

# Primacy of institution building



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

## STRAIGHT LINE

**We have to hope and pray that institution building in Bangladesh, now, would mean that there will be a change from privilege to talent and from accident of birth to accent on calibre. It shall also mean that money is something to be earned rather than to be got or won; it shall mean putting extra effort before extra leisure; it will mean stopping our society from disintegrating into hostile factions; it will mean enabling our leaders to perceive the truth and empowering them with the courage to say it to the people; it shall ensure that there is no substitute for knowledge and integrity in public life and that persons are appointed to high public offices for what they are.**

THE commendable reform venture of the present government has brought to the fore the large scale deviations and malfunctioning that have taken place in our body-politic. Irregularities and waywardness have been so deep and corrosive that unless sustained efforts are made to restore normalcy and propriety, in at least the domain of public affairs, it may not be possible to ensure decent living in a civilized society.

Paramount importance need to be attached to the repair and rebuilding of vital institutions that nourish and nurture a democratic society. Collapse will overtake our country if our institutions, particularly the political ones do not acquire durability through experience and tradition.

We have to remember that the roots of our disarray are in our minds and the erosion of national character could not be checked. Consequently, the quality of public life has almost reached the nadir. Many of us are as careless about public property as we are careful about our own property.

There are many amongst us who would not allow any trespass on our private property but are not at all bothered at the manifest sight of harmful encroachments on public property and destruction of public amenities. We have failed to distinguish humanitarianism from miscarriage of mercy.

We have not appreciated that out democracy cannot survive without

law and order and that public interest requires the real professional promotion of the entire criminal justice administration and not its denegation and destruction. We continue to forget that crime is not a problem for the police only but for the whole society.

Successful democratic experience indicates that we cannot be truly free without doing away with ignorance. We have to realise that our leaders have to rebuild and also produce the required institutions for doing the needful. In course of time, those institutions will produce the leaders.

One may reasonably ask as to what has happened to our nation-building institutions, particularly the educational institutions that will generate excellence? Some say that in Bangladesh, instead of establishing excellent educational institutions, we have downgraded and devalued the fine universities which existed when we became a republic. It would only be stating the obvious to comment that meaningful democracy would be impossible without literacy and education and that the absence of earnest efforts in this regard will help the vested quarters to continue to benefit from public ignorance.

One would not be far from reality to say that in Bangladesh we have devalued the judiciary, as we have devalued every other important institution. Instead of defending our judges against political pressures and threats and instead of insisting upon integrity and impartiality in

judicial appointments we have permitted the executive to supersede judges of calibre and courage.

The politicians and the media complain that higher judicial appointments have been given to persons who are suspected to subscribe to the notions of the ruling party. Therefore, it would be prudent to recognise the underlying moral, political and constitutional implications of such gross indiscretions. It is perhaps time to initiate corrective measures to effectively halt the irregularities and hold aloft the majesty of judiciary in public interest.

A very vital segment of the governance apparatus where institution building is of supreme importance is the police. Since we no longer want to tinker with the freedom and honourable living of our citizens, we will only be practical to initiate the desired process.

The police in our democracy have to be a provider of service and no longer a force to subdue and subjugate people. The police organisation should be designed to be responsive to the needs of community. However, an inefficient and outmoded administrative legacy is undermining reform. The prime need in this regard is to make the quality of law enforcement a permanent and integral part of the national agenda, regardless of which party is in power. Let us remember that public concern for improved levels of law enforcement has never been higher.

The overawing police set up

have to be replaced by a customer friendly outfit by concerted efforts including statutory amendments. The Police Act, 1861 needs to be replaced with new legislation that embraces all the essential elements of reinvention, based on the best models available in the world.

In the foregoing paragraphs, the need of reforms that include institution building in three vital segments of education, judiciary and police has been impressed upon. The urgency of institutional changes in other areas of public activity is by no means secondary. Those areas, too, demand the attention of the government and concerned citizens.

