## Moving forward

We can move forward if only we wipe out our horrible past by trying and punishing the perpetrators of the 1971 genocide. The time has come for our generation to solve this issue and not pass this burden of guilt to our next generations. It is our responsibility to complete the task we undertook in 1971 to free our motherland from the clutches of evil-doers. Now it is we who must complete that job which remains unfinished.

AKKU CHOWDHURY

HE year 2007 was the most significant for Bangladesh after our liberation on December 16, 1971. The 35 years of chaos and confusion reached a crescendo towards the end of 2006. Although we have not seen the end of it all yet, we can only pray and hope we don't have to see such ruthless violence in the near future as witnessed in October 2006.

All said and done, our political forces talk about democracy -- but in practice it is autocracy and totalitarianism. As a result, to meet their goals or demands, they are more comfortable in using the

politics of streets and violence rather than the parliament. This has resulted in the people being totally disgusted with politicians and the political system.

This is the sad part of our history that when democracy is only in an embryonic stage, being merely 15 years old, there is already apathy with large segments of the public about politics, the system, and the value of democracy.

All our values that came with our thousands of years of heritage, culture, history is being drowned in are still struggling to put our histhe degradation of our society which has become overcome with greed for power and money, nepotism, intolerance, perversions,

intellectual bankruptcy, sociopolitical degradation, and so on and so forth.

I know I am drawing a very negative picture but look deep down into our society and you can see where we have ended ourselves in. We have reached the bottom of the pit and burnt the ladder to get out. This is all our own doing and we cannot point the finger at anyone

It is most unfortunate that even after 36 years of independence we tory in the right perspective. Although most of the freedom fighters are still alive, we as a nation have not bothered to set the

records right, instead they have been used to serve the interest of power hungry leaders and their

The new generation is being deprived of knowing the glorious history of our liberation struggle, which would, definitely imbue them to become patriots and dedicate to serve the nation.

The present leadership in power has called for national unity to build Bangladesh as a prosperous nation. This can be achieved when we tell our children the true history of our liberation war which will teach them the sacrifice the freedom fighters made for us to be citizens of a free nation.

Since our independence we have been like nomads, and the nation, as a whole, had neither a direction nor a vision. As a result we have engulfed ourselves in corruption, cronyism, and moral degradation that have made us politically, socially, and economically

After January 11, 2007, the nation has a whiff of fresh air and like a "second coming" looks forward to the rebirth of the nation to move towards building a "Golden Bengal" that the freedom fighters fought for. This can only be achieved if we get leaders with the right vision to move forward and the belief in the Spirit of 71 which is that of sacrifice and selflessness to build a "Golden Bengal."

It is not only our moral obligation to the freedom fighters but also our moral obligation to those heroic sons and daughters who sacrificed their lives for the country's independence to commit us to build Bangladesh as a prosperous nation. As we fight to rid our nation of the corruption and evil forces that brought us to our knees we must not forget to punish those who opposed (Razakars, Al-Badr and Al- Shams) our national struggle for independence in 1971. It is important that the truth should be revealed and

what happened in 1971 needs to be known not to look backward but for the nation to move forward. We must clear the ashes and debris from 1971 so that we can be reborn like a phoenix and fly to higher grounds.

The big question is how much of this expectation will turn into reality? We have a commission to wipe out corruption and investigate the corrupt, un-transparent Transparency International looking over our shoulders to report our corruption, the inter- 31, 1975. national community making sure we follow all the standards of human rights and democratic norms (what a joke), and so on and so forth.

This is all well and good, but what is important now for the nation to move forward is to raise the issues and bring to light the 1971 war crimes, crimes against were responsible for the crimes in humanity, the genocide, and other 1971. The wait has been too long, criminal activities that was perpetuated by the Pakistani military, have waited for the last 36 years,

Pakistani politicians, and Pakistani business troika with the collaboration of few Bengalis.

Those who were responsible have already been identified, but except for few Bengali collaborators none were tried. Even the trial of those people that began in 1973 under the Collaborators Act were abruptly stopped after the killing of Bangabandhu Sheik Mujibur Rahman, and the accused including some who were tried and punished were pardoned on December

Just like the crime itself, this pardon was another crime against humanity to add salt to the wound. The time has come for us to take up the thread and re-open the cases by setting up a tribunal and move towards making a plea to the International Criminal Court to try those Pakistanis who the families of the victims of 1971 let us try to repay the debt by trying the perpetrators and murderers in national and international courts.

