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Shrine culture

In this Indian sub-continent of Aryan civilisation, the light of Islam was first brought by some great men who from far distant lands came here leaving their near and dear ones behind. Those men came from Arabia, Afghanistan, Turkey and portrayed the actual image of this great religion and pleased the general people of this region with their noble characters as well as the simplicity of their personal lives on which Islam always gives great emphasis. We still now commemorate that sacrifice made by those great people. But after their deaths, using the graves of those men, some people have introduced a new shrine-culture among the Muslim community.

Now the question is, does this shrine culture really conform to the basic tenets of Islam? Thus Islam, which never appreciates priesthood, has fallen victim to the misinterpretation of various people who always use religion for their own purpose. If we just take a look at the shrines of our country, we will find that there are many pious Muslims submitting themselves before the grave of the holy men, instead of Allah. They also in the hope for a better hereafter donate money and many other things to the shrines. They don't think where this money goes. Does it do any good to Islam? As a result, in the nights of Shab-e-Barat, Shab-e-Qadr and other special occasions these shrines get more crowded than the mosques. Along with religious deception, the shrines, in some cases, are dens of drug-peddlers, addicts and pimps; a safe hideout for evildoers and terrorists.

The way of living of the caretakers of those shrines also doesn't portray the real image of Islam. So the Muslims should think about this shrine culture.

Kamrul Hasan, BUET



Politics of hartal

While I was reading the letter titled "Hartal!" by Raquib Shamsad from London, I was really surprised a bit! We all know how hartal is doing damage to our economy. So we want to avoid this destructive means of protest. But we should also think about the reasons behind a hartal. Hartal is nothing new in Bangladesh. We have been experiencing it even before the birth of this nation. And the reasons for calling hartal were also different. Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina have set new records in calling hartal. We had seen hartal called by Khaleda Zia during the AL regime to protest the government's actions and now we are watching hartals by Hasina for the same reason. It should also be mentioned that other parties also call hartal. So when we are talking about giving up hartal, we should not only blame Hasina or her party, we should also mention what Khaleda Zia and her party did just a few years back. Otherwise, we will not be able to establish a neutral and acceptable view against hartal for the general people of this country.

So we need to be more careful while expressing our views. We should not make more divisions among the nation.

Mazeed Summon
One-mail

An appeal

We, the people in general, are afraid of bomb blasts every day, everywhere in Bangladesh. So we are requesting the government to take the necessary steps immediately to contain the bomb menace.

Please be tough on the miscreants responsible for the deaths of innocent people. Otherwise, they will cause more damage to us in future.

Masum
Gifu University, Japan

Conspiracy

Bomb was the biggest news for a few days. What was their real object? Will we ever find it out? In my understanding it is a conspiracy. There are a few groups who have many plans. For example the Freemason who have a plan for a new world order, then they have the CIA who has its nose everywhere. Then there are the intelligence services of some countries which are involved in all sorts of mysterious activities. Each of these groups has their own agents working everywhere, including Bangladesh.

I really don't want to blame anyone

religion. So if they attack us, their object will be to destroy Islam. But, thank God, they haven't been successful in their mission so far. They conspired before and will do so again, but they are certainly not following the teachings of our religion.

Ubaidullah Awal
One-mail

Genetic influence

The pensive endeavour of human beings to fetch material pleasure--propelled by instinctive forces like greed, rapacity, licentiousness, dishonesty-- is a genetic reality. The demystification of "the methodical function of the genome code" produces a clear picture of how the anthropoid would conduct in future upon their biological and emotional development. The mechanism of the gene is an arguably constructive factor in formulating and moulding human character. This efficacy of the gene in stratifying the human nature has, in one sense, turned the most intelligent animals of the animal kingdom into key-driven puppets of the nature. The grim actuality of biological formation in the human body is that we have been heavily intertwined with the whims of the nature.

Education has been recognised and billed as the most effective medium to dispose of the vile biological contributions to our bodies. And it is now well nigh axiomatic through the years of studies that a systematic education could yield in human beings the knowledge of cherry-picking the good ones and singling out the bad stuff. But the irritating factor is that despite receiving high education, some people tend to be incorrigible.

Sulav Chowdhury
London

Political leaders and people

I extend my thanks to Mr. O. H. Kabir for his letter (DS 3/10/05) which gives me an opportunity to share my views with him.

In reply to my recent e-mail (telling about my sharing ideas through The Daily Star), my cousin, who is now a Canadian citizen, a product of Dhaka University, reciprocated heavily by saying that he too writes to many places and e-forums. He regularly writes to most of their MPs (over 300 in total), most Senators and even to many of the US Congressmen and Senators on many issues. Many of those US Congressmen replied him back with appreciation. He writes to many other e-forums, which are very interesting but very challenging as he continues. I gave him the website address of The Daily Star to discover my write-ups and he agreed to give me the addresses of the e-forums (if I am interested) that he is writing to. Besides writing to the politicians and e-forums he has one more "strange hobby" to teach accounting to all his children (He is a C.A.).

