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A friend in need...

Liberation war is our glory and freedom fighters are the crown of our liberation war. Besides the freedom fighters, many allies helped us during our liberation war in 1971. It is unforgettable how Pundit Ravi Shankar and George Harrison arranged the "Concert for Bangladesh" in New York to help our liberation war. US poet Allan Ginsberg composed the "September on Jessore Road." while Hemar Wadarland (Australian citizen born in Netherlands) actively fought for our land. Symon Dring (a Briton) sent the news of the barbaric "Operation Searchlight" throughout the world. Like them, many other foreigners encouraged people to support our cause. The Daily Star published a news item on September 10, 2004 -- "Bangladesh loses a friend", where it was mentioned that Archer K Blood was a selfless well-wisher of Bangladesh and he was the author of "The crude birth of Bangladesh" on the then East Pakistan in 1971. On hearing this sad news, we sent a condolence message to his bereaved family.

On important national days, we honour people who have served the nation in various capacities. But comrades of our liberation war have never been honoured by our government, though some anti-liberation elements are known to have received medals. Among the foreigners, only Hemar got "Bir Protik" medal but was never invited to this country. Like him, many comrades of our liberation war have already passed away. Why have we failed to honour them? Is it not a shame for the nation?

Md Zillur Rahman, Gandaria, Dhaka

Democracy of Mr. Bush

Mr. Bush, the so called harbinger of democracy across the world, has now turned his shaft of criticism to Iran and has been busy to label it as a nuclear-possessed power. Iran, he believes, is a patent threat to the smooth and uninterrupted practice of democracy. His constant and mordant flak coupled with the threat of imposing sanctions in case of procrastination in letting the UN surveillance mechanism to have access into every nuclear plant of Iran, has spawned a lot of questions. Can Iran be ever a threat to the US or the democracy of Europe? If it is an emerging consternation for peace, why the more powerful Israel is ignored? The answer is that President Bush wants to establish the supremacy of his country in every place on earth. The bitter taste of this uncouth and cowardly power-play experienced by the Iraqi people in recent times has invited lot of condemnation. But Bush is very much adamant in his mission to bring back democracy to Iraq!

They are trying to impose the same thing on Iran. Surprisingly, though Israel is well-equipped with atomic weapons and is suppressing the Palestinians, it is not deemed a threat to democracy in America or Europe.

The hypocrisy of the lone superpower must come to an end.
ABM Shafiqul Islam
Deptt. of English
Jahangirnagar University

Two tragedies

How far can we compare 9/11 with 3 September, 2004 of Russia and take lessons from them for a peaceful solution of our various socio-economic and political problems?

Who on this good earth is not horrified, grieved and shocked at the sensational, gruesome and tragic deaths of hundreds of innocent men, women and children on 9/11 and 9/3?

Are US support to Israel for atrocities on the Palestinians, Russian genocide of the Chechens, the situation in Kashmir, US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, violation of human rights and crimes committed against humanity across the world acceptable and justified?

Let us hold discussions and debates world wide in schools, colleges, universities, national parliaments even in US Senate and Congress, Russian Duma and UNSC and UNGA not to hide and seek but to find out reasons and truths of 9/11 and 9/3 and arrive at a consensus to prevent such gruesome and tragic events in future.

Unless and until we wake up, change our heart and mentality, believe and accept that all men and women irrespective of race, colour, geographical nationalities and religious differences --whether Egyptians, Chinese, Palestinians, Russians, Kashmiris, Americans, Chechens, Bangladeshis, Israelis, Burmese, Indians or Nigerians-- are the creation of God and they are all equal in the eyes of God and all human beings have the right to live.

OH Kabir
Wari, Dhaka-1203

Attack on AL rally: Threat to national security

My attention has been drawn to the opinion column titled as above, by Air Commodore Ishfaq Ilahi Chowdhury ndc, psc (retd) that appeared on September 3 in response to my article published on September 10 in the Strategic Issues page. I must thank him for writing an exhaustive comment that has enriched my knowledge further.

However, I feel the need to respond to some of the points made by him relating to some of my observations.