In fact, the present government has already effected key personnel changes in sensitive regulatory institutions. The staffing pattern, entry qualifications, domain of responsibilities and related matters in constitutional posts require scrutiny before formalisation.

What, however, should engage our thoughts in the wake of the present efforts of transformation, is the nearly all pervasive attitude of tentativeness in every establishment effort to innovate or contain or arrest systemic deficiencies. Without doubt, such tentativeness has an adverse impact on the staying power of democracy.

The cynics say that we in Bangladesh do not appreciate that freedom must be taken in moderation and that our misplaced enthusi-

asm following independence resulted in the unfortunate discarding of the old norms of discipline and decorum, dignity and decency. We are oblivious of the fact that people have risen to great heights when they have basked in the glow of noble kings or leaders. In fact, regimes have been destroyed not by adversity but by abasement.

We have to hope and pray that institution building in Bangladesh, now, would mean that there will be a change from privilege to talent and from accident of birth to accent on calibre. It shall also mean that money is something to be earned rather than to be got or won; it shall mean putting extra effort before extra leisure; it will mean stopping our society from disintegrating into hostile factions; it will mean enabling our leaders to perceive the truth and empowering them with the courage to say it to the people; it shall ensure that there is no substitute for knowledge and integrity in public life and that persons are appointed to high public offices for what they are.

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# EAST-WEST Hong Kong under Chinese rule After ten years

A.K. ENAMUL HAQUE

ON July 1, 1997 China got back Hong Kong (HK) which was given to the British government in 1842 through the Treaty of Nanjing (following the Opium War that began in 1840). The treaty was a scar on the Chinese stigma for which they suffered humiliation for a century.

In 1994, I traveled to Hong Kong for the first time and realised that it was still a colony. It was towards the end of the 20th century and yet HK citizens did not get the right to choose their leaders, which India got in 1935 long before 1947 (when the partition took place) from the same British rulers. The thing that struck me the most at that time was that most of the signboards/bill boards in HK had English spelling errors. At that time, I realised that the Chinese in HK did not get English by their heart!

However, rumours were running high among the British rulers even before that time trying to understand whether the treaty could be extended or could be nullified. But China stood firm and told the UK government that they have no choice but to leave HK and return the territorial sovereignty to the Chinese.

The discussion of returning HK to China led to a large scale out-migration of people who had no trust in the Chinese government and thought that they would find a "better" place abroad. Canada, Britain and Australia opened doors of fast track immigration processing to the HK people. It appeared to be a race for some of the HK citizens to leave winding up their businesses.

Western press refueled the exodus by creating "stories" full of speculation about "HK after British rule" -- as if the whole world were coming to an end in Hong Kong in 1997! The hype was useful to some extent; it kept pressure on the Chinese government to accept a separate status for HK. Making things worse, the British government decided to give the "power" back to the people a year before leaving HK. What a joke it was!

On July 1, 1997 Hong Kong returned to China. China was very careful in handling the new territory. They adopted a "one China, two systems" policy and made Hong Kong a separate zone. The result: Hong Kong economy grew at a faster rate than expected. HK citizens got a country, a proud citizenship (prior to that they had no citizenship!) and in return retained their separate

economic system. On July 1, 2007 at the eve of the 10th anniversary of the return of HK to China, the Chinese press was upbeat. Media was proud and explained to the world that China is a strong nation. It has made the world press a laughing stock in terms of their analysis on the future of Hong Kong (or for other parts of the world).

The ride since 1997 was not smooth for Hong Kong. First, there was the Asian Financial Crisis -- HK economy was almost down! Luckily, China was their country (not UK!) and so China stood by and backed the HK economy like one of their own. This is what it meant by their one country policy. After this came the collapse of the real estate bubble that had driven the HK economy for long -- then the Avian Flu and the Sars pandemic. Yet the HK economy experienced on average a 6 percent growth with only unemployment 3 percent and a huge budgetary surplus.

