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# Strategic management

I would like to share some strategic aspects of politically managing Bangladesh. In Bangladesh politics is at least 27-30 years backward looking. Whereas it should be at least 30 years forward looking. Questions like,

After 30 years or even in the next century where do Bangladeshis want to go or want to be are to be answered right at the moment when we are talking or working.

Then strategies have to be fixed how to get there.

Questions revolving around the former heads of two main political parties over more than 30 years are still artificially dividing the people of the country in two groups or may be more. Every year young people who do not have institutional path for their education and future career development take up the short cut political way and then become politically charged terrorists, while they should be learning and building up skills to survive.

As a strategic manager to me

playing with puzzles or riddles of 27-30 years back is not important. I do believe that I share the same feelings of most of the 150 million people in Bangladesh. We have to take note of the following.

1. Bangladesh is an independent country. Once a boy becomes an independent man he has to take care of himself.
2. Bangladesh has a separate society, separate needs, separate problems. These problems are socio-economic problems. Many of the problems in Bangladesh including corruption and lawlessness stem from poverty and lack of opportunities where survival for the fittest takes a beastly form.
3. Bangladeshis have to solve their own problems within themselves.
4. Independence and religion should not be turned into political issues.

Easy to say but difficult to do: So how the strategic management would work?

I would give some examples.

Take a look at China, Hong Kong or Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore or Europe and Japan. What do you observe? It can be observed that what is common in all these cases is far from a reality in the countries like Bangladesh.

In our childhood we all learned that Bangladesh is a riverine country. But where are those rivers or water channels now? One of the greatest threats to Bangladesh are natural calamities. So one of our main tasks should be controlling nature to the extent possible. If not possible at least we should try to control damage. There are many other areas where improvement is possible through sound management.

The topics of strategic management are never ending. So is this discussion, I feel like sharing my thoughts with those interested in finding faults in the way we manage things in Bangladesh.

Mahmud, UK



PHOTO: AFP



PHOTO: INTERNET

# Non motorised vehicles

As a highly populated city, Dhaka is now facing a terrible traffic jam. Constructing new roads methodically and improving the traffic system should be the main agenda of the government at this point of time. The authorities concerned usually think about long term and big budget projects for solving the traffic problem. But sometimes fruitful low budget plans can also lessen the existing problems.

In this regard non motorised vehicles can play an important role. Non motorised vehicle (NMVs) which means bicycle, cycle rickshaws and carts, continue to play a vital role in urban transportation systems in most places of our country.

However, the future of NMVs in this country is threatened by growing motorisation, loss of street space for the NMVs use and changes in urban schemes prompted by motorisation. The government's transport planning and investment have focused mainly on the motorisation of the transport sector and have often ignored the need for non motorised transport. As a result, NMVs use may decline considerably in the coming decade, with a highly negative impact on air, movement of traffic, energy use, urban sprawl and the employment and mobility of low income people.

Transport investment and policies are the primary factors that influence NMVs use and level of motorisation. For example, Japan has witnessed major growth of bicycle use, despite increased motorisation, through programmes providing extensive bicycle paths, free bicycle parking at rail stations and high fees for motor vehicle use.

China has for several decades offered commuter subsidies for those people bicycling to work, cultivated a domestic bicycle industry and allocated extensive urban space to NMVs use. Bicycle has largely replaced buses as the principal means of urban vehicle transport in China. Buses are generally slower for the same trip made by bicycle.

Recently, the government has taken several plans for transport and road management as is evident from construction of road dividers, auto signals, and flyovers etc with a high budget. But they didn't think about the magical effect of cycle use as a private vehicle. The government should encourage it through the media, cycle rallies, cycle donation campaigns and massive publicity in every possible way.

Following the model of China our government can initiate a programme for promoting the use of bicycles. This will help solve many of the problems that we are facing in the cities.

Md. Shafiqur Rahman, DU

## Rise of political violence

We the general people are sadly noticing that political violence is dangerously rising, there is specifically no commitment, no accountability no justice to the people. Still now we cannot come together on a common issue. Instead of that our two mainstream political parties have engaged themselves in clashes and propaganda. Their sight is not fixed upon the interests of the people.

Consequently, the perpetrators of various crimes are making the country unstable. We have seen a series of bomb blasts, grenade attacks upon political meetings, processions and many other activities. Meanwhile, one party is blaming another, and the real culprits escape without being brought to justice. It seems to me that the two major parties are busy with themselves, and are not really interested in bringing changes for the better. The government is saying that the AL is responsible for the recent attacks. We think it makes no sense.