Geo-strategic analysis has always been a contested subject. Not necessarily all opinions will be the same. The analysis is perceptive, based on important geographical and strategic factors. Perception is based on the

evaluation of various factors. Discernment may differ, but one must accept the most plausible deductions. In that ambit, Air Commodore Ishfaq Ilahi may have a different perception than mine.

I would not disagree on the volume of budget allocations of police in special reference. What I tried to point out in my article is the sense of priority. For example, it is said Bangladesh police is unique in South Asia to have established a 'staff college'. My apology, that I do not know if that was the most pressing requirement compared to establishing a 'counter terrorism cell', 'explosive demolition squad', 'training ballistic and forensic experts' and improving working conditions in outlying police stations.

I am surprised when Air Commodore Ishfaq Ilahi comments

Indian government (pages 55, 56, 57, reference of transit pages 187 and 273). The book bears testimony to India's strategic considerations apart from the humane aspect that Ishfaq Ilahi mentions.

I do acknowledge Indian help in liberation war but what I maintain is that no nation sacrifices for others relegating the national aim.

Once again let me thank Ishfaq Ilahi for making objective comments.

Brigadier General M. Sakhawath Hussain ndc, psc (retd)
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka

How many more deaths?

The tragic death of Sumi, a first year student of philosophy department of

not want to lose any more life. We want the guarantee of normal death, the students of JU want safety and security. Some speed-breakers and road dividers should be constructed to avoid accidents. The issue should not remain unattended as it has been over the years.

Rajkumar Ghosh
Department of English
Jahangirnagar University
Savar, Dhaka

A question to Putin

A very tragic incident happened at Beslan School in Russia in which 322 people died and hundreds were injured, half of them were children. Our deep sympathy for the families of those who lost their dear ones. We believe that this heart rending tragedy could have been averted if Russian President Vladimir Putin had not taken so hard a stance and negotiated with the hostage-takers. If their demand of withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya and release of Chechen fighters arrested in June in Ingushetia, another neighbouring republic of Chechnya, were met, those innocent children would not have lost their lives. But to President Putin those lives meant nothing. It seems that he is a staunch supporter of President Bush, likes to walk in his footsteps, a ruthless, hard-liner not caring about other people.

When the former Soviet Union broke up, many Soviet republics became independent but Chechnya was unlucky though it agreed to allow transportation of oil through it to Russia, independence was not given to it. When Putin became President he acted most unwisely and preferred use of force instead of tackling the situation prudently. He stationed 150,000 troops in Chechnya, who are making life miserable for the Chechens. Atrocities, human rights abuse are common. The soldiers unleashed violence and a great number of people died, women lost their husbands and children, there are innumerable families which have lost their dear ones. So, it is natural that they will be consumed with the fire to take revenge, those women, who are being called as 'Black widows' have become suicide bombers because they have nothing to live for.

I have a question to Russian President Vladimir Putin, what he would have done if his wife and children and other dear ones were in that school which was under seize? Would he have handled it that way which killed so many people? I think not, and wonder why the people of Russia are not protesting his action.

Nur Jahan, Chittagong

Your life is in danger!

The pattern of unrest and insecurity in the country is becoming more clear since the 21/8 bombing of a political meeting in Dhaka. The indirect message propagated by the powerful coterie (foreigners suspected) sponsoring the terrorist acts is something like this: "do not do this and that, your life is in danger. Can't you see that the governance is out of control?" Former president Ershad has also warned the people of external forces trying to create dissension in the society (DS Sep 7).

Do not travel, your life is in danger (live bombs found in launch with 2,000 passengers leaving Barisal, DS Sep 7). Similarly, do not attend schools, colleges, and universities, public meetings mosques, shrines, and markets. Goal: fear, insecurity in daily-life operations, and creating doubts about governance.

The leaders (political and public leaders) have to brief the people as to who are behind the game, and why.

Has Dhaka got the means to resist foreign machinations, specially when there is no political consensus at the national level? Is our politics so weak and truncated that outsiders might take advantage of the disunity and grab Bangladesh through divide-and-rule tactics, as it happened in the case of other [smaller] countries? Why Bangladesh is being eyed so covetously? Energy resources, and

strategic location? South Asia is a big market for the industrialized countries [West], and the latter are facing sunset years. WTO is not working smoothly, as time bombs [policies] have been planted in the Recommendations dictated by the G-7. **AZ, Dhaka**

A worried citizen

As a citizen under duress, I appreciate the neutral observations on current and political affairs by social activist Mrs. Sigma Huda (DS Sep 7). It needs moral courage and guts to be different, when political fatwas control the souls.

