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Paradigm shift in Latin America?

Though personally I don't believe in reincarnation or metempsychosis, it seems Late Saddam Hussein has started speaking out through the vocal cord of President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela.

Years back, Saddam did deliver a speech full of gravest admonitions that only the

fainthearted Arabs are to bow down before the United States as the only power to decide the fate of the pan-Arab security. Chavez is also intoning the same admonitions to the Latin Americans to stand firm against the United States and its hegemonic instruments like IMF and World Bank; the difference now is he is buttressed by his solid friends: Fidel Castro of Cuba, President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and President Evo Morales of Bolivia, while no Arab country dared to lend a friendly hand to Saddam. Fidel Castro also led the fight for Latin American freedom from domination by

the US and international monetary organisations. Like Saddam, Castro too had then fellawies in the region.

When Hugo Chavez came on to the scene, things changed. Today, several countries are working together in Latin America to use their resources for their own people and to

unite as a unit to maintain their identities.

On the last May Day holiday, President Chavez declared that from the May Day holiday of 2010 the legal workweek in his country would be slashed from 40 to 36 hours or 6 hours a day. Minimum wage has already been raised by 20%. He also announced that Venezuela is going to modernize its military and offered to sell oil to the allies at a 50% discount. He has steadily worked to provide alternative forms of credit and financial support for the countries in the region, backed up by Venezuela's oil wealth. He has referred to such a project as the "Bank of the South".

Somewhat analogous to socialist policies, seizing control of oil projects in Venezuela run by large American and European energy companies may be a paradigm shift in governance, perhaps his "21st Century socialism". Chavez has been contemplating to establish first in Latin America, then probably in the rest of the world.

Now the question is: Can Chavez navigate his nation along with his allies, already plagued by inflation and poverty in South American standard, to take a stand against the US when he must continue to allow his own country to be one of the top oil suppliers of his northern nemesis?

Maswood Alam Khan
General Manager
Bangladesh Krishi Bank



Voters' ID & EC

are required for the purpose. The main job of the EC shall be to regularly monitor it. Moreover, they now have the consultants also, to look after and monitor the job professionally.

That's why I feel that the EC should not bother about the procurement of laptops and scanners (unless they want to award the procurement job to some particular organisation), but get themselves ready with their requirement and ask for offers from interested parties immediately. This way they can fulfill the peoples' demand of a free and fair election at an early date.

One word about your reform programme. I personally feel that in the ballot paper you should put one more column "I don't like any of the above candidates" for us to put the stamp if any of us feels so. If there are more votes cast on this column, then you can go for reelection in that particular constituency. It may so happen that both the major parties have fielded either a muscleman or a black money holder and people would be forced to vote for the lesser evil. This way the people can ventilate their hatred for both of them.

ACitizen, One-e-mail

Deaths at RMCH

I am absolutely appalled as to how the medical interns could deny care to the sick and dying patients at the RMCH. They have violated the Hippocratic Oath their actions were inhumane and unethical. They must be banned for life from practising medicine. Their action is tantamount to premeditated murder.

They should be prosecuted and given the due punishment.

Shahed Nasrullah
Canada

Road link with Myanmar

Bangladesh and Myanmar have agreed to establish road communication. This is an important development and the plan should be implemented immediately.

Safit Tinku
One-mail

Letter from US Senators

Your editorial on 18 May characterises the tone of the US Senators' letter as unfortunate and unacceptable. I express my strong belief that this letter and other frequent interferences by US politicians are just that - interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation. While every individual anywhere in the world can, and should protest what he or she reasonably perceives to be wrongdoing by a government - the disagreement should not come in a schoolmasterly fashion as this is an affront to us as a nation, but it is also insulting that the very Senators who supported President Bush in going to the unjust war in Iraq are taking the moral high ground. Just as an aside, some of your readers may recall the time when the then First Lady Senator Clinton alluded to the need for a separate state for the Palestinians and almost immediately disowned it after being attacked by the pro-Israeli lobby. These days it seems it's not the false sense of superior morality alone but the fact of owning the big stick that prompts the US administration and lawmakers to pronounce what other nations ought to do.

Unfortunately, the blame for this lies with us Bangladeshis in the country and abroad to a great extent. The political leaders almost made it a practice to have their policies guided by foreign powers, solicited blessings and sought mediation of foreign diplomats in matters truly concerning the Bangladeshi people only. Here in the United States, the expatriate Bangladeshis have been quick to mobilize lawmakers to support causes of their favourite parties forgetting the fact that it is demeaning for an independent nation to be reminded every now and then how it should behave. Obviously, our fellow expatriates see no humiliation in this. Whereas they could have used the same clout to lobby for broader access of Bangladeshi goods to the US, for instance, they are engaged in the

game of political one-upmanship.

But however much the blames lies with our leaders and fellow expatriate Bangladeshis, it is up to the foreign meddlers to refrain from imposing their will on a small nation.

H.Taufiq Choudhury
Attorney at Law
New York

27th BCS

First of all, we congratulate the caretaker government for taking the bold steps against all forms of corruption. Hopefully, they will be able to wipe out the roots of corruption for good.

We the finally selected candidates of the 27th BCS came through very competitive and long procedure of exams and screening methods. We had to appear at the MCQ prelim. exam at first. It is for the very first time that a lethocode system was introduced in BCS written exams so that no one could identify a candidate's answer script. Thus the question of manipulation in written exams didn't arise. We had to appear in nine written exams and those taking general cadres had to sit for two more written exams, each carrying 100 marks. In viva, there were only 100 marks, instead of 200. So chances of manipulation were not there.