As we await for democracy to get rooted with a free and fair election, it is the expectation of all that the evil that dwells amongst us in the form of war criminals and "a legacy of blood that remains unpunished" should be immediately taken care

We can move forward if only we wipe out our horrible past by trying and punishing the perpetrators of the 1971 genocide. The time has come for our generation to solve this issue and not pass this burden of guilt to our next generations. It is our responsibility to complete the task we undertook in 1971 to free our motherland from the clutches of evil-doers. Now it is we who must complete that job which remains unfinished.

Akku Chowdhury is the founder-director of the Liberation War Museum.

# Will cricket ever be the same again?

The late legendary Omar Kureshi used to say that Test cricket is like ballet dancing and ODI is like belly dancing. I wonder how Omar would have described Twenty20 cricket. Rock & Roll, Big Bang, Big Bash, Crazy Cricket. It is anybody's guess.

K. Z. ISLAM

HE late legendary Omar Kureshi used to say that Test cricket is like ballet dancing and ODI is like belly dancing. I wonder how Omar would have described Twenty20 cricket. Rock & Roll, Big Bang, Big Bash, Crazy Cricket. It is anybody's guess. But the unmistakable fact is that T20 has captured the imagination of the spectators and TV viewers. It is absolutely certain T20 is sheer exciting entertainment with inevitable consequences for Test and ODI cricket.

The Indian Premier League (IPL), BCCI's latest commercial enterprise disguised as domestic T20 competition, has been both hailed as revolutionary and dis-

about it later), the IPL is an officially sanctioned T20 tournament. Owing to its recognition by the International Cricket Council (ICC), it will enjoy a better status

and international reach. On January 14 it was announced that the consortium consisting India's Sony television network and Singapore-based world sports group secured the rights of the IPL. The record deal is for 10 years at a cost of \$1.026 billion. As part of the deal, the consortium will pay the BCCI \$918 million for the telecast rights and \$108 million for the promotion of the tournament.

Credit must be given where it is due. The bidding for 2003 telecast rights for BCCI was made by Zee Films in which they lost the bidding although they had made the highmissed as revolting. Unlike the est bid. Again in the year 2004 to the former cricket players who Indian Cricket League (ICL more Subhash Chandra, owner of Zee are part of ICL. Since ICL has auction like paintings or indeed ers like Kolkata Knight Riders from

Film bid for the same but lost in the bidding and had to resort to the court. Again, for the year 2006-2010 he bid and lost once again.

This motivated Subhash to create his own cricket content which grew up to be the all new Indian Cricket League (ICL). The problem was the BCCI took an extremely prejudiced and narrowminded look at the ICL. The BCCI banned all cricketers who would participate in ICL. Since Kapil Dev was appointed CEO of ICL he was removed from the BCCI selection committee. Kapil Dev has filed a suit against the BCCI. The contention of Kapil Dev is that the players of ICL have been humiliated by the BCCI just because they belong to ICL. Adding insult to injury, BCCI have stopped payment of pension

received no recognition or support from BCCI the future of this tournament hangs in the balance. Personally, I feel the approach of BCCI is not fair, as both IPL and ICL could go on side-by-side creating opportunities for cricketers of all levels to earn some money.

The magnitude of the IPL was confirmed when the wining bidders of the 8 franchises were announced on January 24, 2008. Franchise owners and the price paid: (i) Bangalore Royal Challengers (Vijay Mallya) \$111.6m, (ii) Chennai Super Kings (India Cement) \$91m, (iii) Delhi Daredevils (GMR Group) \$84m, (iv) Deccan Chargers (Deccan Chronicles) \$107m, (v) Rajasthan Royals (Emerging Media) \$67m, (vi) Kolkata Knight Riders (Shahrukh Khan) \$75m, (vii) Kings XI Punjab (Preity Zinta) \$76m, (viii) Mumbai Indians (Mukesh Ambani) \$111.9m.

But for shock value and impact, nothing came close to putting international cricketers up for

cattle. The sight of a professional auctioneers calling million or more than one third went to 25 Indians other than the 5 designated "icons": (Tendulkar, Ganguly, Dravid, Yuvraj, and Sehwag). The average fee for an Indian IPL cricketer (excluding icons) is \$585,000 for a maximum of 16 matches -- it is much more than the highest retainer paid out to international cricketers contracted by BCCI.

