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Trial of war criminals

Nowadays the demand for punishing war criminals of 1971 is a burning issue. It has always been the demand of the people of this country. Though 37 years have passed, these collaborators are yet to be tried. And so these culprits are now showing the courage to kick the freedom fighters! Not only that, these war criminals, the old Razakars, Al Badrs and Al Shams, told journalists a few months ago that there were no war criminals in the country and also called Bangladesh's war of independence a mere civil war.

It is indeed a shame for us as a nation that the deaths of so many martyrs who lay down their lives for the liberation of our country have not been avenged. No government could take any initiative to make these collaborators face justice who went against the rule of law, though thousands of records are available to prove their crimes. The copies of newspapers printed at that time are littered with evidence of war crimes. Hundreds of mass graves have been discovered in which the bodies of innocent civilians were dumped by the collaborators of the Pakistani army. This non-political



PHOTO: RASHID TALUKDER

caretaker government cannot deny its responsibility to try these war criminals. Before it leaves office, the government can form a war crimes commission to punish them and thus the nation can be free from sin.

Siddiqur Rahman Apu
Khulna University

Post-partition effect

About one and a half billion people in South Asia (former British India subcontinent) are still suffering from the after-effects of partition in 1947. Friendly relations amongst the neighbours have disappeared. The Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan still lingers, and Indo-Bangladesh relations are not as cordial as expected.

The Western powers and industrialised countries are feeling the economic strain of the high standards of living (through past eras of exploitation and empire-building); and the global competition from cheaper Chinese goods and services. Therefore, today the natural base is South Asia, with huge human resources, ensuring cheap factory labour. Pakistan and India are already aligned to the rich West, and the next target is Bangladesh, now facing elections, arranged by a non-political interim government.

The stakes are high, in the global context. Hence it is very difficult for third world countries to face the giants. Dhaka is facing a critical period, after the dynasty rule of 15 years; plus there is the cumulative effect of deep-set corrupt practices. One ray of sunshine is the completion of the digitalised and computerised national voter ID cards for some 80 million citizens.

But the effects of black wealth will remain for quite sometime, at various vertical and horizontal levels. The resistance and holding power of the economically backward electorate is low, hence powerful cartels, local and foreign, will retard public service activities through the backdoor.

SAARC is still a paper tiger, suffering from the partition effect. The human touch is missing in the application of its principles; as the objectives are divergent rather than converging on long-term goals. The thrust gained from a regional outlook is missing (trade within the Saarc members is only three per cent). It is difficult to contain exploitation, internally and externally.

The new and young generation have to be alert, facing the fiery bath of patriotism and regional cooperation. India has to take the lead (population one billion) -- objectively.

AMawaz
Dhaka

Not a good practice

The incident of blockade by university teachers for promotion at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) has surprised me. Such practices are common nowadays by both teachers and students. Surprisingly, the authority also calls emergency meeting to justify such activities. We don't expect this type of raw protest from teachers. Their activities should be moral and ethical, so that everybody can follow that as examples.

To tell the truth, vandalising is our common practice to press any demand. Some days ago SAU students also did a similar thing and Dhaka College students destroyed their principal's room. Interestingly, the authorities also wait for this type of unruly protest for fulfilling their demand. This type of activity should not be practised in a civic society!

Atiqur Rahman
Magura

Bus fare hike

Not taking into consideration the commuters' plight, the govt surrendered to owners' pressure and increased bus fares. Many bus owners did not even think of consulting with the government in this regard. Bus fare hike has provoked huge altercation between bus staff and commuters. Earlier, a passenger was run over due to scuffle over bus fare.

However, the government has upped bus fares taking into account the price hike of gas. But when CNG run buses were first introduced in Dhaka, the authorities did not classify the fare of CNG-run buses versus oil-run buses. Buses that ran on oil are now running on CNG. But those bus owners have also increased the fare. CNG price is still cheaper than oil price. The fare of the buses run by CNG and oil should not be the same. The government should take the above mentioned things into consideration and re-fix bus fares according to the kilometre and also take punitive action against bus owners if do not comply.