Most interestingly, the capital flight out of HK that began in the early 90s reversed after China took over HK. The size of Hong Kong Stock Exchange has passed New York Stock Exchange today. Hong Kong has retained its differences in terms of basic laws. The People's Liberation Army -- whose march in 1997 to downtown Hong Kong was labeled by the western press as a sign of "repression" is receiving great appreciation from its people. The HK passport lets them visit 110 countries without visa formalities and the HK economy is more connected to the mainland economy than ever before.

Why am I saying all this? Well it just happened that I am in China now and have been watching all this on Chinese television. True that some of you might say that all that I have said cannot be true but it is also true that I am using numbers to explain the facts. With this story, my appeal to all is to understand that the western press does a lot of propaganda. Let it be the free press of the West or the state controlled media of the Chinese government, we should all try to understand that press reports are often conjectures based on radical hypothesis and remarks are swift and too much of over generalisation! In terms of predicting the future they open act like "palm readers."



# Not everything is as it seems

PHILIP SHAW

AS apocalypses go, Hong Kong in 1997 seemed to be an everybody's radar. I visited Hong Kong in 1993 four years before the zero hour. At the time I felt like I was visiting paradise for the very last time. With a plane leaving in a couple of days, I had my way out.

And that's the way it felt. Call me crazy. My wife and I were staying in Kowloon, amid the glitz of Hong Kong. To me the take-over hearkened back to an older time. I'd be far away, not worried about anything. At that time the worst thing for me about Hong Kong was flying amid skyscrapers to reach ground at their old airport.

However, at the time I had many opportunities to ask people what they were going to do in four years. From my standpoint it had everything to do with income. My tour guide said all the rich folks were leaving. Finding out I was from Canada she told me there was a new name for Vancouver. She called it "Hong-couver." Her plan was to stay the course. She realised she didn't have a choice to leave and the future she didn't find that scary.

Another person I talked with at time looked at it another way. He was clearly nervous. He didn't speak much English so our jilted conversation was a bit tough. However, he told me he was very nervous about 1997. Maybe his job as a waiter to western tourists stoked his tension. I'm sure as 1997 got closer he was asked that question over and over again.

This morning (Wednesday) I talked with Enamul. As he said, he is in China. In fact it seems to be a regular gig for him now. He's watching Chinese TV and telling us not to believe everything we see in the western media or western TV. Well, I'm afraid many of us here in the West would say ditto for him. I know for a fact that I don't want to base everything I see on Chinese television. I know Enamul is not, me neither.

However if this column has a "raison d'être" it's the fact that people from different parts of this earth see things differently. That being the case, what is right, what is just and what is really happening out there? I see that first hand when I turn up in Asia from time to time. Being so far away from western circles, Asia always has a different bent on something. You see it in

their press, in their streets and on their billboards. Ditto for the rest of the world. As 1997 neared the western media ran wild with the Hong Kong apocalypse to come. We know in 2007, it didn't happen.

Fast forward to 2003. That's when your loyal scribe once again found himself in Hong Kong. However, this time it was China and I wasn't staying long, only a few hours. I had a flight cancelled on my way to Bangladesh because of snow in Newark, New Jersey. My job in Hong Kong was to find a way to Dhaka. I'd been told in Sarnia, Ontario: once I was on the ground in Hong Kong I'd have to find my own way.

I lost track of time somewhere on the flight over the Bering Strait. As the plane neared Hong Kong I quickly calculated I still had time to catch a flight to Singapore and get my other flight to Dhaka. Knowing time was short, I almost catapulted out of the plane into the brand spanking new Hong Kong International Airport.

I was quickly confused. All I saw was Mandarin. However, everybody was going that way so I quickly shuffled off. Still, there was no English, only Mandarin. However, I could read "Singapore Airlines." So after much fast confusion I made it to the Singapore Airlines booth, explained my situation and made it to my next flight with 20 minutes to spare.

