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Political solution?

The government is claiming that they have solved the 'Pilkhana' carnage politically. They also claim that this 'political solution' has saved many lives. Has it really?

Political solution to a problem is sought when it arises due to political reason or cause and not when actually armed violence is raging. When a political procession turns violent, the first thing the government does is to physically tackle the unruly mob and then make a political move to defuse the situation. Political solution can be applied when the country is about to be attacked and not during the attack. During the attack the country resists the attackers with its full might.

To tackle such situations in future, it should not be left to the novices in the art of negotiation and art of management of violence. We should not look for 'political solution' but a peaceful solution; tough action should be the very last option.

Quazi Salimuddin
Baitul Aman Housing Society
Adabor, Dhaka

Good potato harvest

The potato harvest was indeed remarkable this year and so would be the wheat cultivation particularly in the west and the north-western region of Bangladesh. However, the boro harvest will be better if fertilisers, pesticides and water are applied timely and sufficiently.

The food ministry must undertake procurements at the prices fixed reasonably. The packing, transport & storage of potatoes must be ensured at the field level and all the food go-downs must be repaired, painted and cleaned before the food grains are purchased, transported & stored across the country.

Golam Ashraf
Gulshan, Dhaka

Bashundhara fire

Bashundhara Group's Corporate Office, attached with the Bashundhara City Shopping Mall, saw a devastating fire on 13 March 2009, Friday. The fire devoured the top five floors of the tower from 15th to 20th floor except the 16th.

It is assumed that it will not take that much time to rebuild the structures lost to the fire but the loss of documents related to its business operations might put the Group in

real difficulties.

Just 13 days before the incident, a report was published in The Daily Star entitled "Most malls in Dhaka run without fire safety" by Helemul Alam. According to the report The Fire Protection Act 2003 directs all the buildings including the commercial establishments to have sufficient fire fighting equipment and conform to measures of public security.

The Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defence said, "According to the fire rules, every floor should have at least two fire extinguishers, hydrant point, water reservoir and a tank on top which will always contain a certain amount of water." He also said that every market needs to arrange training on safety net. We know that most of the city markets do not have fire safety measures. But it shocked me that having all these equipments and necessary training on this purpose how could the fire be allowed to become so big at Bashundhara City.

Being a client of Meghna Cement Mills Limited an enterprise of Bashundhara Group, I had an opportunity to go to its corporate office at level-14 of Bashundhara City Tower where I saw enough safety equipments such as two emergency exits, hydrant points, smoke detectors and so on. Even after the accident, I got another opportunity to visit the damaged area of the tower part and I found that the fire equipment had been used, the glasses of hosepipes were broken, gas cylinders were left used. I am astonished knowing that in spite of having such modern fire detecting and preventing system the fire spread menacingly.

I also heard that the management of Bashundhara Group used to conduct fire drills regularly.

We, from the bottom of our hearts, appreciate the approach of the employees of Bashundhara Group, firemen, the members of the armed forces, police and local people for trying their best to bring the fire under control and maintain peace and discipline in the area. We are shocked at the death of 7 employees of Bashundhara and the damage to the architectural masterpiece. However, we also would like to know why the fire could not be controlled before it caused so much damage.

Masudur Rahman Manna
Student of MBA
Department of Banking
University of Dhaka

Doctors' strike

We, the common people of the country, take exception to the latest incident that took place at DMCH. There was allegation that the patient died due to negligence of doctors. As the deceased's relatives were under such an impression, they might have failed to control their emotions.

What is appalling is that the doctors made a mountain out of a molehill to teach the protesters a good lesson. They called a 14-hour strike, to the distress of all the patients and took the dead body under their control. On top of it, they duped the wife and younger brother of the deceased into a negotiation and handed them over to police. Later she was freed on bail. All they did was driving the knife in the wound of the bereaved family. It is true that in a market-driven society a medical degree is an open sesame to a good career and lot of money. Believe me, due to the monopoly of this sector, I find them grossly inflating their abilities to helpless people. I wonder where is medical ethics?

We request the authorities to handle the matter firmly. After all, the interns caused so much agony to the family members of the dead man. And the strike brought everything to standstill at the DMCH.