Md. Zanaed Emran
Dept. of Political Science
University of Dhaka

Traffic jam

Very often there are tumultuous road traffic jams at different places in new and old parts of Dhaka -- Sadarghat, Chawkbazar, Nawabpur-English road square, Farmgate, GPO, Hotel Sonargaon-Karwanbazar square and so on and so forth. As a result, waste of time and energy and the sufferings of the people know no bounds.

Can't our authorities, planners and engineers build one, two or three storied flyovers at some important points for uninterrupted movement of motor vehicles at all times and so mitigate the sufferings of the people.

We have built giant flyovers at Mohakhali and Khilgaon, planned Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover but later on cancelled it and are now considering another mammoth flyover from Jatrabari to Uttara.

Is it not wise, economical and useful to build small one, two and three stories fly over at different road squares and road corners consistent with our requirements?

OH Kabir
Wari
Dhaka

Private universities

We have to hear many undesirable comments for being students of private universities. Wherever I go and people hear that I am a student of a private university, their attitude changes instantly. They think there is no syllabus in a private university and students got themselves admitted there to pass their time lazily. But the question is why we have to hear such comments? May be we do not have a large campus like the public universities do; we have no playgrounds; we didn't have to face a hard competition that the public varsity students faced to get admitted, but the teachers who are teaching us, needless to say, they all are highly qualified, experienced, competent and sincere. They are trying their best to teach us according to the UGC approved curriculum and syllabus. The UGC as well as the conscious and educated people should come forward to save the image of the private universities.

Md Nasir Uddin Morol
University of South Asia

Two sets of voters' list?

I am fully aware that the issue of the voter list is officially considered closed except for some formalities of corrections and new additions. Thanks to the election commission for such a successful public relation arrangement in Hotel Radisson recently commemorating the theoretical success of registering more than 8 crores voters with photo. Indeed a commendable work by those who are involved in the process.

Nevertheless, I have an unanswered question: Do we have two sets of voter lists - one only the list and the other with the photo of the voter? I have been asking this question since I heard one Commissioner of the EC making comments admitting about two sets of voter lists on a TV talk show few weeks back. I would be very grateful if the media can get this point clarified from the EC and inform the people. I do not expect the EC to respond to my query. They already appear to be desperate and non-accountable institution in the country. How can CEC say that I do not bother what the politicians say, I will go for the upazila election in October 2008? What a desperate plan from such a high level public servant?

Anyway, we are waiting for field testing of the voter list in the coming elections and make our final judgement. The politicians have further proved their inherent weakness in handling the political situation due to their inter and intra conflicts in and between the major political parties in the country. Their failure has strengthened the hands of the unelected government to follow hard and desperate line in politics.

Areader
One-mail

Remembering Uttam Kumar

Thanks very much for the topic on Uttam Kumar on his death anniversary. Uttam Kumar's acting has great impact on my life. I remember that I first saw his movie Harano Sur when I was thirteen years of age and from that day at the age of forty I still love this person in the same way. Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen, both of them made a history and it is not possible to get out of their spell. Thanks to Shahnoor Wahid for remembering him in such a beautiful way. Just want to add that not only my parents or uncle, aunt were amazed by Uttam Suchitra, me and some of my friends and also younger

Food production

Over two days, news about the subject mentioned above (21 & 22 July in The Daily Star) has created an idea in my mind. Let me state my feelings here. Our interim government is struggling with the issue heart and soul. But what may happen after election of a new government, I am not sure. Our requirement is somehow getting to prevent any crisis.