However, on that harried run I learned many things. There were English signs and lots of them. Nonetheless, you had to work a little harder than 1997 to see them. The airport was beautiful, just as striking or more so than the glittering Changi Airport in Singapore. In my very short time there, Hong Kong post-1997 looked very good to me.

Like many things in life, we only know what we know. There surely were and are competing visions of Hong Kong pre and post 1997. Both our respective media on each side of the divide do what they do. Everything is not always as it seems. The challenge is spreading that little gem around the world.

East/West is a joint column written by A.K. Enamul Haque and Philip Shaw. Dr. A.K. Enamul Haque, is a Professor of Economics at East West University. Philip Shaw is a farmer, writer, and broadcaster in Ontario, Canada.

# Dengue: Time to act now

DR ZULFIQUER AHMED AMIN

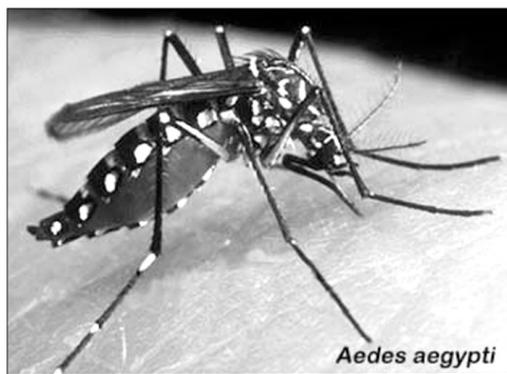
DENGUE is a disease caused by any one of four closely related viruses (DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3, or DEN-4). The viruses are transmitted to humans by an infected mosquito. The Aedes aegypti mosquito is the most important transmitter of dengue viruses and in some area by Aedes albopictus. Outbreaks of dengue occur primarily in areas where Aedes aegypti (sometimes also Aedes albopictus) mosquitoes live.

A global pandemic of dengue began in Southeast Asia after World War II and has intensified during the last 15 years. Epidemics caused by multiple serotypes are more frequent, the geographic distribution of dengue viruses and their mosquito vectors has expanded and Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF) has emerged in the Pacific region and the Americas. The disease is now endemic in more than 100 countries in Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asia and the Western Pacific.

Before 1970 only nine countries had experienced DHF epidemics, a number which had increased more than four-fold by 1995. Some 2500 million people -- two fifths of the world's population -- are now at risk from dengue. WHO currently estimates there may be 50 million cases of dengue infection worldwide every year. In Southeast Asia, epidemic DHF first appeared in the 1950s, but by 1975 it had become a leading cause of hospitalisation and death among children in many countries in that region (CDC 2000).

**Situation in Bangladesh:** First outbreak of dengue fever (Dhaka fever) was documented in 1964 in Dhaka followed by few scattered cases of DF during 1977-78. In 1996-97 dengue infections were confirmed in 13.7 per cent of 255 fever patients screened at Chittagong Medical College. The first epidemic of dengue hemorrhagic fever occurred in mid 2000, when 5551 dengue infections were reported from Dhaka, Chittagong

**Dengue and dengue hemorrhagic fever have emerged as a major public health problem in Bangladesh. Dengue is easily preventable, with self-awareness and collective campaigning to seek public cooperation in keeping neighbourhoods clean. City corporations by taking appropriate vector control measure coupled with arrangements for drainage of logged water can save many from intense suffering and averting deaths from DHF and DSS in the future days to come.**



Aedes aegypti

and Khulna cities, occurring mainly among adults. Among the reported cases 4385 (62.4%) were dengue fever infections and 1186 (37.6%) dengue haemorrhagic fever. The case fatality rate was 1.7% with 93 deaths reported. Aedes aegypti was identified as the main vector responsible for the epidemic and Aedes albopictus was identified as a potential vector in Chittagong.