Our politicians and political leaders do not have the sensitivity of this type of awareness. The latter have one-track minds, and do not like to get off the track even once in a while (severe insecurity syndrome). The party cannot be the whole soul of life, as individualistic and personal principles might conflict with group opinions from time to time. That way we have floor crossings from time to time. But sometimes it is forgotten that the base is our dear, dear Sonar Bangla!

The politicians have to restore their public image, to bring back confidence in political culture. Today political vultures are using their claws to tear apart other players in the field. That is why one major party, Awami League, is out of tune with the times. The other party, BNP, cannot mobilise internally, to make its presence felt amongst the non-politicians (citizens and voters). Both the parties firmly believe that their field workers could never commit anything wrong, hence no persecutions so far. Shake the tree from time to time, for spring cleaning. Nepotism in public life is not good politics. Even the parents scold their children from time to time; but public censures are needed in public services. Parties do not like to take the rap themselves.

We are shy of confessions (Bill Clinton confessed his waywardness in his book) before the public and before the Lord. I would like to read the "Confessions of a (local) Mayor"--- let us see who comes out first with a book!

Abu abad, Dhaka

A failed team

There is a cricket team with Test status. The performance of that team is substandard but there is no symptom of improvement. They change their management and coach at regular intervals. Every new management is committed to making new something to achieve

Asians want Kerry

Election campaigns of the two presidential candidates, John Kerry and George W. Bush, are gradually ascending to a climax. Both the aspirants are holding meetings that are being attended by their wives and supporters.

Meanwhile, it is evident from a recent survey conducted by a global research firm GLOESCAN Inc. and the University of Maryland that majority of the Asians prefer Kerry to Bush. Interestingly, in Japan which is regarded as America's best friend in Asia, Kerry was favoured by 43 percent of those polled compared to 23 per cent supporting Bush. In China and Indonesia, the result of the poll was even more encouraging for Kerry because Kerry scored 52% and 57% while Bush secured 12% and 34% votes respectively.

The poll result further reveals that even in the countries that have contributed troops to Iraq, Kerry has more support. So, the Americans need a change in their leadership for the welfare of America itself and the world as a whole.

Let the Americans elect a President of their choice who can restore the past glory of the United States and contribute positively in promoting world peace.

Prof. M. Zahidul Haque
Chairman
Dept. of Language
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka-1207

Overcrowded city

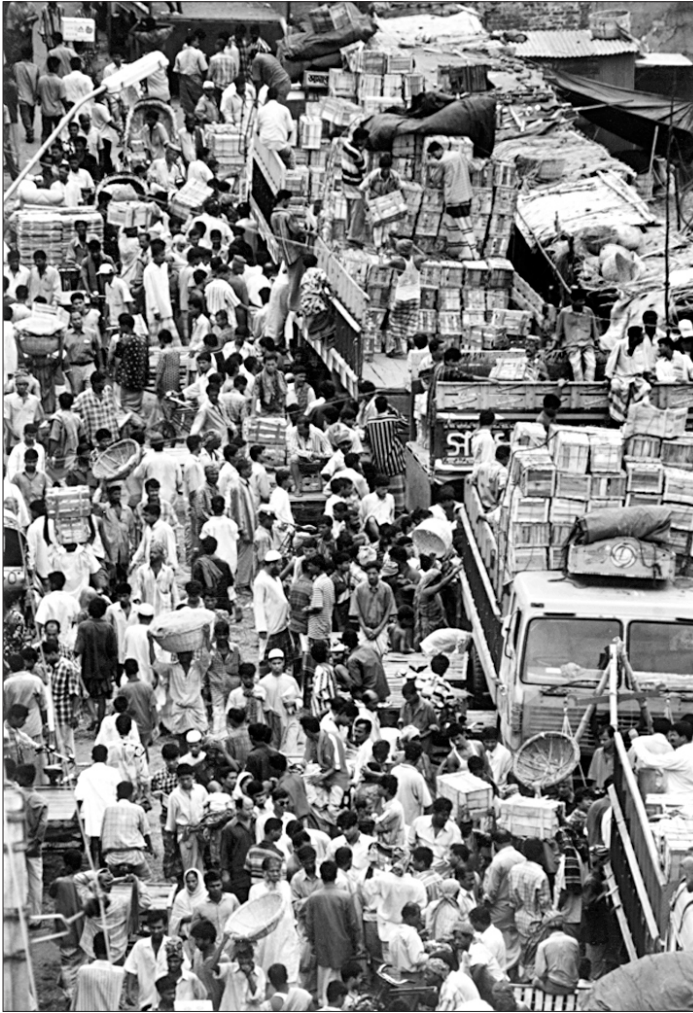
Overcrowded Dhaka metropolis (pop. 10 m plus) is facing more and more security problems. The government has to announce long term projects (and start the first phase on priority basis) to decrease the population of the megalopolis, by shifting some industries and business activities outside the DCC zone. The Greater Dhaka perimeter is becoming an industrial belt; hence more infrastructure facilities have to be provided to encourage migration outside DCC area. More satellite towns are needed to take care of the booming SMEs (small and cottage industries); with cheap and efficient transport system for daily mobility of the work force. The Dhaka water transport ring system around the city is a good move. It should have been started two decades ago.

