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End of LTTE



PHOTO: AFP

It was the moment that Sri Lankans were waiting for 30 long years the end of the ruthless terrorism of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The security forces have reported to the president that their mission to defeat terrorism was over.

The architect of this magnificent triumph over terrorism is none other than President Mahinda Rajapakse, who announced on Saturday that the forces have finally defeated the LTTE militarily. "I will be going back to a country that has been totally freed from the barbaric acts of the LTTE."

This humanitarian operation has so far succeeded in rescuing over 210,000 civilians who were being used as human shields by the LTTE," President Rajapakse told world leaders in Jordan.

The entire Sri Lankan nation will

forever be grateful to the heroic men and women of the forces who sacrificed their lives to defend the motherland against a band of terrorists. Their thoughts are also with service personnel who have been disabled and injured. The families of services personnel deserve the gratitude of all citizens for giving their sons and daughters to the forces.

All Sri Lankans must now join the search for lasting peace in the island. Their future lies in amity and reconciliation, not rancour and discord. With the LTTE and its terrorism finally consigned to a dark chapter in history, they can look forward to a bright and peaceful future for all Lankans.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam
National tourism worker

Queen Elizabeth's birthday

"The Daily Star" in its 14 May issue carried a special supplement marking the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Quite a lot of information pertaining to various development partnership between Britain and Bangladesh plus a very informative message from the British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Mr. Stephen Evans were published in the supplement. But nowhere I could find any information indicating the birth date of the Queen. I think, in such types of special newspaper supplements covering particular occasion or event, readers mostly search for relevant information centring that event or occasion.

Anyway, the actual birth date of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (Full name: Elizabeth Alexandra Mary) is 21 April, 1926. She was born at 17 Bruton Street, Mayfair, London. However, her birthday is officially celebrated in Britain on the 3rd Saturday of June each year. She ascended the throne on 6 February, 1952. She is one of the longest-reigning British monarchs. During her long reign, from 1952, Britain witnessed many changes and developments in both national and international arena.

I sincerely wish HM Queen Elizabeth II a very happy birthday! Professor M Zahidul Haque
Chairman
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System
SAU, Dhaka

Build an overbridge

All of we know that old Dhaka is extremely crowded with several types of vehicles.

Most of the vehicles are not in good shape, sometimes drivers cannot control their vehicles, leading to accidents. To overcome it, the authorities should construct overbridges on busy roads, like Tikatuli area just near the Rajdhani market. It is quite a busy road, without any speed-breakers.

Zafar Akbar
MBA
Bangladesh Islami University
Bisua Road, Dhaka

Market

manipulators

Recently, the same business group responsible for the 1996 Dhaka stock market collapse has become very active in the market causing serious concerns for many, particularly small investors. They are trying to take advantage of their close relation with the policy makers by declaring higher dividends for market manipulation. They are so clever in their accounting and finance practices, that our weak SEC or regulatory bodies are helpless.

Rizvi Haq
Pallabi, Dhaka

Future of ACC

It is reported in the newspapers that some powers of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) are being curtailed and the prime minister is being given the veto power to block or allow any case for prosecution by the ACC. This was an old rule which was abolished during the 4-party alliance government. There were reports of widespread misuse by the absolute power until 1/11, and the common people could know about the existence of the ACC only after this change. The "picked-men-select" theory was the rule. The findings of corruption cases during the CTG have in fact opened the public eyes. The people could only know that their country had become champion as the "most corrupt nation" in the world but they did not know the scale of corruption that could happen before that time.

The present party in power promised in its election manifesto that a strong ACC will remain and will work independently against corruption. We don't know what changes the present government is contemplating but anything short of a "strong ACC" will not be accepted by the people. The corrupt practices have eaten away the vitals of this nation and it should not be allowed to continue any more. The prime minister cannot guarantee that the corrupt bureaucrats, ministers, secretaries and businessmen during her rule will not indulge in corruption. In fact, corruption has not gone down much during this government's few months tenure and if the corrupts could sense that they will be again free as they were, I am sure, they will restart with more vigour.

To come out of the clutches of the corrupt, a very strong ACC is the only option. I hope the PM realises that and thinks twice before she signs the new rule.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Cleanliness

Clean living is the reflection of a clean society. And for a clean lifestyle we have to do away with all kinds of dirt, muck, filth, mess, stain and dampness from our society. Today a rickshaw-puller gave me a dirty ten taka note change which not only mentally let me down but also caused me trouble in passing it to others as everybody wants crispy clean notes for crispy feelings. But mere wishing will not help. We have to work with the government to create a civilized society. For cleaning all ills from society, first we have to start working for cleanliness which may involve cleaning filth, dust and dampness off all our private and public infrastructures and withdrawing all slimy and tattered notes from the market. Once the environment is clean and hygienic, people will automatically get rid of narrow-mindedness, greediness etc.