The number of doctors who were finally selected for viva after written exams was about 1800. The manpower required by the establishment ministry was 2305. It is to be mentioned that both in the 24th and 25th BCS the numbers of doctors required were about 800 and 1581 respectively, though in the initial circular the posts mentioned were much less. It was about 571 in the 25th BCS.

Most doctors selected through the 25th BCS have already been appointed in district hospitals, as a result our rural population will be without healthcare services if the 27th BCS doctors are not appointed on a priority basis.

So, the doctors selected through the 27th BCS should be appointed immediately.

Selected doctors of 27th BCS

One-mail

Democracy and discipline

I remember while going through a paper published from Hong Kong 20+ years back I came to know that a visiting statesman from Singapore was requested to comment on the democracy established by the president of the host country. The visiting statesman graciously commented,

"Mr. president you established it but I don't find the results." Mr. president wanted to know about it more specifically. The visiting statesman

replied that he should have established "Disciplinocracy" first, before trying to set up democracy---then things would have been alright. The President, a wise man, understood the inherent point and admitted his failure.

In our motherland do we find any discipline anywhere?

People walk along the roads and not the zebra crossings, hence zebra crossings also vanished.

We spit and smoke everywhere - should we not stop it?

We are free to write on others' walls -- should we do it or should we be allowed to do it?

Dhaka and other cities are glutted with ads & hoardings in a haphazard manner -- is it acceptable?

There is no road discipline.

There is no speed or horning discipline etc. Will the govt. see to it?

M.A.Bari Mian

One-mail

Press freedom

Press freedom is the precondition for democracy. Democracy depends on the collective wishes of the people. When there is freedom of the press people will have access to the required mass of information they need to reach a logical conclusion on any issue. Moreover, the newspapers will point out the pros and cons of government's decisions. Even the party in power will not dare do anything against the interest of the country, lest people should know about their misdeeds. Through newspapers people will know about the mistakes and wrong doings of the mighty sect of the society. In a democracy, press is the medium connecting people and the government.

Moreover, when a newspaper publishes news about famine, drought or any natural disaster, the government takes immediate steps. To get the benefit of democracy, freedom of the press must be ensured.

Jim Johnny

Crescent Road

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Bac and ACC

I had an opportunity to work at the Bureau of Anti-Corruption as an officer for about two years. I have retired from government service. As I worked for Bac, I came to know about its officials. In my opinion, 98% officials were more or less corrupt. And at least 40% of them were corrupt beyond imagination.

The new ACC chairman will have to address this problem before anything else. I hope and strongly believe that he will do justice to his reputation.

Abdur Razzak

Uttara, Dhaka

Business leaders

There are so many leaders of FBCCI and other chambers who have cases of bank loan default against them. But these business leaders usually talk much about their contributions to the nation, while speaking in a seminar or meeting.

My request to the business leaders: instead of issuing statements, please try to be honest in

your profession.

Zafar Hossain
Elephant Road, Dhaka

Black money

Before going deep into the matter, I think it will be better if I try to explain what back money is and how it is made. In this respect I quote Horace Greely. "The darkest hour of any man's life is when he sits down to plan how to get money without earning it." This is possibly one of the best ways of explaining the black money and the mental attitude of the person engaged in illegal methods of getting money. The money which is not earned legally is black. There are many ways the holder of such black money/wealth earns it. Black-marketing, smuggling, adulteration, bribery, graft, evasion of taxes etc. are some of the common things in our country.

Four: Didn't Bangladesh become champion of corruption twice under her leadership?

Five: Wasn't she the chairperson of the BNP, when she overlooked and didn't take any action against

the people, especially those who rely on the ministry and the health department.

Even some educational institutions under the ministry are facing many problems while important files, which have already been investigated and given clearance, are still marked 'red' by the ministry. As the present government is neither impartial and committed to the welfare of the country as well as the people, so the victims of the irregularities in the health ministry are expecting something better and removal of the corrupt.

Two: Weren't her sons and immediate family charged with corruption? **Three:** Wasn't she the prime minister when her closest people were involved in corruption of monumental proportions?

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Communicative teaching

English deserves a special place as a language because of its global importance.

There is no doubt that the communicative teaching approach is very effective for language learning.

It is known to us as a theoretical concept only, because in English language teaching we don't see the appropriate implementation of this approach.

Last week, I participated in a five-day workshop on techniques and tactics of communicative teaching approach. At this workshop, some fundamental points were raised, such as modifying speech through talking at a slow-to-normal pace, short sentences, pleasant tone, simple sentence structure and high frequency words. There was also a lively presentation on group and pair working to make an ideal English language class.

Here my view is that this sort of workshop is not rare in Dhaka city. But the disappointing thing is such discussion can't produce good results.

There are standard methods which have to be followed in this important area.

Md. Mehedi Hassan

Department of English
Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT)

The illegal occupants of government land are also to be bracketed as black money/wealth holders.

By now, a large number of such illegal holders of money and land have been caught and the process is on.

The new ACC chairman will have to address this problem before anything else. I hope and strongly believe that he will do justice to his reputation.

Monzur Rahaman

Rajshahi

Irregularities in health ministry

Readers' attention has been drawn to a news item on 'Corruption, irregularities and indiscipline' in the Health Ministry, published in a Bangla daily. Actually, the ministry is not fulfilling the expectations of

her corrupt party people?

In my opinion, she has lost all credibility to be a political leader.

Khaled

Manhattan, US

Dr. Yunus' decision

It is good news that Dr. Yunus has finally understood that politics is not his cup of tea.

He can perform much better in the economic field.

Monzur Rahaman

Rajshahi

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