

One more public health concern

Quacks having a field-day

A survey carried out under the Health and Population Survey Programme makes a dismal reading of the state of our public health service.

The statistics contained in the report should get the relevant people in the government thinking.

There are some cogent reasons why people are turning away from public health services and the government must urgently address the causes if it wants to arrest the decline in health delivery system.

One of the causes of poor service of public health system is the spurt of private clinics and hospitals, which attract government doctors at the expense of their primary responsibility.

Among the developing countries, Bangladesh is credited with having very good primary healthcare infrastructure facilities.

We feel that apart from improving government medicare system in terms of the quality of service the quacks also must be brought under some sort of control.

A situation where the quacks are a major provider of health care is perhaps too much to endure, even for a country like ours.

Is it compensation or insult?

The very culture has not grown

IN the event of an industrial worker's death or injury in the line of duty, neither any member of the bereaved family nor the wounded victim himself or herself is recompensed automatically or with any degree of certainty.

The tale of the family of deceased sixteen year old worker Md Alam is a case in point. The lad died from a terrible accident. While working at the SR Steel Complex in Shyampur Industrial Area molten iron with temperature of 1200 to 1500 centigrade splashed on his head and rolled down to his back.

Actually, the whole concept is wrong. The allowable figure is a cruel apology for compensation and the assessment of losses bears little relation to the magnitude of disaster suffered in the absence or the maiming of the only bread earner in the family.

That is bad enough. But imagine the plight of the families of those who died or the ordeal of those crippled in fire accidents in garment industries and through launch or highway accidents who are seldom paid any compensation.

We have a strong feeling it is time the government put a comprehensive compensation policy in place through consultation with the key players in public and private sectors to give a more civilised account of ourselves.

Back to business as usual



M ABDUL HAFIZ

THE nation will take long indeed to recover from the trauma of the tragedy of 21st August last. Such traumas are however nothing new in this country which witnessed a number of brutal political killings in the past.

But it contained so much of lethality, bestiality, vendetta and hatred that it defies an apt description of itself. Worse still is the fact that it did not happen in a vacuum.

shell shocked a deeply anguished Sheikh Hasina acknowledged those courtesies, the government also received no less a share of it. But it appeared worried.

establishment did exactly that by blaming the Awami League for the tragedy. But can any party commit such harakiri for its self-perdition. No amount of conspiracy theories can vindicate such insanity.

was possible to nip in the bud the rise of an invisible evil force in the country. It is always the privilege of the government of initiate such enterprise.

PERSPECTIVES

After having silenced the nagging fuss of 8/21 the government will now be able to treat any conceivable problem of governance from soaring prices of the essentials to continuing dismal internal order just as routine.

Yet after 9/11 no other country drew so much of the outpourings of sympathies from all over the world as did Bangladesh.

deep into an introspection and are able to catapult the nation of the morass. A nation state has an inexhaustible capacity to retrieve itself from the deepest of the crises.

government and opposition who chose to be locked up in a no-win game. It obviously resulted in the defeat of great national purpose.

The country like Bangladesh would remain problematic and trouble can always erupt in some form or other. Yet by all reckoning the alliance will find the turf smooth both to rule and play politics -- thanks to the absence of many Motia Chowdhurys and her likes in the street, a mercurial politics of redoubtable Sheikh Hasina and a proverbial disunity of the left parties.

for them. You can virtually trade on everything. Why joining street agitation -- even for rightful things -- to be mercilessly beaten up by the police who are well trained in it -- if not in hunting down the criminals.

An embattled Sheikh Hasina has already left for a month long jaunt in America. Don't the politicians -- who are also human beings -- need holidays? With that the government, always dogged by nagging opposition, now looks relaxed.

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Brig (ret'd) Hafiz is former DG of BISS.