The number one item on the list is obviously to shift hundreds of garment factories outside the city. It would have tremendous beneficial effects on the economics, ecology and sociology of urban life. But, no concrete plans have been discussed publicly or announced, although we read about a lot of verbal assurances on future policies. RMG is a powerful and sensitive political lobby, as many politicians are involved in this vast industry. It is being coddled for too long, which may not ultimately be in public interest. Social illnesses and epidemics take time to emerge and become visible. We are still steeped in ad-hoc management practices. Long-term projects and policies receive step-motherly treatment from succeeding regimes.

The bomb blast in Aziz supermarket complex is another warning sign: separate the residential flats from offices and shops. Corollary: shift the NGO and business offices from the residential areas such as DRA, Lalmatia and other well demarcated residential zones. There is too much internal penetration beyond the main roads (such as Satmasjid, Asad Avenue).

Target: Offices and family residential flats should not be located in the same building, for obvious reasons. Now a large number of shopping complexes have come up in Dhaka. The upper floors can accommodate a large number of offices and NGOs. The latter are not being encouraged to shift with carrot and stick policies (the governance is too politicized for visible action day by day). Formerly, it was a question of finding alternative accommodation. Now real estate development is very much visible in all big cities. So what's the administrative problem in policy-making? As for the shifting of the RM-Garment factories outside the cities (in all divisions of the country), some residential and messing arrangements have to be made for the lakhs of female workers. It is disgusting to note that the related associations and the coordinating ministries do not even talk about it (for awareness), not to speak of announcing regulatory policies. We are fond of default culture.

A Mawaz, Dhaka



14 players couldn't grow up from 140 million people. Only coaches won't help. Please look for new players, instead of relying on the coach to do everything for you.

Md. Ruhul Amin Munshi
North Manik Nagar, Dhaka-1203

English Language teaching

Communicative language teaching has got wider approval from its embryonic stage. Recent revolutionary changes in language teaching arena of Bangladesh have struck many of our friends relatives, thinkers teachers. Some of them have rejected this approach terming it a failed method of language teaching. They have complained about this approach that there is no grammar in this approach to language teaching. Many of them have criticized the absence of explicit grammar and literature. Syllabus and materials of language teaching have been changed as far

as communication is concerned. This approach to language teaching has enjoyed faith and popularity in many countries like Malaysia Hongkong, Singapore India.

On the contrary, it has lost its image in Haiti, a developing country, like Bangladesh. This method has been a completely failed approach to language teaching. Bangladesh may face the same problem. Because the situation of Malaysia is not similar to Bangladesh. We do not have logistic support to implement this method. We do not have opportunity to use language outside classroom. We hardly can communicate with the native speakers, so we should replace this method.

The need of the hour is a good number of skilled and trained teachers.

Md Masudur Alam, MA (ELT),
Department of English (DU)