We have lost valuable time, many regimes ruled the country but we got nothing at all. This situation cannot continue for an indefinite period of time, unless we want to expose ourselves to the grave danger of losing control. Signs are really ominous.

M.A.H Nazim  
Deptt. Of Political Science, DU

## 21 February

The UNESCO has declared February 21 the International Mother Language Day. It is the most glorious day in our national history. On this day the people of Bangladesh laid down their lives to establish Bangla as our mother tongue. After the creation of Pakistan, the rulers tried to establish Urdu as the only state language. But the students and the people of Bangladesh demanded that Bengali be the state language as the majority of the then Pakistanis spoke in this language.

On every 21 February we get up early in the morning remembering the martyrs, but for whose supreme sacrifice we would never get Bangla as our mother tongue. We walk barefooted to the Shaheed Minar. We put on black badges. We go to the Shaheed Minar in the evening and sing - "Amar Bhaer rockte Ranganano....." We pay homage to the memory of the great martyrs.

And now we are speaking in Bengali. But what is going on in our country is totally ironical. Most of the parents are sending their children to the English medium schools. Most of them do not know Bengali very well. True, English is an international language, but we should learn English after learning our own language properly. We should not forget the spirit of Ekushey, the day of self assertion.

Bichitra Roy  
Dhaka university

## British textile mills in Comilla EPZ

The above news published in the business page of your newspaper on March 4, really amazed me! Very sad, I have no idea as to which developed countries are utilizing our 6 EPZs. But, I became astonished to think about their policy! They are used to be buyers only, why have they come to our to expand their business?

Evaluating different positive aspects of choosing Comilla EPZ, I realised that though the EPZ was established in the year 2000, they have assessed all positive aspects of that EPZ! Firstly, it is not in an overcrowded place like Dhaka city; secondly, it has an airport for frequent movement of the people in the business; thirdly, they could bring their products to Dhaka by a cheaper- river route; and finally, they are getting cheaper manpower. I appreciate their insight!

Among the six EPZs; so far my knowledge goes - only Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla and Saidpur have airports. Dhaka and Chittagong EPZs are running for a long time. Condition of Saidpur EPZ is not satisfactory; as I have seen personally! I know nothing about the Mongla EPZ, established recently.

I hope the British strategy of running their industry would be something to learn from as far as the local entrepreneurs are concerned.

Dr. Lailun Nahar  
Shamoli  
Dhaka 1207

## Thirty-three years ago

If we consider our position as a nation 33 years ago - it was so unique, the whole nation was so united under one leadership that emerged from a big sacrifice. But, we missed the opportunity. Slowly and gradually not only we proved ourselves in many spheres of our nationhood as ineffective and incapable but successfully managed to divide the nation into two houses of extreme beliefs. Recently, these two houses allowed another thought to creep in, into the mainstream. This could be an allowance or due to their incapability.

These divisions alone put us far behind than what is even reasonably expected. We all are going certain extent of extreme to support our schools of thoughts and often with dubious reasoning. We keep failing to rise above the mindset to support the national causes by going beyond the identity of our alienation as if we have promised to the devil our soul. Our mind, thought and arguments whirl around and within the spectrum of agendas of the houses.

Various illogical ethics, beliefs and norms are made to flood the strategic outlines. Many of the ethics or beliefs are alien, norms are

fictitious and impractical, yet we remain faithful. Be it political, cultural, social or illusive enough on the knowledge front.

The consequence is, with all the overwhelming and overriding social issues and mountain high failures of our institutions we couldn't come up with a solution or resolve together.

While these failures should have enough resources and potentials for the economists, poets, essayist,

the heart of one hundred and forty million people, an essay that enlightens the whole nation in true perspective to rise beyond and defeat our enemies of progress, we will keep living in the past.

Earlier the division is minimised better would be our achievements. Don't you think time is ripe yet?

MM Haque  
Jeddah, K.S.A

# Biman flying low

No figure is available on the total loss incurred, but on sketchy reports published it appears that the revenue was up by 17 percent and the total fuel cost incurred was up by 44.4% in FY 2004. There is also talk of replacing the existing DC-10 aircraft with new Boeing B777 and Airbus A340 that will cost billions of dollars. Biman was also running at a loss two flights to New York a week.

In western countries corporate incompetence & inefficiency will always involve appointing independent firms to look into the financial affairs of the failed subject and recommend solutions and penalties. I suppose this isn't going to happen in this case. Pan Am & TWA simply collapsed with debt burden and loss of passengers but the US government did not give a damn about it. Other entrepreneurs turned up and US civil air space is not

vacant. One of the main culprits was the rise of petrol price last year, but it was predictable because of the Iraq situation. The senior management did not even think of hedging the expected price rise. The German airlines had been hedging the oil price rise of millions of dollars to avoid extra cost. In Europe heads of some senior management would have rolled.

