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Spirit of Victory Day



PHOTO: AFP

The nation celebrated the 34th anniversary of its Victory with a gloomy face, not with much enthusiasm, because of the recent incidents that are taking place all over Bangladesh.

The zealous, Islamic fundamentalists, have raised their heads again; many innocent people have so far been killed by them (JMB operatives). And every day bombs are being blasted killing and injuring many. On December 16, the gallant Freedom Fighters liberated the country from the occupation forces. Actually it was Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation, whose great leadership and dynamism inspired the otherwise innocent, harmless teeming millions to stand rock solid in those dark days of the nine month long War of Liberation. At this critical juncture when the nation appears to be divided on political

lines, many pertinent questions crowd the minds of the people. After a nine month war the mighty Bengali nation snatched victory at a heavy cost. But even in this democratic era the nation is haunted by forces opposed to our glorious liberation war.

On the other hand, there is no sign of unity among the political parties. Politics has become a costly game and completely commercialised for the benefits of those self-certified patriots who are actually destroying the moral fabric of our society. Watchers of our political scene are observing the rapid political developments with dismay. Many people have miserably failed to evaluate the sacrifices of the brave sons of the soil who embraced martyrdom upon the altar of independence.

Has the present democratically elected

government really brought smiles to the faces of the toiling masses braving all odds with patience, tolerance and perseverance?

The time has come for us all to bear in mind that our Founding Father was not the leader of a particular party only. He was the leader of the entire nation and as patriots it is our foremost duty to follow him. Late President Ziaur Rahman was also a gallant freedom fighter and his achievement in liberating the country should not be overlooked. But the ruling party should not misuse his name.

We sincerely believe that the two national leaders, Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia, will act with utmost prudence and refrain from political hostilities at this critical juncture of our national life.

Kazi Liakat Hossain, Topkhana, Road Dhaka

Reckless driving
matter.
Md. Sanowar Hossain, Dhaka Chittagong environment

Street accidents have become a matter of daily occurrence in Bangladesh. In the morning when we open the newspaper, we have to see the news of street accidents. These accidents, of course, happen mostly due to rash driving. Hundreds of people are being killed and hundreds are being wounded every year. At present it has become almost impossible to predict which vehicle will reach the destination safely. No one can say that he will reach home without being injured in an accident. It seems that all the streets were made only for the drivers of the automobiles and they are given licence to do whatever they like. Sometimes the drivers fail to control the vehicles. The traffic police do not perform their job sincerely. They seem to ignore the fitness of the vehicles. Though there is always news of road accidents, no steps are reported to have been taken.

"Safe Road" is now the demand of the city dwellers. We don't want to see anybody lament for his/her dear ones. So the authorities should enforce the traffic rules strictly and give maximum punishment to the reckless drivers. The traffic police on duty should be instructed to be more active.

Naheed Neeger, On-email

Appeal for BRTC counter

Barpa bus stand at Rupgonj upazila in Narayanganj is located near a well known industrial area. There are some export quality industrial units around the bus stand along with many small industries. More than 30 thousand people are working in these industries. Many of them come from Dhaka. Besides this, a host of working people, businessmen and university going students from this area have to go to Dhaka every day. They have to commute by bus. Though "Magla" bus service counter has already been set up here, most people do not get chance to reach Dhaka by "Magla" as the number of buses is not adequate. So they have to go by local bus and they never reach their place on time.

So we would request the BRTC authorities to set up a counter at the Barpa bus stand.

Rahima Akter
Eden College, Dhaka

Palli Bidyut

The Palli Bidyut Samity (PBS) in the country is playing a vital role in socio economic uplift in rural areas since its inception with the expansion of PBS network by Shahid President Ziaur Rahman. The economic condition of farmers has been strengthened along with the entire agriculture sector. But the PBS is not functioning smoothly in some places like Jamalpur, for example. The revenue income of the Jamalpur Palli Bidyut Samity has declined considerably over the years.

We would request the authorities concerned to look into the

man. She has called upon women, those who are used as model, not to be used as publicity material in exchange of money alone. In my opinion there are many ways to earn money.

It is a matter of great regret that women are being used (or exploited!) as models for the publicity of many products. I honour the observation of Misty that models should be conscious of their rights.

AKM Nurul Islam, Tongi

high-ups?
S M R Karim, JU

Impact of TV

Television is a source of knowledge, pleasure and information and it is a very popular media. Our youngsters are very fond of watching television. But is it really a good habit? It is an important question both to ask and to answer indeed. As far as education is concerned, the TV is to be considered one of the most effective means of educating both the students and

have a negative impact on our youngsters.