Is the government willing to initiate a welcome cleanliness drive or only remain busy cleansing all opponents?

Tinku
One-e-mail

Pay hike

Recently, the Pay Commission submitted its report to the finance ministry with recommendation to increase the salary of government employees by 82% on an average. The recommended highest salary is Tk 45,000 (fixed) and the lowest basic salary is Tk 4,000. Other recommendations are: govt staff will pay income taxes, education allowance for two children & retirement age extended to 60 years.

The Pay Commission report said around Tk 6500 crore would be required additionally to implement the recommendations. They also showed the ways to collect the additional money by extending the VAT net, increasing land value and stopping evasion of tax. That means it is the taxpayers & the common people who will bear the burden. But what will they get in return?

The government employees are there to serve the people. But every one of us knows what services we receive from them. In all of the government offices, people face a lot of hassle to get their legitimate jobs done and paying of kickbacks is part and parcel of the process. Although government jobs are not well paid, people are highly interested and leave no stone unturned to get enrolled in any government service.

There are already questions regarding this pay hike and extension of retirement age. First, the government should design & implement a system where there is no place for dishonest and inefficient employees. The idea of a fixed annual increment in salary should be discontinued. The salary increase as well as the amount should be

tied up with job performance. Besides, the govt. employees must remember that they are being paid by the people and should serve as servants of the people/republic in true sense of the term. Considering the chronic unemployment problem in the country, the justification of extension of retirement age needs extensive review.

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur, Khulna

It came to our notice through different newspapers on 15 May, 2009 that our education minister is going to take necessary steps to frame "Individual Salary Structure" for the teachers. So, as a schoolteacher I would like to thank him for it. Actually, it will be a great pleasure and good news for them if it is done very soon but at the same time it would be very bad if they are deprived of the new pay-scale which will be introduced quickly and perhaps in the coming fiscal year (FY). More facilities including higher scale of salary should be provided to the teachers as they play an important role in building up the nation. And if it is done, qualified people with excellent educational background will come to the teaching profession. It is known to all that if we sow good seeds, we will get a good harvest. But today no truly qualified person likes to enter this career because enough facilities are not available here.

I would like to draw the attention of our honourable minister in this regard, so that the situation improves in future. Taking all these things into consideration, an "Indi-

vidual Salary Structure" should be introduced.

Md. Abdus Salam
Senior Asst. Teacher (English)
Joypara Pilot High School
Joypara, Dohar, Dhaka

JMB menace

The speed with which JMB is spreading its evil roots in our country is really disquieting. Bangladesh being a poor country is more vulnerable to the proliferation of these obscurantists who recruit the poor religious minded people to serve their interests. Though Islam strictly prohibits terrorism or militancy and disseminates the message of peace, these poor people are given wrong interpretation of 'Jihad' with well-manoeuvred skills of oratory. They are paid regularly and trained well for different units e.g. bomb-making or suicide squads to establish their version of the state and that by killing people!

The government and people, especially overall Muslim community, must come forward to annihilate these perpetrators. It is heartening that a special committee to tackle militancy has been formed. But sincere efforts for creating mass awareness are needed.

So, I recommend that the government launch a campaign against such acts. With this end in view, the whole madrasa education (esp. Qawmi) has to be reformed and brought under constant vigilance. Religious leaders can play a pro-active role in this campaign. But above all, financial sources of these terrorist groups are to be identified and for this an Expatriate Group monitoring the financial profile of the terrorists has to be formed.

Ahmed Mustahid
National Housing Apartment
Mirpur-2, Dhaka

Agriculture and farmers



SHAFIQ ISLAM / DRINKNEWS

Considering its huge population, Bangladesh is a very tiny country. Cyclone and other natural calamities prone Bangladesh is undoubtedly dependent on agriculture and its farmers. But it is a matter of concern that every year our country is losing 1% of its agricultural land due to increasing housing and other development purposes.

We have not attained sufficient progress in the field of industry. Due to the world's much talked about recession, our manpower export has started shrinking. So, we have to rely on our old farming fields. But still we have

prospect to increase outputs if modern and scientific methods are applied. No doubt, it is not possible to bring about such a revolution overnight. At first, our whole population including farmers, men and women, must be educated. The population growth rate must be decreased to an optimum point. Every inch of our valuable land should be utilized properly.

Our farmers are working hard all day long. We should refund their labour by way of reasonable prices of their products.

Harun-or-Rashid
Sobhanbag, Dhaka

Volleying back....

Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

Atrocities committed in '71

Forget past, Pakistan urges Bangladesh (May 15, 2009)

Under no circumstances should the AL government leave the past. It has pledged to try war criminals and if it fails, then the people shall never again elect them. The Pakistanis committed the atrocities and they should be penalised for their crimes.