Biman's London flight should have been a profit earner but it was not, although other airlines like British Airways, Gulf Air have been running seven flights a week between Dhaka and London with excellent service both inside and outside cabins and making profit.

What is Biman doing?

MF Karim  
Uttara, Dhaka



writers, journalists, social activists to excel, we have become the spectators of award ceremonies of other people from other countries. This happens because we all are toying the line of our 'house of belief' and forget or sideline the reality on the ground and keep adding glasses to the pyramids.

Unless and until we are able or flexible enough to break the glass pyramid, set our mind free and manage to write a play that touches

## BCS recruitment

After independence of Bangladesh large scale recruitment started in different cadres of the Bangladesh Civil Service. There was vacuum in different services and there was some justification behind such recruitment. But the policy should have been revised after a few years. Due to large scale recruitment in class I cadres, after six seven years of service officers were demanding

much fewer number of vacancies. And now there is intense pressure from the same group of officials for promotion to the post of Secretary. A few days ago over sixty officers were promoted to the post of Joint Secretary and there is immediate pressure for more promotion to the same post. Then again, class I officers with service of nearly twenty years are waiting for being promoted to the post of Deputy Secretary. Their concern is also genuine

and press report says that government is contemplating promoting some three hundred officers to the post of Deputy Secretary shortly although there are much fewer vacancies. This has led to a situation where government has to promote for the sake of promotion and not for the need of the government and administration. This is also leading to wastage of public fund. All this resulted due lack of proper planning or no planning or ad hocism in all the central class I cadres of East Pakistan quota was roughly 40 in a year. Total recruitment in erstwhile EPCS class I cadre varied from 30 to 50. EPCS class I officers used to get promotion to senior scale after roughly twenty years and very few of them got promoted to the rank of Deputy Secretary to the central government.

But now there is a rising expectation among officers although the average quality is simply horrible. So to restore efficiency and to prevent impasse it is high time that the government restricted recruitment to class I cadres seriously. Total number of recruitment in BCS class I cadres should be restricted to roughly one hundred in a year by recruiting five to ten class I officers in each cadre. And a class II cadre should be created where larger number of officers may be recruited. Class II officers can be promoted to class I posts after about fifteen to twenty years of service. This will enable the government to maintain efficiency in administration and to prevent pressure for undue promotion.

Will the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the Ministry of Establishment ponder over this?

Momtaz Jahan  
Fulbari, Sylhet

## Political unrest

Given the current political scenario of Bangladesh, I cannot be proud of myself as a Bangladeshi. I am going to deal with a burning question. Lack of political unrest, crime and corruption have been increasing alarmingly and already we are "world champions" in corruption. Apparently, we the Bangladeshis are totally handicapped by the political parties. The government is trying its best to control crime but the opposition does not extend helping hand in doing this, rather they are criticising the role of Rab as well as calling hartal. But we, the general people, can say that for the betterment of the country political stability is needed. Since ours is a developing country, so politicians should keep in mind that they have to play a vital role in this regard. It seems to me that politicians are running after power only. They love to exercise power and that's their only goal, nothing else.

In respect of Bangladesh our political parties have a distinct approach. They know how to make commitments and how not to respect them, once they are in power. People know what our former prime minister and present opposition leader committed to the general people. She said she would never call hartal if her party was in the opposition. But in fact they are still calling hartal. Nothing can stop them.

How long shall we have to bear with this kind of torture?

Mamun Ali Khan  
CMA (Final level)  
ICMAB, Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

# We salute the martyrs

We are feeling very sad at the deaths of the nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers who were killed in Congo while on duty. We watched with heavy hearts the coffins being brought down, one by one, from a plane chartered by the United Nations.

The soldiers will always be remembered as heroes because they sacrificed

their lives for a noble cause, we are really proud of them. May those UN peacekeepers find eternal peace and may their families find the strength to bear this agony.

Nur Jahan  
Chittagong

I express my deep condolence at the death of nine Bangladeshi heroes who were killed on March 25,

2005 in a militia ambush in Congo. That was the second highest casualty that our army suffered since independence, after the biggest military loss in an air crash in Benin on December 31, 2003. We have lost 24 great martyrs within three years. I pay my tributes to the national heroes who sacrificed their lives for peace in this cha-

otic world. May Allah bless their departed souls and give us strength to absorb the great shock.

We hope that we will achieve our goals in peace-keeping missions under the UN in future also. The deaths will only strengthen our resolve.

Mamunur Rashid Tomal  
Department of English,  
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