Taslim Akter
Islamic University, Chittagong

A disappointment, ZS

I have always read Mr. Zafar Sobhan's write-ups with great interest, for at times he seems to diagnose Bangladesh's many ills very accurately. So it came as something of a disappointment to read his piece on the martyred intellectuals of '71 in the December 14 issue.

Mr. Sobhan thinks it very important to draw a connection between '71 and what is happening in the present day. I hope this was more of an understandable over-emotional reaction to the horrors of December 14 than a genuine practical prescription for our problems. In any case, it makes Mr. Sobhan sound no better than those of our political leaders who constantly invoke "the spirit of '71" for narrow political gains.

There may well be a "direct line between those dark nights and what is happening in the country today." Why is it important for us, the citizens of Bangladesh, to draw this supposed "direct line"? Mr. Sobhan's answer is that we have to remind ourselves of "whom we are fighting and what we are fighting for?"

I would argue that focusing on '71 could very well be counterproductive for it really doesn't answer that question at all. Let us briefly remind ourselves then. In 1971, the people of Bangladesh fought terrorists (the most apt modern word to describe those butchers!) backed by the resources of a particular state, armed and operating along military lines. We were fighting for our right to live as free people. At present, we are fighting terrorists backed by the shadowy organisations that cut across state lines, operating along the al-Qaeda model for lack of a better term. We are apparently not even fighting properly, although now it is we who are backed by a state and have the advantage in terms of fighting capabilities. There lies the real tragedy and it has nothing to do with '71.

Mr. Sobhan also seems to imply that not prosecuting the war criminals of '71 has directly led to our woes today. While I am all for prosecuting the perpetrators, I don't think that that would have been the end of terrorism in Bangladesh. But perhaps Mr. Sobhan does not share my concern with the violent means of terrorism but rather with the "fundamentalist" aspect of it. In which case, invoking '71 is again counterproductive. The roots behind the fundamentalists then were very

As a sort of follow-up to the August 17 series bomb attacks across the country, the recent suicidal bomb blasts have dealt a serious blow to the deteriorating law and order situation of the country. The security of the general public and the stability of the country and the society have been jeopardised by the terrorist activities undertaken by a handful of misguided and misled people who have engaged themselves in the ridiculous task of establishing Islamic rule of law on this soil. But is it a proper way to fulfil their mission? Do their activities conform to the true spirit of Islam? Did any prophet, any Islamic thinker or leader show them the path they are traversing? Has Islam taught them to create anarchy, chaos, conflicts and panic in the society killing innocent people and destroying public property? Of course not. In fact, these off-track miscreants are absolutely devoid of any knowledge of the teachings of Islam. They are the trouble-mongers and they have indulged in the heinous act of tarnishing the image of the country as well as the image of Islam. As a

matter of fact, Islam is a religion of peace and there is no room for any kind of violence, killing and destruction in this unique faith followed by innumerable Muslims all over the world. Moreover, Islam bitterly denounces all kinds of suicidal acts. One can never enter 'Jannah' or 'Heaven' by committing suicide. So, the unruly militants carrying out suicidal bomb attacks and killing lawyers, judges, journalists, members of the law-enforcing agencies and other people are utterly misguided and regrettably ill motivated.

In such a situation, the common people must be made conscious about the evil designs and 'Satanic' acts of the outlaws/extremists and all the people of the country must form rock-solid unity to combat and resist these unscrupulous elements who have proved themselves to be the enemies of the people, the enemies of the soil and the enemies of the religion of Islam.

Anwar Iqbal
Thawtala, Comilla



PHOTO: AFP

was "indeed necessary". Let us not make it cheap.

A citizen
On e-mail

Load management

There is a talk going round regarding load management. It relates to power supplies during peak hours (7 to 10 PM) to high rises, shopping complexes and garment factories. Our State Minister of Power wants it to be implemented.

However, to be pragmatic, there should be a time frame before the

facilities every day to ensure that manual change over is effected and maintained through out the maximum demand period? All these equipment have to be made available. For this we also need to know the cut off level at which this becomes operative. Is it for all units, irrespective of load or say any load over 49KW as an example?

All these facts need to be sorted out, which needs a time frame from clarification to compliance. A minimum ten-month period is probably realistic, provided everyone is on his or her toes, and government gives it the top most priority and highest level follow up.

