Ornamented roads and starving police-men

Two contrasting news items (ornamented road, photo feature and woes of a village policeman) in the DS of 8-6-2004 caught my attention.

The transportation ministry and the DCC are hell-bent on making the Dhaka city beautiful. They are dismantling turnabouts, making a footpath, breaking it and again making it, making about one lane width divider shrinking the road capacity and now ornamenting the roads with expensive steel bar railing. Will our economy be as strong as that of England if you get the impression that you are in England while travelling through the roads near the airport? Can a crow ever become a peacock even if it tries valuable cosmetics? In fact, it is all part of the sinister

Spoiling Kahn's masterpiece

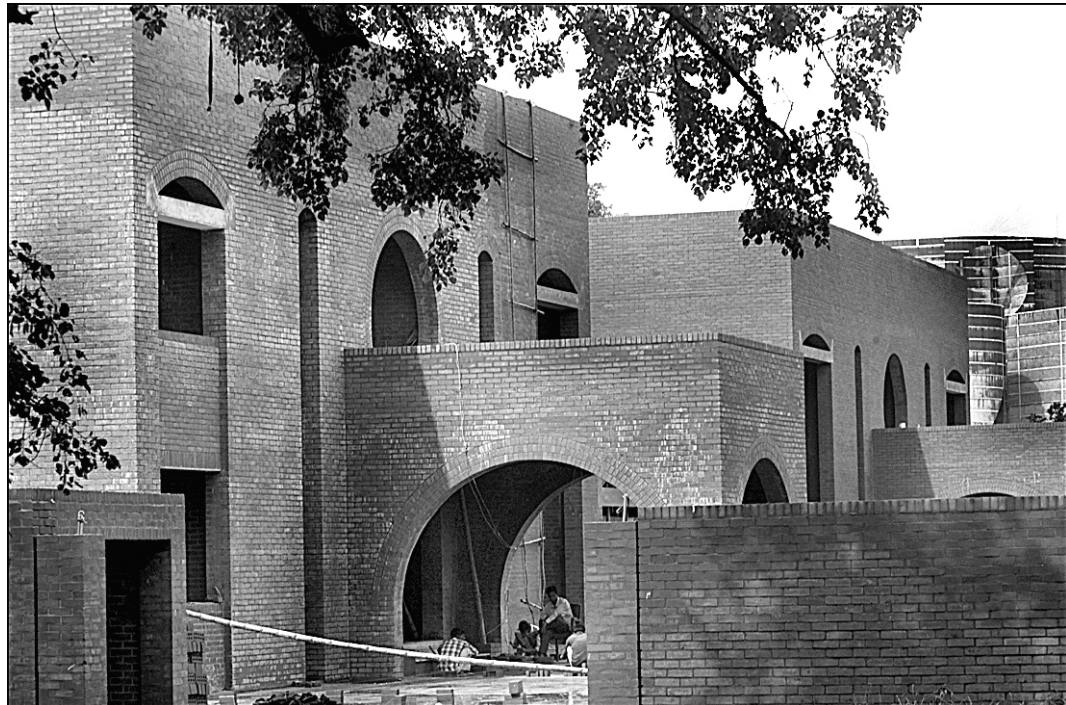


PHOTO: STAR

We welcome the HC verdict regarding the JS Complex. By implication, anything added to it bypassing Kahn's master plan over 850 acres of land is illegal. The DS editorial on the subject (23/6/04) indicates conflicting interests of parties involved in the matter. The residences of the speaker and the deputy speaker are relatively a minor deviation from Kahn's last document but we tend to ignore major violations as has been pointed out by DS reports (22 and 23/6/04) on the above subject. The following are the major violations of the 1973 master plan: Prime Minister's Residence (1974); Hospital Complex (1982-2000); Bangladesh-China Friendship Centre demolishing Kahn's only tower building (1999); Children's Park in Shaymoli corner (1988); Resident Mission of ADB (2004) and so on. The Agriculture University that stands in the middle of Kahn's planned area was supposed to be removed somewhere else at the first opportunity, but contrary to that this is

expanding day by day ignoring Kahn's vision in all the master plans prepared sequentially from 1963 to 1973. I believe when we stand for something we should be thoroughly consistent and not selective; otherwise it gives wrong signals.