In view of the above, I have every reason to believe that we can do the same in our country in this age of Information (Communication) Technology and politicians can afford internet connection to keep in touch with the people who elect them to run the country. I don't feel like elaborat-

ing further in this context.

I reiterate the call of Bangabandhu Sk. Mujibur Rahman for a "Green Revolution" which is for growing more food, a dire necessity for most of our countrymen, instead of being too wordy on many impractical and imaginary issues.

Thomas Gomes Bhura
One-mail

Mili rape and murder case

On September 24 last I went to Rajshahi on a family visit. There was a dawn-to dusk hartal on the following day, 25 September, in Rajshahi. The hartal was observed to protest the alleged injustice in the schoolgirl Mili rape and murder case. The hartal was peaceful. It may be mentioned here that the nine-year-old schoolgirl Mili was raped and murdered on May 3 when she was alone in the house.

What a barbaric act! How people on earth could commit such a heinous crime?

In my opinion, an impartial investigation should be conducted with a view to bringing the real culprits to book and to award them exemplary punishment as early as possible.

Professor M. Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka-1207

Bring CHT under mobile network

It is a matter of regret that Chittagong Hill Tracts still remains outside the purview of mobile networks. The 61 other districts of Bangladesh have been brought under the mobile networks. So as an inhabitant of CHT, my question to the authorities concerned is, how long the people of CHT will be deprived of this facility? Besides, many students, government employees etc are living outside the CHT for various reasons. To communicate with their families, they are compelled to depend on the T&T line that is also unavailable in some places.

Now I would like to request the government and the mobile companies to think over the matter seriously, and to try to bring CHT under the mobile networks without wasting any more time.

Kriti Chakma
Jahangirnagar University

Vacant posts at NBR

At least one post of Member (Taxes) and three posts of Commissioner of Taxes are vacant in the Taxes Department for quite a long time causing a huge revenue loss to the government.

The post of Member (Taxes) of the National Board of Revenue has fallen vacant following the retirement of a Member of the Board in June last. The post is still vacant, despite the fact that the illegible incumbent is there to fulfil the post. This is for the first time that a top post of the NBR has been kept vacant for such a long time.

The posts of three Commissioners of Taxes are also vacant for at least six months or so. These posts have fallen vacant due to transfer of three tax officers. These posts are being kept vacant despite the availability of illegible candidates to fill up these posts.

The non-fulfilment of these top



Water logging

PHOTO: AFP

Whether in the rainy season, winter or summer, when it rains most of the roads and streets of Dhaka are flooded and water logged.

We are surprised and disappointed that every year, whoever is the Mayor of Dhaka, DCC is spending crores of taka from the public

exchequer for construction and repair of the underground drainage system to clear the stagnant dirty water, but to no use. Why? Where does all the public money go?

Would the Ministry of LGRD and the DCC kindly let us know for the sake of account-

ability and transparency as to what amount the DCC has spent area-wise in the fiscal year 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 on road construction and removing water logging?

O.H. Kabir
Wari, Dhaka

revenue posts of the NBR hampers the normal functioning of the Taxes Department.

M. Ataur Rahim
Gulshan 2, Dhaka

Prisoners of prisoners!

The plan of launching a massive raid on Dhaka Jail was, as usual, leaked out. The senior officers of the jail are being reshuffled frequently, but the standard of mercy (or punishment) hardly varies! It is easy to be dishonest even inside the jail, both for the prisoners and the staff; Even outside there is no freedom--it is worse! There is no refuge on *matribhumi*, and the heavens above look ominous. Six feet below the soil, justice waits.

We are hostages today to several cultural environmental effects, which the reigning politicians leave out for the sociologists (and microphone addicts) to handle. The politicians enjoy the right to criticise and offer free advice, but, democratically, leave the operation clean up to others: so long they were not disturbed in their daily mantras and honourable rituals.

In the Third world, the local definition of Democracy has to be redefined. Cajoling is not enough, we need more of the stick than the carrot. Going soft in the grey world hardens the new criminals. The underworld is always under exposed.

Alif Zabr, Dhaka

Whither Saarc?

Bangladesh has to take a clear stand during the coming Saarc conference in Dhaka. It is make or break Saarc. Totally non-dynamic & useless. Global politics and diplomacy are changing fast & Saarc could be self-sufficient with one and a half billion people.

Why can't we communicate?
AMahasen, Dhaka

Saarc secret!