While the total base price for auction was \$400m, the auction fetched \$723.59m. The biggest gainer, therefore, was BCCI that netted over \$1.7 billion. If we look at the financial part, the gainers are BCCI, Sony Max who get their money from advertisements; ground owners from sale of tickets, and players from the franchisees.

DLF the chief sponsor of the tournament have paid BCCI; umpires and referees would be paid by BCCI. The party facing the major risk are the franchisees. They get some money from the promotNokia, Bangalore RC from the company Royal Challenger.

It seems the franchisees have overpaid for the teams. That is probably the reason they are unable to pay the Australian cricketers who have left after playing only 4-5 matches. Apart from the sponsors, what other source of earning would they have? The team owners get an amount if the team win the matches. The winners of the tournament will get a lump sum amount. The franchise is probably for 10 years. I wonder if we will see Shahrukh Khan and Preity Zinta on the screen during the matches in the coming years.

It appears that there is hardly any relationship between the amount paid for the teams and the players and their performances. The top four teams to reach the semi-final are Rajasthan Royals (\$67m), Kings XI Punjab (\$76m), Chennai Super Kings (\$91m) and Delhi Dare Devils (\$84m). It appears there is an inverse relationship between the amount paid and success achieved in the tour nament. In fact, Rajasthan Royals, the underdogs at \$67m with the highest amount paid for Kaif

(\$675,000), top the list. During the bidding Rajasthan had bid below the minimum \$3.3m and had to put their deficit of \$375,000 into IPL pool as penalty. Also in the performance of players there is hardly any relationship between the amount paid and the success achieved. In fact, Sohail Test. Tanvir who was paid below \$200,000 tops the bowling, and for batting Shaun Marsh and Gautam Gambhir, who were by no means the higher paid players, topped the

The excitement of the matches can be judged from the number of the total runs scored in the 40 overs. In the last match played between Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI, the total was 401. Probably in the whole tournament the average runs scored in the 40 overs would exceed 300 runs -- which means the future. IPL is a favourable more than 7 runs an over. The development for cricket.

standard of batting, bowling, and fielding is also high.

The effect of T20 would naturally be reflected in the performance of the players in Test and ODI cricket. For example, Brendon McCullum, who had the distinction of having scored the highest number of runs (158) had to cut short his stint in the T20 for playing Test Cricket in England for New Zealand. He scored 90 runs in 90 balls in the first

The format of the IPL will certainly be replicated in other countries. It is incomprehensible why the English Cricket Board did not allow their players to play in IPL. After all, the County Cricket is no big deal and the English cricketers were deprived of earning some money in the IPL. IPL is also likely to be replicated in the various Test playing nations including England, Pakistan, Australia, and West Indies. My personal feeling is that cricket is unlikely to be the same in

### The 18th hole: Pakistan's futile constitutional amendment

Between mindless subservience and open rebellion lies the precious space for democracy where ideas are openly exchanged with respect and dignity and where the rule of law is not traded for narrow interests. To pre-empt future constitutional disruptions, Pakistan needs to develop this precious space.

LIAQUAT ALI KHAN

HE Pakistan People's Party (PPP) will soon propose to the Parliament the 18th amendment to the 1973 constitution. The proposed amendment would reportedly abolish Article 58 (2)(b) of the constitution, which empowers the president, in his sole discretion, to dissolve the National Assembly. The amendment would also strengthen Article 6 of the constitution to punish judges who would in future support military coups and constitutional subversions.

This essay argues that the proposed 18th amendment is an exercise in futility. Unfortunately, no constitutional amendment will prevent future military adventurism unless the political and military leadership is committed to

honour the constitution. As discussed below, however, the culture of the ruling elites has no respect for the rule of law.

### Historical see-sawing of Article 58(2)(b)

The proposal of abolishing Article 58(2)(b) is neither new, nor effective. The article has been abolished once before only to be reinstated in the constitution. Furthermore, military coups respect no provision of the constitution. In fact, the disrespect for the constitution runs deep among ruling elites. Even the judiciary and the parliament are quick to reform the constitution for

short-term interests. Historically, Article 58(2)(b) is the invention of a military general Exercising the non-existent powers of the army chief, General Zia ul Haq, who toppled a democratically

elected government in 1977, ordered the addition of Article 58(2)(b) to the constitution. In 1985, a pro-military parliament, using the constitutional procedure of two-thirds majority, ratified Zia's Article 58(2)(b) as a constitutional amendment, called the 8th amend-

ment. Note, however, that the highly discretionary power built into Article 58(b)(2) is vested in a duly elected president. It is not vested in the army chief. Abolishing Article 58(2)(b) disables the president -not the army chief -- from deposing an elected government.