Shumi Khulna University, Khulna

HC verdict on JS complex

It is nice to see a HC judgement honouring public sentiment. I guess there are many bigger violations of the master plan than the one under litigation. If we are sincere in preserving the plan we should work for its total realisation, instead of going for its piecemeal implementation.

Partial acceptance of a thing amounts to deviation.

ZIslam, Monipuripara, Dhaka

by the ruling party and activities of the law enforcing agencies were highlighted in your newspaper in such a way that I was wondering at some stage that it was not Mahi but the ruling party candidate who had won the election through massive rigging.

It is fair to say that the BNP candidate would not have lost the election so badly had they applied their state and muscle power. Against the backdrop of our socio-economic condition, election will never be 100% fair but if it is near fair, it's a fair election. A newspa-

politicians because on many occasions they are found to nurture those terrorists. Hence, I request the teachers of the Dhaka University to unite and take measures to stop such heinous crimes. I strongly believe that unity among DU teachers can bring an end to terrorism in DU. If they do not become united on this issue and remain obedient to their respective political parties or remain reluctant, I am sorry to say people will not respect them any more. Please remember today my son is abducted or killed and tomorrow it will be yours.

our cities as evident in the recent HC verdict on "JS Complex Buildings- DS: 22/6/2004". The HC observed that residences in that area did not take permission from RAJUK. Probably the area is beyond the jurisdiction of RAJUK. These types of duplications are also responsible for the city's misman- agement, which was rightly pointed out in a DS editorial (DS: 21/6/2004). There is no dearth of regulations, plans or expertise; the need of the hour is to make proper use of them.

Asadul Hoq (Bonny) Dept. of Geography and Environ- ment, Dhaka University

OIC setback

The less SQC says about his performance at the OIC meet, the better. His comment that the OIC is a 'communal' organisation speaks for his shallow understand- ing of this international body.

KM Elahi Jahangirnagar University

To Mr. Shahjahan Ahmed...

Do you really think these special envoys-- sent overseas to campaign and canvas for our candidate-- did any serious work? They must have used these trips for personal purposes, only working in a cursory sense for the actual task.

Here is what I see. Abuse, misuse and intentional dereliction of duty or responsibility has become so ingrained and internalised in such people that it has become their second nature to respond this way. There is no accountability process employed or enforced, so these well (mis)placed officials can go about publicly flouting their responsibilities with callous disregard. These minds are unequivocally corrupt to an unparalleled degree!

Khan NY, USA

OIC debacle

Bangladesh has failed measurably to clinch the top post of "secretary general" of the OIC though a hectic campaign in the diplomatic channel. Bangladesh has nominated its candidate four times to secure the top post of the OIC since obtaining its membership. But due to pressing circumstances, Bangladesh had to withdraw its candidate. This time Bangladesh goes with full vigour to get its candidate elected and remains in the race facing various difficulties. Bangladesh had to break the age-old system of selecting candidates for such posts. So, we have to appreciate the government initiative. But it is an irony of fate that some quarters are trying to politicise the OIC secretary general election.

MH Bari Zigatola, Dhaka

Disgraceful!

I have had the (mis?) fortune of viewing through TV news broadcasts and the latest press briefing given on 21st June by Mr. Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, where he tried to defend himself against charges of improper and obscene remarks and attacks against fellow politicians. I feel

My country

My applause for Rumana Afroze for her forthright expression of some of the things that are wrong with our country. She brings hope in letting us know that there are people who still care about this country. Passive apathy has been our biggest failure, leading to acceptance of illegal means as normal behaviour by the elected or appointed guardians of our lives. Understanding and expressing what is wrong is the first step towards bringing about a change - real progress will come when many voices like Rumana's get together to carry out required actions.

I would like to point out that poverty brings similar problems across all races and divides. When the UK was in recession during 1988-1996, the incidence of crime, mugging and violence was at its highest. Bangladesh is unfortunate from almost all counts, a few people have contributed to make things worse.

The challenge for Rumana -- don't stop now. We, who are getting old, will support you all the way.

AAhmed NRB in UK

One-e-mail

The article of Rumana Afroze is a splendid piece of honest confession. The writer, a Dhaka University academician, was upright to share her feelings. Regrettably, I bear a different perspective on the whole issue. It's only a few days that I have written on our moral duties as a 'Bangladeshi' at home and abroad. I would reiterate that it is the noble duty of every citizen of this country to inculcate the spirit of nationalistic feeling in their heart and mind and demonstrate it through their words and actions. It is about time we start thinking positive to achieve commendable performance in all spheres of national arena.