Syed

If that is so, I wonder why it still is such a big hype to catch any Nazi guard who took part in the killing of the Jews in WWII. That's what you get in a developed world -- Justice! And in our region, people just get away with it. The question of Pakistan comes second to punishing our very own kind who betrayed us.

Ruhi

Instead of seeking such apology from Pakistan for what they did wrongfully in 1971, the Bangladesh government should act promptly to try all those Razakars of 1971.

MD

It would be much appreciated if and only if Bangladesh were sincere about seeking a regret note from Pakistan for the crimes of 1971.

Dr. Kalam A. Mir

Pakistan should indeed apologise for their planned and calculated genocide during the War of '71 and pay compensation to the surviving families.

Pakistan is yet to acknowledge any wrongdoing, let alone make amends. Bangladesh should keep up the relentless pressure until that day comes.

Syed Towheed

How can a Pakistan govt official say this, after they killed their own citizens before and during the war? They still haven't paid compensation to us. After this comment all trading with that country should be stopped. That would be the best answer.

Itat Mamoon

Pakistan is asking Bangladesh to forget the genocide at a time when its Punjabi army is busy committing similar crimes in the Swat Valley. Those young Bangladeshis, who have doubts about the sufferings inflicted on us in 1971, should see that almost a million civilians are now refugees in their own country. And if they are doing this to their own people, what could they do to Bengalis whom they did not consider to be their equals? That is why they have

neither apologised nor paid any compensation for the loot they took from the people. We should ask the women who were raped and brothers and sisters of those who were killed before we can forgive them.

Jamaluddin Ahmed

It is utterly ridiculous and blatantly outrageous to suggest that Bangladesh should forget the atrocities committed by the Pakistani army in 1971. War crimes and injustices are not to be ignored or forgotten. Not only would it be a tremendous insult to those who gave up their lives for the ultimate patriotic cause, it would be like ripping out the pages from our history that are of the greatest significance and the greatest consequence.

I am a proud Bangladeshi, not just because I was born as one, but because I know that the freedom we take for granted today came through the tremendous sacrifices in 1971.

Nabil

He should understand the fact that the general consensus among the Bengalis is not against all general Pakistanis. Only the war criminals have to go to the

international criminal court.

General Pakistanis were prevented from knowing about the atrocities committed by the Pakistani junta in 1971. Will Mr. Basit be happy to show those in Pakistani media?

Dr Mohammad Karim

Pakistan says, let bygones be bygones. Well, if the same crimes were committed in Pakistan by us, would they have forgiven us?

Minhaj Ahmed

Never! They can't deny the truths.

Asif

That's right, we should move forward instead of looking back. But we expect an apology first. There is nothing wrong in saying sorry for the atrocities committed in 1971.

Sobuj

No, the past cannot be forgotten. Pakistan must formally regret what they did to us. They should also give back 55% of the assets that rightfully belong to us.

Khondaker Haque

Thanks, minister

Recently, our education minister declared that this government would form a separate pay commission for the teacher community of Bangladesh. We don't know what will be, personally, be able to do for this derelict community, but this is enough for getting thanks as he has given his plan. We can anticipate such type of consideration from him because he has an extensive background of working with 'education' in Bangladesh. Generally, our political leaders like to remain far from this sector because this is comparatively less profitable in the business of politics. But till now he is working and this comments prove that he has feelings for this 'backward' group of people.

Education is treated as the backbone of any nation. We know in our country, teachers of primary and high schools lead a miserable life. Always they have to think about alternative source of earnings to carry the load of their families. If you expect more commitment from them toward education, you have to upgrade the facilities. Only praise or so called 'dignity' will not be enough to bring out the best out of them.

In case of public universities, once the meritorious students were interested to become 'teacher' to get recognition of their merit and honour. Now the private universities are offering much better

salary and private/ multinational companies are giving five times more! For this, gradually the qualified people are turning to other fields.

We are hopeful that the education minister will make his best efforts to implement what he has promised in a public meeting.

Md. Abdul Hamid
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Business Administration
Shahjalal University, Sylhet

Nuclear power

In a bid to reduce the present energy crisis the government has signed MoU with Russia for setting up a nuclear energy project in Ruppur. Similar MoUs were also signed with the USA & China prior to that. Going by the present activities, it is evident that the government is determined to set up a nuclear energy project. My concern is, can Bangladesh handle a project like that considering its high risk factors, radioactive waste management, technical know-how and last, but not the least, fuel sourcing?

The government and others concerned should judge the feasibility of these projects considering facts which are embedded in our socio-economic realities. Otherwise, the country may face a hazardous situation.

Sheikh Habibur Rahman
PC Culture Housing
Shakhertak, Mohammadpur
Dhaka