In 1996, a civilian president invoked Article 58(2)(b), dissolved the national assembly, and dismissed Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's democratically elected government. The president justi-

fied dissolution on several grounds, including the Bhutto government's corruption, incompetence, and disrespect for the Supreme Court. In his book, constitutional attorney Hamid Khan accuses Nawaz Sharif, the then opposition leader, for encouraging the president to dissolve the national assembly and hold new

Nawaz Sharif benefitted from the Article 58(2)(b) dissolution of the Bhutto government. In the 1997 general elections, Sharif won a twothirds majority in the parliament. Soon after assuming the office of the prime minister, Sharif turned on the president, and hurriedly processed a constitutional amendment to abolish Article 58(2)(b). The sole purpose of abolition was to weaken the office of the president and bestow all powers on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

The abolition of 58(2)(b), however, did not safeguard parliamentary democracy. Nor did it restore any respect for political governments. In a short time, the Sharif government lost its popularity. The

nation did not know what to do with the autocratic Sharif family, which showed little respect for the rule of law. The Sharif government even sent ruffians to assault the Supreme Court. The civilian president was unable to dissolve the national assembly, since Article 58(2)(b) had been abolished.

Hot-headed political forces and restive media were openly inviting the armed forces to remove the Sharif government. Hearing the clarion call, army chief Pervez Musharraf overthrew the Sharif government. This deposition had nothing to do with Article 58(2)(b). Nor could the crime of high treason embodied in Article 6 deter the army chief from subverting the constitution. Following the habit of subservience, the Supreme Court upheld the coup and took a new oath to obey the laws of the

army chief. Exercising the non-existent powers of the army chief, Musharraf issued an order to reintroduce Article 58(2)(b) back into the constitution. In 2003, a promilitary Parliament elected by the

people passed the 17th amendment to rehabilitate Article 58(2)(b).

Now, the proposed 18th amendment aims at abolishing Article 58(2)(b) again. This time, the proposal stems from the fear that "President" Musharraf will dissolve the national assembly if the judges are reinstated without his consent or in the presence of Article 58(2)(b). The proposed amendment may protect some short-term benefit. However, it will not solve Pakistan's constitutional woes.

The uuderlying problem Article 58(2)(b) is not Pakistan's underlying problem. The problem lies deep in the Pakistani culture of power. Granted, most political and military rulers are patriotic men and women who want to do good for the nation. However, the power culture sees the rule of law as an inefficient barrier to make and execute policies. The rule of law has always been the slogan of the opposition and rarely that of the govern-

Right now, for example, the against the party and form

power has gravitated toward Asif Zardari, the PPP chief, who is not even an elected member of the parliament. Exercising dynastic powers that he inherited from his wife Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated before the general elections, Zardari is calling the shots from the Zardari House.

The prime minister, supposedly the head of the government, is serving as a loyalist subordinate. The law minister, responsible for the drafting of the 18th amendment, is not even an elected member of the national assembly. Most important, the national assembly, where Zardari and Sharif's parties have a solid majority, is waiting for party bosses to issue orders, from outside the parliament, on what needs to be done in the parliament.

This subservience to party bosses explains why in the past the parliament has mindlessly ratified both the constitutional inclusion and exclusion of Article 58(2)(b). Rarely do members of the parliament think independently. And those who think rebel

another group. Each course of action is contrary to the democratic process.

In a respectable parliamentary democracy, party discipline is a cherished value. However, each elected member of the parliament represents the constituency and the nation, in addition to towing the party line. Likewise, party bosses are democratic both within the party and the parliament. They do not establish personal fiefdoms to rule their "tribes" in the party or the parliament and demand mindless subservience.