Along with this one wonders why our government does not go for harnessing standby generators and other installed generators in private and public sector units to provide additional power quickly and cheaply during maximum demand period?

One also wonders why the government does not take up a serious energy conservation policy as an important option for load management and reduction? This should be possible with our own resources; both financial and technical.

If we can recover power from standby and other units and simultaneously go for firm energy conservation, the gap between electricity demand and supply can be brought much closer; and at an affordable cost which could be provided without loans or aid.

One can go on wondering why our government does not practise these sensible and accepted options? Can anyone from any source explain this apparent anomaly? Or may be it needs a World Bank kick before we wake up; like the independent power plant project that has gone to cold storage!

S.A. Mansoor
Gulshan, Dhaka

Bomb attacks

The spectre of suicide bombing has created a sense of panic, insecurity among citizens of

Bangladesh. The two separate suicide bomb attacks in Gazipur and Chittagong court premises that killed some people and wounded many left a deep scar on our collective psyche. The judges who mete out justice in the court are themselves facing death threats. But it is a matter of great regret that the main two political parties are engaged in the blame game and trying to reap a political harvest out of the prevailing situation. People think that the bomb attacks have created a situation which can duly be termed a national crisis.

A fruitful national political dialogue is necessary to find out the means to combat the growing militancy in the country. Political leaders at this critical juncture should forget their narrow differences and get united for the greater interest of the country to fight the perpetrators. Otherwise, bomb attacks would not cease and the country will find itself in great difficulties. Recently, the Sylhet City Corporation Mayor came under bomb attack and thanks to the Almighty, he escaped unhurt as the grenade did not blast.

The series of bomb attacks have agitated people as they are passing their days amid great anxiety. The terrorists are using the name of Islam, though Islam never supports this kind of violence. The militants are misleading our youths and the need of the hour is to counter their propaganda with education on Islam in the real sense of the term. We should not sit idle as that would only help the criminals.

We are a peace-loving nation and never want to see our beloved country in anarchy and disarray. The real culprits behind this wave of terrorist activities must be found out and the force of the militancy blunted with effective measures.

Md. Shahidul Islam
Khilgaon, Taltola, Dhaka

Load-shedding

Load-shedding has become an inseparable part of our daily life. It creates many problems and hinders the socio-economic development of the country. It is also a big problem for the students and hospitals. Students suffer in their study, straining their eyes in dim candle light. Social order suffers too. Domestic life becomes a painful ordeal. For load-shedding we can't work properly.

The prime minister addressed the issue about a month back. She advised people not to use light for

decoration in market and in marriage ceremonies. I also agree with her. Because at first we have to think about our country. If we consume too much electricity, it hampers our collective interests.

We are not rich, so we have to be careful regarding consumption of our resources. The government, for its part, should take immediate steps to increase power generation.

Israt Enam Chy
Chittagong

idea can be put in practice. Most of the above mentioned facilities have minimum generation capacity to take emergency load only. To provide full load capability their generating and related switchgear sets have to be of much larger capacity; in effect new set up. Further to ensure that utility power supply is switched off and the in house power run on fixed times, the power supply utility has to provide automatic time related change over switches. Otherwise, who will check all these



Drug addiction

Drug addiction means taking heroine, opium, marijuana, morphine, cocaine, phenisyl etc. This is now a global problem. This social cancer has spread its pernicious tentacles all over the world. Frustration is the cause behind addiction. Unemployment, political instability, lack of family ties, lack of love, affection etc give rise to frustration. Again, addiction gives rise to social crimes. Drug addiction has gripped the young generation of our country. The drugs are very expensive. So when young boys cannot afford to buy drugs they have to commit many kinds of crimes like hijacking, looting, plundering, killing, robbery etc. Drugs have a terrible effect on human body. They kill the addicts slowly but surely. No physician can stop the changes that take place in the body of a drug addict. It may damage the brain and gradually stop all internal functions of the body. The addicts feel acute pain in the body.

Jubaeda Begum
Chittagong

The treatment of drug addicts is expensive and difficult. In Bangladesh the drug problem has become acute. It directly or indirectly affects thousands of families in cities, towns and even rural areas. So at any cost we must get rid of this social malady by highlighting its dangerous effect on human body and society. The remedy for drug addiction is not very easy. Greed of drug traders has affected the whole world. Drug peddling is a punishable offence and the highest punishment is death sentence in Bangladesh. This law must be enforced immediately. Parents must be careful about their treatment to children. Religious and social values must be taught from early childhood. We must overcome this problem