The trade within the region is mere three per cent. Increase it to 10 per cent, in the first phase; and note the awakening. Second phase: 30% then the take-off would be painless.

Md. Abad, Dhaka

Drive against food adulteration

Our honourable prime minister declared in parliament that the mopping-up operation against people adulterating food and other dishonest traders would be continued with more vigour. We appreciate her resolve in this matter and hope this operation will flush out all the perpetrators of food adulteration.

We the consumers would appreciate if the BSTI, City Corporation and related organisations take random samples of items like pure ghee, canned/packed or open cooking oil (soya bean, mustard, sunflower, palm oil etc), powder milk (full cream) in foil packing and check the quality, weight and contents of the products. It is a known fact that the cooking oil which is supposed to be cholesterol free, refined and odourless is not in conformity with the specifications given on the labels of the products. Milk in packets is not full cream as mentioned on the packets and usually adulterated with low quality milk powder. Most of the ghee in the market is adulterated. Powder milk, which is supposed to be full cream, is adulterated with non-fat or low quality powder milk, which reduces the richness and quality of the milk.

The ongoing drive against the dishonest traders should also include checking of the weights and measures

Concerned citizen
Dhaka

Students' attack on BUET VC

As an ex-student of BUET, I could not help write something after reading the letter "Students' attack on BUET VC" by Mohammed Rashed (Sat. October 01, 2005). First, I want to say may be we are not living in as "civilised" a world as Mr. Rashed is living, but in terms of "independence of media" we are living in a "faster world". Unfortunately, using the immunity, some people add things or distort stories or completely change the story to have a better sell of news. Some years ago I read a news item with the catchy head line "An actress narrowly escapes death" which had all the details how she was challenged by a notorious student leader and her near death experience. We, the students, knew the real incident which was that a slightly mentally challenged student leader wanted to meet her. For some reason (may be publicity or something) she did not make any clarification. This is just one of my experiences where I was present on the very spot and was alarmed to read the distorted or completely changed story in the newspaper. These days catchy headlines don't attract me, (don't blame me for that)

We, the students of BUET, are well aware of our class and we know what the nation expects from us. During my BUET life I had seen such "attacks"

(the teachers like to use the same phrase as the media does) on teachers and the subsequent "investigations" which put an end to some "guilty" students' life, who were just trying to make their point to the teachers.

In Bangladesh, the TV with its numerous telefilms, dramas etc has made all the Dhaka University students "lovers" and BUET Engineers either corrupt officers or idle unemployed youth who want to have a wealthy father-in-law. Now the print media is doing its part.

Here, it is a difficult task telling anything against the print media, even against yellow journalism. Because they have the supreme power, people will always believe them.

Saif
Dhaka

Spiralling prices

After the BNP led four party alliance had assumed office in October 2001, people began to feel uncomfortable in all spheres, as the success of the alliance government has been nominal. Honestly speaking, it achieved some success in curbing criminality through forming the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab). However, the government has failed to have control on the market. The prices of essentials are going up every day.

Md. Abu Musa
Nuria Madrasa, Ctg

Privatising Shishu Park



I do not like the plan of privatising "Shishu Park" by DCC. It is not necessary that the government has to hand it over to private operators for its renovation and modernisation. The government can look for other means for acquiring the necessary funds to improve the condition of Shishu Park. The government mustn't overlook the fact that selling Shishu Park would generate revenue, but it would also cut

off one of its permanent source of income. Since Shishu Park is still owned by the government, whatever income is generated from it would be added to the income of the government's treasury. A large number of city dwellers come from low-income families. Shishu Park is one of the few existing public places for recreation in our city. Privatisation would hike up the ticket prices, indirectly discourag-

ing these low-income families and attracting the high-income people like most private amusement parks in our country have been doing.

I am afraid that the way our government is going these days to get rid of its responsibilities, it wouldn't be far seeing the privatisation of our National Zoo also.

Naom Syed
Mohammadpur
Dhaka

Islamic extremism and mainstream Muslims

Are mainstream Muslims blameless for the rise of Islamic extremism?

Of course not. It is the mainstream Muslims who did not stand up to the mounting corruption and cultural degeneration in the society. It is the mainstream Muslims who tolerated social injustice and political double talk and remained complacent. It is the mainstream Muslims who did not demand human dignity for them and for the humanity at large.

They remained silent for too long. For almost fifty years.

Fifty years have gone by since the yoke of colonialism was lifted from the Muslims. Now chicken coming home to roost. Whom do we blame? Those who led us to this situation or those who let them do that without raising a finger to stop it?

Your writer (dealing with the issue in a recent article) wants to be in a very convenient spot. They are blaming mainstream Muslims for the problem that they created. It is like killing one's father and then asking for clemency for being an orphan. That is just outrageous.

A. Islam, USA