Roney
One-mail

Bleak future

I'm writing to you because I think I'm a responsible citizen of this country who had the great good fortune to witness the Great Liberation War as a petty officer in then exiled govt of Bangladesh. To speak the truth, the whole spirit of LW was lost immediately after the new govt took power. Just as our political leaders in the partition era (1947) did not care to get the 1st Radcliffe Award exacted, rather set fighting for 'gadi' and thereafter put all blame on WP leaders; the power-hungry, money-starved political leaders of Bangladesh got down to plundering the assets, immediately after liberation. Nobody bothered to restore the morale and morality of a traumatized nation; rehabilitate the people mentally after the great shock and set the judiciary and the education sector, first on the right track. Instead, party goons and thugs have since been nurtured in both the camps, thereby entirely degrading the standard of education.

You speak of human rights. What does human right mean when the question of the bestial criminals comes? You say we are going through a critical juncture of history; but don't you realize that special measures are to be taken to deal with special kind of situations? It's very appreciable that the media has played an admirable role in unveiling crime and corruption in the country; but side by side a latent notion of clemency towards the 'beasts' is also not absent. Especially, our intelligentsia have always been playing the double game. And this is the main cause why crime and injustice will never go from this country. So, I must entreat you to be outspoken in a stern language that a cancer cannot be cured just by ointment; rather it needs operation, if necessary amputation. We had great expecta-

tion of the present govt but as morning shows, they are in the cocoon of the past 'metho-politics' and 'grab-all' culture.

We say to the govt that this honeymoon period will be very short-lived unless they mend their ways, give up hypocrisy and set to bring about real change. Otherwise, this present trend will push the country into the abyss from where it will be impossible to come out again.

Shawkat Ali
One-mail

University and environment

With due respect I would like to refer your 18th, 20th and 22nd Mar '09 editions' feature news, where in it has been observed that our sense of environmental cautiousness is increasing, which is obviously a good sign. A good environment is of course an important ingredient of a healthy life. In this regard, I would like to share the following with you. There is a university at Dhanmondi. On its left side, stands a school. Hundreds of small children are coming every morning and breathing the black smoke of the university power generator, besides the tremendous sound pollution during their classes. Also in the apartment houses there are many small children, aged and sick persons living among others, who can not intake fresh southern air for the same problem.

Keeping enough space in the basement of the campus, the university has installed the generator outside the building, caring little about the neighbours' sufferings.

It is in fact a matter of civic sense to decide where to install a generator and how the black smoke should exhaust to let the neighbours live a problem free life. But, this type of sense seems to be absent in the minds of the social leaders who have taken charge to build the nation by giving educational degrees from their University!!!

In the above connection, I personally contacted the management of the university. They obviously showed interest to co-operate, but ended up with no meaningful solution.

When our educated society is lacking social manners, how can we expect the general people to be sensitive!!

To grow civic sense in a country, continuous campaign must be initiated from school/college and university, as I know from my Singaporean friends who have done so since their school life to make the present clean & nice Singapore.

Can we encourage our institutions to make such plans on a roster basis school by school, class by class to educate themselves first and at the same time, help waking up the general people's sense on: (1) Not to harm the neighbours. (2) Not to blow horn unnecessarily. (3) Not to change lanes frequently to overtake others. (4) Educate the rickshaw pullers on how to park the rickshaws on a line, instead of blocking the major part of a road. (5) How the street walkers should cross the road...and many others...

In fact, I do this campaign all by myself whenever I am on roads on the way to my office and back home, especially point (2,3 & 4), and in most cases I get good response. But one man effort in such a mas-

Independence Day thoughts

The cold breeze swept through the pale, fragile body of the child standing immobile in the heavy downpour. Raindrops were falling on his porcelain smooth skin--mingling with the stream of moisture that was overflowing from his coal black eyes. He heaved a deep sigh as he tried to recall the events that led him here although his mind rebelled, frightened to bring back those painful incidents where he saw his own father being piled up in a heap of dead bodies, a nasty stench coming from the mutilated corpse who was a vibrant man cradling him in his big, wide arms a day or two ago before that ----- BDR carnage.

Is this the independence we are talking about on our 38th Independence Day? Is this the true freedom from the clutches of Pakistani Army or just a mere, hazy outline of being free? We have once again approached the threshold of the day that signals a sovereign country, covering an area of 1,44,000 square kilometres where unity and friendship co-exist between man and man, among people of different tribes and religious beliefs.