BJP: The Janata is missing



M.J. AKBAR

POLITICIANS can survive a great deal -- plague (corruption charges), pestilence (electoral defeat), famine (not made a minister) -- but very few survive a sense of humour.

quaint, the combination was often hopelessly funny for all the wrong reasons. He overdid himself during the press conferences in the general elections.

because L.K. Advani struck a chord with the poor. He did not do so with an economic agenda, but a religious one. He took the Ram temple construction movement into the villages, where the party had insufficient presence, and to women, whom the party had never wooed.

Pakistan, an antithesis of the BJP, to redefine the thesis of his years in power. It was not another political game. He genuinely believed in peace with Pakistan, and sustained that belief through the Kargil war, the turmoil of terrorism and the expensive failure of Agra.

card, Advani, since it is trapped once again in the uncertainties of the 1980s. The mention of the Emergency was incidental, but has a deeper relevance. The doubts of the 1980s were a direct consequence of three years of power after the Emergency, and the extraordinary compromise that the party made in 1977 when it merged its identity into the Janata Party.

The BJP has a large research division. It should put together a team to find out just how many times the party president used the words "poverty" or "poor" and compare it to other words in his repertoire.

strengths when opportunity presented itself at the end of the 1990s. The BJP Leadership took the sentimental view that if it wanted power in Delhi then it could only be through partnerships.

How many years of doubt will emerge from six years of power? The nub is this: can Advani of the 2000s be the Advani of the 1980s? Or is Narendra Modi going to be the Next Big Thing? There is little doubt that Modi sees himself as the future of his party.

inverted-U relationship between growth and inequality, as suggested by Kuznets? 'Globalization' must go hand in hand with democratisation to make it, i.e., 'globalisation', worth its nomenclature.

OPINION

Arrest the spiraling price of essentials

SHAMSHER CHOWDHURY

I am no longer worried about the enquiry into the bombings of August 21. I am no longer worried about the traffic jam in the capital city. I am no longer worried about the criminal acts of a section of the people who have wrongfully occupied lakes and other water bodies and have constructed some monstrous and ugly structures ringing the death bell of our environment.

It is a shame for a country 87 percent of whose people are Muslims when the rising of prices takes place every year during the Ramadan and the Eid festival.

I am not worried about which intellectual belongs to which of the two major political parties. I am not worried about which newspaper represents which of the political parties. I am not worried about the accident of the F-28 at the Sylhet airport the other day.

The government says it is arranging the security of the members of the public during Ramadan. I no longer care. Government and the high-profile businessmen of the country are busy in assessing the feasibility of the \$2 billion investment by Tata. I could not be both-

While the present regime is engaged in celebrating its three years of success, the opposition is busy trying to bring down the government and be in the seat of power. No one ever thinks of these unfortunate people. At times I have the feeling that this country has been custom tailored for the corrupt, the rich, and the unscrupulous.

The rich and the affluent will do nothing about it. The politicians and our lawmakers will do nothing about it. The civil society will do nothing about it. Strangest of all, the affected will also do nothing about it.

many other reasons -- like poor law and order situation, lack of infrastructural facilities, and corruption -- for the lack of progress of these countries. One may debate whether the trade policies of the developed countries are more or less responsible than the other reasons or equally responsible, for the not-so-palatable condition of the developing world.

AHAB AZIZ

THE buzzword 'globalisation' has different meanings or connotations to different people. To me, 'globalisation' is a misnomer. Though we are living in a 'coca-colonised' world, as they say, it is still hindered by barriers of myriad nature -- some cultural, some trade related, some ethnocentric, and what not.

inverted-U relationship between growth and inequality, as suggested by Kuznets? 'Globalization' must go hand in hand with democratisation to make it, i.e., 'globalisation', worth its nomenclature. However, the reality is just the reverse. World Bank and IMF, the behemoths of global finance and trade, are not democratic in nature, as 'one country, one vote' system is not operating there. Rather, the voting rights are determined there according to the amount of donations offered by the member states, resulting in the majority of the votes in the hands of less than 10 per cent of the countries of the world.

So, is it not natural that the biased equation of power is only accentuating the unjust polarisation between the rich and the poor in the 'globalised' world? Ahabb Aziz is a research professional.