To my understanding, corruption is a 'cancer' to a nation that does not strive to accommodate its own problems and gradually the 'psyche' turns into vices in many forms in every possible tiers. Criticism is an effective tool to bring problems into limelight but then how many of us could rise above criticism to resolve the core problems? Recently, in Australia, massive corruption of police force in drug related matters attracted world attention.



PHOTO: AFP

The irony is that a special police department is assigned to police the regular police activities!

As for the educational standards of the country, one would appreciate that the 'awareness' is gradually created to offer quality education; consequently a large number of institutions have surfaced in the recent past. Not many would disagree that 'quality of education' is being compromised due to lack of authentic supervision and policy. But then such 'initiative' certainly marks the start of a noble cause; time and experience would regulate and mature the system in the days to come.

'Newspapers' represent real time facts and feeling of a society; it is a beneficial media that helps to synchronise our thoughts and actions. Today, we enjoy quite reasonable freedom in our expressions and certainly this 'indicator' would help us in creating positive awareness and taking correct actions. The essence of 'pride' lies in one's heart; it is the individual obligation to express it in the right way.

Mahbub Akbar Dhaka

compelled to comment on this. I hold no brief for any political party, nor have I, with rare exceptions, ever harboured a very high opinion about politicians in general. Even with this proviso, I have never been as unpleasantly astonished as I was on witnessing this display of offensive and repulsive behaviour.

Mr. Choudhury, through verbal and facial expressions, mannerisms and demeanour, revealed a degree of crudity that totally contradicts his identity as a person elected to a high office on a national level. It is a horrifying thought that such a person - even apart from the question of his controversial background should have been nominated by the government to head a distinguished and prestigious international body like the OIC.

Mrs SH Islam DOHS, Mohakhali

Reasons behind our OIC defeat

I read with interest Mr. Harunur Rashid's column on why we lost the OIC race (DS June 23). I am afraid his arguments are rather weak in explaining our loss. Likewise, his arguments for Turkey's victory are also weak and hardly explain our defeat in any conclusive way.

For one, the OIC secretary general's post was just ours for the asking. When we withdrew our candidature last time, that of the former Speaker late Mr. Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, on Saudi Arabia's request, we were more or less assured that this time we would be given this post. We should not forget, as Mr. Rashid seems to have, that Bangladesh is not a country to wish away in the Muslim world. It is the third largest Muslim country and has a good reputation, good enough to have one of its candidate head an organisation such as the OIC. Did Gabon not head it and is Morocco a major power in the Islamic world? Both these countries headed the OIC.

The writer's exposition of

Turkey is also weak. What has Turkey's NATO membership or it being a bridge between Asia and Europe got to do with the OIC? None of these were at all a factor in why Turkey received so many votes. He may be right in assessing that the familiarity of a candidate with the organisation where he is

seeking the post helps in winning and in this case, Turkey had the edge. But the Turkish candidate served not in the OIC headquarters but perhaps in one of its subsidiary organisation although I am not really sure what link his organisation has with the OIC.

We lost a post which could have

The rain



PHOTO: AFP

I was little perplexed at first as I was in the bus when it started raining. I was coming home at Farmgate from Mirpur. I thought I would not be able to reach home without being wet. I would get cold. I would get fever. I would not be able to continue my daily work. I became so disgusted that I started cursing the rain. When the bus stopped at Farmgate, the rain, it seemed, became stronger perhaps to increase my anger or to answer my silent curse. Many people got down, so did I. Oh! When the

drops first dropped on me, I felt a chilling cold running down my nerves and bones. My heated head and brain seemed to lose the aforesaid conflicts of my mind. They were all swept away. The present thrill overpowered me. I started walking -- it was rather like morning walk (though it was 8:00 or 9:00pm) -- slow and steady and singing. My music seemed to make the experience a perfect one. I hummed, whistled, shouted (there was no fear of being looked at because the

been ours by unanimous approval if we had not nominated a candidate who did not meet even the barest minimum qualifications for the post. After all, the OIC is not an international organisation dealing with health matters like WHO for example. Therefore the one qualification that our candidate has as a former minister made no sense at all to the OIC. Take this away and what is left of our candidate? I am amazed how Mr. Rashid could write this piece, for he is a former diplomat himself. Has he not read what this erstwhile candidate is now saying? If ever a country lost a major international post by its poor choice of candidate, it is this failed effort of ours at the OIC. There is just no other explanation for our defeat.