But the massacre took place right before our own eyes while we acted numbly, sitting before TV, waiting. This does not indicate that we are breathing the sweet air of freedom because we watch helplessly as our eyes focus on the gruesome killings that took place on 25th February 2009 or the daily murders happening or the raging conflicts between the student politicians where they wreck havoc in the reputed universities and colleges-closing the doors to the heaven of education.

Still the bold voice of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Shaheed Ziaur Rahman resonate through my ears when talking about the happenings discussed above. Their call to battle with the Pakistani military forces fuels up a flickering hope in my heart which gets diminished when I



PHOTO: AFP

remember the past governments trying to disregard the contributions of one and keeping the other--the pattern which changed continuously as the two main political parties took their turns after every five years to govern this country--the history behind its birth distorted just for political purposes.

Observing from a different point of view, what about the ill-fed, diseased street children lying on the streets while glistening BMWs rush past them carrying children coming from a rich family, sitting well dressed, prepared to go to school? Is their fate going to be tethered to the

same rope as it always had been? I cannot even neglect the fact that each day a woman gets harassed mentally or physically by their male counterparts in some way or the other.

Flashes of shiver crawl through my spine when these thoughts continuously bombard my mind leaving me feeling insane, restless, waiting to break free of the reins holding me tightly against the hard wall.

Shatabdi Biswas
Paramount School and College
Rajshahi

sive area is not workable!

May I take the opportunity to request The Daily Star to organise such campaign programmes on a regular basis (at least for one full year without brake) by students/cadets/rover scouts to take us a few extra miles.

Besides the government's efforts, our people's personal efforts are essential and will be very effective.

Saiful Islam
One-mail

Post-Riquelme Argentina

The mercurial playmaker, Juan Roman Riquelme of Boca Juniors, has announced his retirement from Argentina national football team. He cited differences of football tactics and philosophies with coach Diego Maradona, a former Boca Junior player as well. The inclusion of Riquelme in the national team has pros and cons. The team has to be built around him and whenever he is in top form, the whole team plays well, but whenever he does not click, it seems to affect the performance of the whole team. That is why, he was hardly called up by former coach Marcelo Bielsa. Since coach Bielsa stepped down from his coach-

ing role in late 2004, then coach Jose Pekerman built the team around him. This trend continued under coach Alfio Basile. In the meantime, a new superstar, Lionel Messi has become the most important player for the Argentina national team. The new coach, Maradona, repeatedly said the he would include Riquelme in his team and want him to be a part and parcel of it. But he said he wanted a slightly different role for Riquelme. Apparently, it was not acceptable for Riquelme.

Now that Riquelme era is over, coach Maradona has two options. One is to use another playmaker as Riquelme's replacement. There are several players that can take that role. Andres D'Alessandro (Internacional, Brazil), Luis Gonzalez (FC Porto, Portugal), Pablo Almar (Benfica, Portugal). Veteran midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron (Estudiantes La Plata, Argentina) can play as typical playmaker. Should the first option be the case, Maradona can field three offensive players in front of the playmaker. Lionel Messi (Barcelona, Spain) is guaranteed to be one offensive weapon.

Option number two would be a very different one that has not been employed so far.

Lionel Messi will be the playmaker (like the playing days of Maradona) and there will be three attackers in front of him. In that case, Sergio Aguero and Carlos Tevez can be the two guaranteed starters and the 3rd attacker would be a typical goal scorer. Diego Milito, Lisandro Lopez, and even Hernan Crespo of Inter Milan (if he can get regular football time from next season) would be the ideal choice. Personally, I would prefer the 2nd option where Messi can be the playmaker.

What option or strategy Maradona will employ will be interesting to follow. But one thing looks almost certain, that is, Lionel Messi will be wearing the prestigious number 10 jersey that was once worn by his coach Maradona. It might be possible to see Messi wearing the number 10 from the World Cup qualifiers. Perhaps, the time has come for Lionel Messi to reign the football world.

Bazlul Wahab Shaheen
Boston, Massachusetts
USA

Industrial units in bad shape

It was very disheartening to read a detailed report carried out by the Bangla daily,

Prothom Alo (March 22nd) on the present deteriorating state of different industries which were handed over by the government to the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters' Welfare Trust for the purpose of helping out the financially weak and injured freedom fighters.