Between mindless subservience and open rebellion lies the precious space for democracy where ideas are openly exchanged with respect and dignity and where the rule of law is not traded for narrow interests. To pre-empt future constitutional disruptions, Pakistan needs to develop this precious

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# Brig. Sabihuddin Ahmed: An intrepid soldier passes away

He never yielded on his principles, and stood by his beliefs and moral ground. The result was that REB was the first ever public entity in Bangladesh that was admired internationally for its efficiency, freedom from corrupt practices, and high degree of

trust among its clients. ZIAUDDIN CHOUDHURY

RIG. Sabihuddin Ahmed, the founding chairman of the Rural Electrification Board, passed away quietly on May 30 in Maryland, USA, far away from the country he loved, worked for,

and was devoted to. An obituary for this true soldier of life should probably have been drafted twenty-three years ago when he was diagnosed with an untreatable heart condition, and could be saved only with a transplanted heart, impossibility in

with only God and his iron will as the now famous entity in rural support to have a transplant. His electrification in Bangladesh. They was a hopeless case, since as a admired him because this fledgling foreign national he had almost no entity would go on to provide chance of getting a transplant in electrical power to over 46,000

Cudney, then international program chief of US National Co-Operatives of Rural Electrification, the agency that partnered with REB, came to his help. These

Bangladesh. He came to the US and exemplary integrity in building villages in Bangladesh. But a miracle did happen. The Sabihuddin became one of the very circle of friends led by James few foreign recipients of heart transplant. That was twenty-three

years ago.

Ironically, it was not the transplanted heart to which he fell; he fell to a more common invasion of friends were also his admirers. the body by cancerous cells that They admired his tireless efforts, gradually eat you away. For more

than two decades he carried himself with a transplanted heart in ways that would put most ablebodied youth to a challenge. In encyclopedic mind -- always ahead that period, before he was inwisdomandinformation. restricted to the confines of his home to attend to his newly found adversary in cancer, he traveled widely and frequently, home and abroad, footloose and fancy-free. He was like a kid who had acquired a new car.

was always engrossed with new challenges. He read voraciously, and used all varieties of informa-

information for us all. In the knowledge front, we were in an unequal race with him as he had an

He had an incisive mind, a keen power of observation, an exceptionally analytical faculty, and an immense organizational capacity. These are qualities that were spotted in his career by his superiors in the Army, and civil sector. Very But traveling is not the only early in his career with the army, thing that Brig. Sabihuddin did in Sabihuddin was asked to form the that remarkable life span of his. He Air Force Intelligence School -- a task he completed so well that he technology, new ways to meet old was decorated by then chief of air force for notable achievement. He would later move on to help build tion medium -- newspapers, up an Advanced Intelligence internet, television -- to keep him- School for the army. After liberaself updated on political events, tion of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu every new invention, and discov- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would ask ery. He was an amazing source of him to help build the Jatiyo Rakkhi

Bahini along with his friend and colleague late Brig. Nuruzzaman.

Sabihuddin had succeeded in life because he believed in a mission, with a profound courage of conviction. When offered by Board as its first chairman, he analytical ability. made it a condition that he would have complete autonomy for the new entity, that there be no political pressure. He never yielded on his principles, and stood by his beliefs and moral ground. The result was that REB was the first ever public entity in Bangladesh that was admired internationally for its efficiency, freedom from corrupt practices, and high degree of trust among its clients.

His observations and analysis of events at home would be so accu-

rate that we wondered if he were deliver. He always kept quiet. In actually privy to some decision one of his last conversations with making. Part of this was because he had a superior mind; but a large part of it came from his own experience with the personalities in news In a book, he would have to tell all President Ziaur Rahman the job of making, a deep understanding of founding the Rural Electrification the environment, and of course, his

His hope and anxieties for it he said. Bangladesh would never abate. Even in his failing days in the hospital he enquired of a visiting friend from Bangladesh in a barely audible voice the latest news on the political front. He was anxious that the fruits of our hard fought independence not be frittered away.

I frequently prodded him to write a book on the rich experience that he had had in his life, the challenges that he had faced, and the solutions that he was able to The Daily Star.

me he stated that his decision not to write was deliberate. All his life he had believed in telling the truth. truth; and it would have hurt many. He would rather speak the truth in front of a person, than write about He will be missed by his wide

circle of friends and admirers, both

in Bangladesh and abroad. A true soldier, he faced all adversities in life with courage, determination, and conviction. It was an honor and privilege to know him. There are not many of his kind that one can meet in one's lifetime. Goodbye, friend and mentor.

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