The worst outbreak was in 2002 with 6,104 cases and 300 deaths. In 2004, a total of 3,934 cases with 13 deaths (CFR = 0.33%) were reported. The epidemic started in June, peaked in July (1,209) and continued through August. During the outbreak period, 98 per cent of the cases were from Dhaka with a case fatality rate of 2.3 per cent. The rest of the cases were from districts of Khulna, Jessore, Barishal, Comilla, Chittagong, Jhainaidah, Sirajgonj, and Madaripur. In 2005 there were 1048 reported cases and 4 deaths (CFR 0.38%). In 2006 the

number of cases and deaths increased two fold as compared to 2005. The maximum transmission period is July to September each year since 2000. This year 37 suspected dengue cases had already been admitted in different hospitals in Dhaka till July. A recent DCC survey found that 8 out of its 10 zones have an alarming concentration of Aedes mosquito.

**Seasonal trend:** Dengue occurs mostly in rainy season and the present trend in Bangladesh shows its occurrences between May to December with peak incidence between June and October.

**Risk factors:** It has been seen that in tropical country, rainy season, scattered collection of water in artificial containers (eg bottles, tires, tire casing, flower vases, discarded boxes, cans, empty oil-barrels), uncovered water-storage, cultivation necessitated temporary water accumulation, vector density, plants with temporary water pool, empty

receptacles in gardens and courtyards and animal water container are all potential risk factors for dengue (John M Hayes et al, 2003).

**Clinical features and complications:** Dengue fever usually starts suddenly with a high fever, rash, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, and muscle and joint pain. The severity of the joint pain has given dengue the name "break-bone fever." Nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite are common. A rash usually appears 3 to 4 days after the start of the fever. The illness can last up to 10 days. Most dengue infections result in relatively mild illness, but some can progress to dengue hemorrhagic fever. With DHF, the blood vessels start to leak and cause bleeding from the nose, mouth, and gums. Bruising can be a sign of bleeding inside the body. Without prompt treatment, the blood vessels can collapse, causing shock (DSS). DHF is fatal in about 5 percent of cases, mostly among children and young adults.

**Transmission:** Dengue viruses are transmitted to humans through the bites of infective female Aedes mosquitoes. Mosquitoes generally acquire the virus while feeding on the blood of an infected person. Once infective a mosquito is capable of transmitting the virus to susceptible individuals for the rest of its life, during probing and blood feeding.

Policy, strategy and objectives: There is no specific treatment for dengue fever. Moreover, vaccine development is difficult since any of four different dengue serotypes may cause the disease, and protection against only one or two of these serotypes might actually increase the risk of more serious disease.

Nevertheless, progress is being made in the development of vaccines that may protect against all four serotypes.

Present elements of strategy should include surveillance of vector density and disease transmission, developing selective and sustainable vector control measures with preparedness for emergency control, strengthening local capacity for assessment of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors that lead to increased vector densities and transmission of disease, early diagnosis and prompt treatment for DHF and DSS, research in vector control and mobilisation of other sectors to incorporate dengue control in their goal and activities.

**Prevention and control:** At present, the only method of controlling or preventing dengue and DHF is to combat the vector mosquitoes. Vector control is implemented using environmental management and chemical methods. Proper solid waste disposal and improved water storage practices, including covering containers to prevent access by egg laying female mosquitoes are among methods that are encouraged through community-based programmes. The application of appropriate insecticides to larval habitats, particularly those which are considered susceptible use of bed nets, screening sleeping areas, eliminating mosquito breeding sites around homes, discarding items that can collect rain or run-off water, regularly changing the water in outdoor bird baths and pet and animal water containers are of paramount importance to prevent dengue.

**Conclusion:** Dengue and dengue hemorrhagic fever have emerged as a major public health problem in Bangladesh. Dengue is easily preventable, with self-awareness and collective campaigning to seek public cooperation in keeping neighbourhoods clean. City corporations by taking appropriate vector control measure coupled with arrangements for drainage of logged water can save many from intense suffering and averting deaths from DHF and DSS in the future days to come.

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