The report highlights the sorry state of the industries. In most of the cases mismanagement and corruption of some staffs of the respective industries are responsible for such a downfall of these once vibrant industries. For instance, the report highlights that Bangladesh Glass Industries was a very profitable industry during the years 1973-1984. However, during Ershad's rule, the industry started to incur huge losses and eventually in 1994 it closed down.

In addition, the report also mentions that the Trustee Board has remained inactive for 10 years! Therefore, the government immediately needs to form a Trustee Board with honest and competent persons who can dedicate more time towards looking into the mismanagement and corruption. Moreover, the ones responsible for the closure of such organisations must not go unpunished.

Wasiq Wahed
One-mail

Power generation



G. R. SOHAIL / DRINKNEWS

As we all know we are having an electricity shortfall of about 2000mw per day. The situation is becoming worse as most of the age old power stations across the country can't run to their full capacity. On the other hand, due to fast urban development the country needs more & more electricity. Since the last 4 party alliance government did not do anything to generate power according to the demand of the country the hunger for power is increasing day by day. Though this new government is trying to address this issue on an emergency basis but it is very difficult to sort out this chronic problem in a year or so. On the one hand, the government should review what would be their source of energy i.e. gas, coal or fuel. Fuel is the most expensive source of energy nowadays to run any power station, so we have to look for alternate source of energy. Since we have sufficient coal we should prepare a coal policy at the earliest to utilise our own resources. Since we are having a shortfall of about 2000mw per day we should also look for nuclear power plants, as nowadays there are several countries which are using nuclear power plants to mitigate the demand for energy. Understandably, the government has started dialogues with Russia to negotiate commissioning of Rooppur Power Plant with a capacity of 1000mw. Besides China & India have also shown interest to help build such nuclear power plants.

Statistics show Russia has over 150 nuclear power plants in their country, followed by China & India. It is the expectation of all that the government will, if needed, arrange a roundtable conference with the experts to determine what will be suitable for our country & how fast we could generate electricity to meet our demand.

Syed Shahid Hossain
HR Bhawan, Kakrail
Dhaka

Politicised students

In my childhood I used to hear a sentence from my teachers -- Education is the backbone of a nation. But at that time I could not realize the deeper meaning of the sentence. Now, this statement should more appropriately be "quality education is the backbone of a nation." Unfortunately, the quality of our country's education seems to be declining gradually, and this is largely the fault of our policy makers and the overall educational system. Moreover, the state of our student politics is at such a level that the prospect of quality education is unthinkable. I am really shocked with the news of recent political violence in different educational institutions. I think no civilized society would tolerate such violence in educational institutions. When the whole world is now in great fear of the economic recession and thinking about the possible ways to get rid of this

situation, we are fighting with each other and killing one another. But what should be the duty of our students?

Students who are studying at university level should be busy with the culture of acquiring universal knowledge. But what are they doing now? What is the ultimate result of such violence? I think, the ultimate losers are they themselves and their parents who would get nothing except tears. Their cry would not be so loud to go into the ears of our policymakers who are abusing students to be in power. I have noticed that when a new government comes into power, they change the VCs of different public universities as early as possible. After that they recruit teachers affiliated with their political party. The ultimate result is that we get a teacher community with low intellectual capacity whose quality of teaching is ques-

tionable, although teachers are considered the conscience of our nation. If such types of spineless teachers and corrupt politicians do not patronize such violent activities, how can a student resort to violence in front of their teachers and law enforcement agencies?

I never hear any political leader condemning such violent activities on campus. I, on behalf of the millions of students and their parents, am requesting the present government-- please do not to allow such violent campus politics anymore. Please maintain an education-friendly environment.

Muhammad Majidul Haq Patwary
Senior Officer- CCD
Pacific Bangladesh Telecom
Limited
Mohakhali, Dhaka

Nowadays what we see in the educational institutions, particularly



MUNIR UZ ZAMAN / DRINKNEWS

in public universities, really disappoints us. Now it seems that students have changed their motto and engage themselves in politics. To be engaged in politics has become the main concern for some

students. The situation has to change if we want the universities to regain their lost glory.

Ramij Ahmad
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University of Chittagong