Shahjahan Ahmed Dhanmandi RA, Dhaka

On English medium schools

Mye-mail is a response to Mr. Saif's letter concerning the English medium schools in Bangladesh. As a fellow part-time tutor in an English medium school, I would like to respond to some of the comments put forward by him in his letter. First, Mr Saif you have argued that the majority of the English medium students are mediocre students. What are you trying to prove? I hope you do not want to reopen the timeless debate of whether English or Bangla medium students are better. However, your letter does paint such a picture. In response as a rational person I believe that the ability of a student to be good in their studies does not depend whether he/she studies in an English or Bangla medium school. It depends on their own will, just because their parents are paying more for their studies does not guarantee good results if their children are not willing to show a interest in their studies.

Second, you seem to contradict yourself. On the one hand, you argue that English medium students are mediocre students being neither good in English or Bangla, but on the other hand you comment that too much home-work is being given to the students of the former category. I would like to ask you what is the purpose of homework, is it not for students to improve their educational standards? If so, then English medium schools are at least making attempts to improve the academic capability of their students and thus it is not a point to complain about.

Third, you seem to be sexually discriminating against women. I don't see a reason why women teachers should be given a bad eye for wearing make-up. If so the same should go for male tutors who wear smart and expensive clothes while teaching in school or any educational institution. Also, I don't see a valid reason for any person to complain about the positive discrimination of females in the teaching posts of English medium schools. As a student of economics, I will note that this is one of the few sectors of the economy where an increasing number of female graduates can find employment in.

Nonetheless, I congratulate you for bringing about the topic of minimum standards or quality. However, I believe the government should set up a board not only for controlling the standard of English medium schools but the Bengali medium ones as well.

Sameer Rahman MSc Economic History, London School of Economics

Beheading goes on



PHOTO: AFP

The unfortunate decapitation of foreign hostages taken by abductors linked to al-Qaeda is going on. I had the rather ominous chance to see one of the video clips. I was horrified to see the gruesome killing in cold blood. My deepest sympathy to the family of Kim Sun and others victims who had nothing to do with the unjust war in Iraq or their government's stand on this issue.

The whole thing started by imposing a war on a sovereign country and occupying it. The decision makers like Bush and Blair will always enjoy the highest possible security and soldiers and common citizens will pay the ultimate price, even not knowing what they are dying for.

Sumon Dhaka

scheme of gobbling up chunks of funds just theoretically showing where the expenses are made.

A village policeman sincerely carrying out his myriad responsibilities sometimes with his own money is getting only the half of his scant salary. It is never possible to maintain a family only with Tk 350 per month. Fund shortage is the excuse shown by the concerned authorities. Is that acceptable?

Saif Dhaka

Mahi's victory

The resounding victory of Mahi Chowdhury in the Munshiganj by-election is a strong signal to the government that people are taking note of their performance and activities. It is a verdict against harassment of their favoured son. However, I would like to dwell upon the coverage of the said election victory by certain media, especially The Daily Star. Rigging

per should know what to highlight and under what circumstances. Although DS editorial comments regarding political matters are quite balanced and may be termed as fairly neutral, the same cannot be said about its news coverage.

Murshid Uttara

An appeal to DU teachers

Thanks to Joy for his letter of June 21 entitled "DU hall: Den of abductors" in which he raised a serious question about the administrative system of DU which provides immunity to the terrorists.

I personally know one student who was recently abducted by some DU students and was detained in a hall. After his release he did not inform the matter to the police, fearing further attacks. I do not expect much from the

Dr. Mahboob Hossain Niigata University of Pharmacy and Applied Life Sciences Niigata, Japan

Blame is the name of the game

What is said by Prof. Rahman in his above titled article (DS-Point Counterpoint: 22/6/2004) is said time and again by many authors, but who cares? A theoretical discourse is not going to yield any result. The problem is who will bell the cat? Regulations and regulatory bodies are at odds with each other. BNBC'93 and DMDP'95 are well thought out documents but only to be violated by the authorities who had formulated those. The problem with our civic bodies is that they do (and pretend to know) all other works (that result in easy bucks) except the job they are entrusted with. Even there are serious governance problems in