Sir Rev Thomas Mathews had predicted in the 18th century "in future majority of people starve due to lack of food". As per his prediction the same has happened. But we must look into the strategy of those countries which are even exporting rice! I intend to express my experience of Birmingham county in the UK. Being a student of Birmingham University, I visited several hospitals in line with the subject of my study. Each hospital was far apart. During the bus journey on those trips, I noticed excellent

green fields on each side of the roads. Very likely the fields were that of foodgrains! I am not confident about the ownership of roadside lands in Bangladesh. If those are not individual citizens' property, certainly we can assume those to be national property. And we can also cultivate foodgrains as in the UK!

The above strategy might be fruitful. We should also examine the production strategy of other countries in South East Asia, with similar climatic status, which are not only self-sufficient, but are exporting the foodgrains.

The strategies of those highly productive countries should be examined and the lessons learned should be applied for higher production. Otherwise our poor country will suffer in the coming days.

Dr. Lailun Nahar
Dhaka



SHUMON AHMED / DRINKNEWS

Inclusive education: a micro analysis

Education is a multidimensional process by which our mind, soul and latent talent develop through formal, and even informal learning. It is indeed a life-long process. It is mental, psychological, intellectual and social training which provides opportunities to overcome all kinds of difficulties and obstacles to national development and overall progress.

Education is one of the fundamental rights of people. In our country it is also recognised as our constitutional right. There are necessary constitutional safeguards for ensuring education for all citizens of Bangladesh. In spite of this some people of our society are deprived of equal rights and opportunities in receiving formal education. Ours is a liberal democratic country. In a democracy, everyone is equal in the eye of the law. So democratic values and norms never support any kind of discrimination among the citizens.

In order to ensure equal facilities for all types of learners at secondary level, Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) authority has included "Inclusive Education" as one of its training contents and strategies. In fact, inclusive education is such a strategic and technical process where all types of learners can receive education in a congenial and cooperative environment. Here all students are included in the learning process and different activities. For establishing human dignity and fundamental human rights, such education can play a vital role. It is in fact the foundation of an inclusive society.

In different educational institutions, the following variation and diversity can usually be observed: (a) Brighter students and dull students, (b) Learners from poor families and rich families, (c) Male

students and female students, (d) Introvers and extrovers, (e) Shy students and confident students (f) Learners with (physical and mental) abilities and disabilities, (g) From an ethnic minority and greater population, (h) From rural areas and urban areas etc.

Inclusive Education considers diversity as a resource, not a problem. It positively recognises diversities and variations and assists the learners in fulfilling their various demands and dreams of life. It encourages the persons concerned and authorities to provide quality learning opportunities for all children. It prepares learners for establishing an ideal society that respects and values diversity and difference.

But in the context of our country, the path and doorway of Inclusive Education is not so smooth. Especially at secondary level, we can find out some barriers to Inclusive Education: (i) Lack of trained and skilled teachers, (ii) Superstitions and prejudice, (iii) Infra-structural limitations, (iv) Want of proper teaching aids and materials, (v) Lack of social awareness and support, (vi) Shortcomings of prevailing education system, (vii) Lack of modern and suitable teaching methodologies and approaches, (viii) Unfavourable attitudes and behaviour towards the learners with disabilities, (ix) Absence of congenial classroom atmosphere.

It is certain that these barriers are not present in the same dimension in all the educational institutions. Rather despite a lot of problems, many dedicated and career-oriented teachers are trying their level best to spread the light of education to the learners effectively and selflessly. They pay equal attention and even in some cases they show special sympathy and fellow feelings for the problematic and disabled learners.

However, for overcoming these barriers, some pragmatic and

dynamic initiatives must be taken. To achieve the goal of Inclusive Education, necessary reformation and change should be brought in our education system. Diversity and different characteristics and needs of the learners should be considered as a normal thing. Equal right of education must be ensured even for the disabled children. All learners' active and spontaneous participation in different activities of the school must be encouraged through participatory approach. Child-centred teaching is very essential for achieving inclusion. Suitable teaching aids, special resources and moral support are needed for Inclusive Education.

Diversity should not be thought as a difficulty, or a negative liability; rather we should take it as a challenge and a humanitarian and moral activity. So an enabling, welcoming and encouraging educational environment must be created in the schools. Proper motivation, interpersonal communication, collaboration, partnership and real-participation may be the best means of promoting inclusion. All elements and components of curriculum and contents should be flexible and responsive. Deep, cordial and meaningful relationship and effective co-ordination should be developed among the teachers, students, guardians, school managing committee and local elites. With a view to building an exploitation-free, welfare-oriented inclusive society and modern democratic country, real, suitable and progressive Inclusive Education should be introduced as early as possible. The nation is eagerly looking forward to having such an education system, not only at secondary level but also at all stages of education.

Md. Khairul Anam
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Comilla Zilla School &
Master Trainer (English)
TQI-SEP, Govt. T.T. College, Comilla

Of beauty within



RAJANMAYI DRINKNEWS

If you could manage some time from your busy hectic city life to go on a vacation, you should go to the Hill Tracts of Chittagong, where in the serenity of nature you will be able to wipe out all the troubles and tiredness from your agitating mind.

I went to Rangamati on vacation this month with some of my university friends. The idyllic beauty of nature was captivating. We became calm and were at peace. The greenery, the clouds over the hills and the beauty of the lake were overwhelming. It is only in the rainy season that

you can find the "Shubholong" fountain in its full form. What a site! You can watch the beauty from afar, stay on the trawler or you can go for a shower. The ice cold water will freeze your body if you stay for long. It would wash away all the weariness from your body and soul. Our whole Rangamati tour was excellent. Residents of Dhaka planning to travel right now should not miss going to such a place inside our own country.

Sumon
Dhaka

SAU's location

This refers to M. Zahidul's comments (DS, dt.21 July, 2008) on the above topic opposing the issue of shifting Bangla Agricultural University (SAU) to a countryside or to be merged with the Bangabandhu Agricultural University from this densely located central area of the capital city as proposed by me in an earlier letter to this column. The SAU has been emerging as a new Agricultural University established during 2001 from a previous agricultural college (institute) under academic management of the Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh having only a land area of 85 acres which is certainly very inadequate for such an university.

Bangabandhu Agricultural University which has also been on the way to instituting undergraduate Faculties (formerly IPSA, started with post graduate studies in agriculture) could be better fitted at this stage of opening to integrate the lone Agriculture Faculty of SAU (it is trying to open new Faculties also to justify as its University existence). May I urge, Prof. Zahidul not to direct any personal question at me like my college or university where I serve, I would agree its merging or dismantling. Its not a sort of debate of You versus Me. My Institution is not at all comparable to yours! It was established long before and established in a location that perfectly suits the nature and pur-



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Having a sprawling campus as noted by Prof. Zahidul would be a prohibitively expensive proposition and as the university is in its formative stage, it is the appropriate time to consider its shifting to a new agro-ecological zone in a countryside befitting its nature and type of education. Alternatively, as I proposed, it could also be merged with

pose of education it imparts. What my colleagues/ students think 'if at all' about merger or dismantling of their alma-mater, how can I answer to that, that you asked me? What I feel for the interest of SAU, for better agricultural education, and the nation, this should be shifted to a new site.

Prof. SAM
One-mail

habit. In this way we will acquire actual knowledge. Osman Goni Tamim
Department of EEE
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Bangladesh

Harmony among politicians!

If AL says, "This is day" the BNP will certainly say, "It is dark and so it is night". The case may be vice versa. But the politicians are unanimous on some points:

1. For importing duty free cars.
2. For sending opponents to foreign

3. For release of opponents from the prisons. Remember, BNP and Jamaat demanded release of Sheikh Hasina.
 4. For attending the reception party of the US ambassador.
 5. For selecting their nominee who can donate maximum amount of money.
 6. For sending their wards to foreign countries for education though they campaign strongly for student politics.
- Harun-or-Rashid
Sobhanbag, Dhaka