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A.M. AHAD / DRINKNEWS

Religion of peace

I always feel the media is portraying Islam wrongly. Every Muslim knows that killing an innocent person is compared to that of killing the whole humankind in Islam. From Islam we learn that a person cannot be a Muslim whose neighbour passes the night in hunger. Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) once told a young man that taking care of his old parents would be the best Jihad for him. Politeness, self-control, charity, generosity, manners, truthfulness and what not are elements of Islamic teaching.

The last messenger of Allah himself set the best example of how a Muslim should be. So, how can we blindly tag the wicked persons in this world as Muslim and Islamic? The groups or persons committing crimes in the name of Islam are terrorists but not Islamic terrorists. They are outcasts of any religion. And should not be referred to as 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' terrorists in the media. Similarly, the word 'Islamic Extremism' is a total misrepresentation.

Shafayet Hossain
Boro Mogbazar
Dhaka

Good and bad students

The other day Channel-i arranged a discussion with the students to get to the bottom of the causes of failure and the discussants were the Hon'ble Education Minister, Prof. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and Mrs. Khushi Kabir. The students, among many other problems faced by them, referred to forcefully that they do not get proper attention of and support from their teachers in class teaching. The poor students blamed their fate as they could not afford money, they could not go to subject-wise coaching practised by the school/college teachers in their residences. The renowned personages above, though accepted the students' views, did shy away from finding fault with the teachers, and while advising the students stressed, among other things, the imperative of reading the text, first and last, instead of going through the guides for short-cut success. Question remains whose duty is it to make the students get the habit of reading the text to know things fully and find out the answers therefrom?

Except for the few renowned schools/colleges, the teachers hardly take pains to see for themselves through class works as to the weaknesses of the students and help them out to improve. Once called people of 'noble profession' and 'manushgarer karigar' they have sold their ethics and thrown themselves into the business of coaching to be hefty money makers. In fact, they too are no less responsible for the erosion of moral values in society. In our time we did not see any college teacher earning by private tuition or coaching but some of them used to write guidebooks which we consulted as helping materials. How funny now you stand dead against guidebooks, but do not criticize the teachers for home tuition.

Here is a story of coaching business of teachers of a private college in Dhaka (at Iqbal Road) where my daughter studied. A few months ahead of the 1st year final examination she and her fellow mates were given to understand through grapevine that promotion to second year might be difficult unless they have their tuition from their class teachers. And when in the second year they heard the same sermon that to be able to sit for the board exams they need to be enrolled in the

coaching centres of their teachers. So both times I had to escort my daughter (a science student) to 4/5 teachers' residence almost every day for more than six months and I found each teacher coaching in batches, each batch comprising no less than ten students. This is how a private college runs with lofty ideals and lets its teachers run their coaching business at their residences. This is only a tip of the iceberg. This norm or trend is permeated through so deeply and widely that nothing could bring this coaching practice to an end unless the whole system of education is overhauled.

Asadullah Asad
Dhaka

DMCH issue

I am writing in reference to Dhaka Medical College Hospital's visitors' fee introduction (source: The Daily Star; 11-08-09). The authorities introduced the mechanism to reduce crowding of visitors which is definitely an issue of concern. Journalists might have noted bad implication of the procedure on patients and criticizing its implementation without approval by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MOHFW), they have published the news.

Very sad to note, 'All higher authorities seem to be unaware of a fact recommended, approved and implemented by the World Bank; commencing in mid-1994.' The policy is still under way to improve Health Service Provision in public sector. But it is ineffective or under-utilized!

To improve health service provision, 4 projects including 'Health Economics Project (HEP)' & 'Human Resource Development Project (HRDP)' were established in the Secretariat building, on the fourth floor of clinic building. I am only aware of HEP and know that there were provisions of foreign courses, both short and long. As I was an officer of the HEP, I know a good number of scholars had qualified in Health Services Management and Health Economics. But are those qualified in Health Service Discipline getting utilized?

Rather, most of them have joined international organizations, by taking lien from GoB job, as they were posted in line with usual transfer provision without counting their foreign degree.

Dr. Lailun Nahar
Dhaka

Political 'mosquitoes'

One of the small pleasures of life is to go through the daily newspaper with the first cup of morning tea. This pleasure is denied in Bangladesh, thanks to the exuberance of our super-agile politicians. Daily, the pages are crammed with the Bangladeshi human beings?

How to lead a normal life? Normally politics should operate quietly in the background, like the way we breathe and the way the mother and the baby are attached to each other. We are not allowed to ignore politics even for a while. This is the norm in normal countries. What's our itch? Is it a sign of insecurity? The political weather signal No 1 is on all the time!

Notice the way our farmers provide us with food--- for centuries. The baby knows that the mother is hovering in the background. We have no politics of intuition. The ego comes first then the party. What has happened to the ageless virtue of self-service? There is no national consensus on any issue.

Patriotism is for slogan mongering, and raising the noise level. Nature does not attract attention to itself through cosmetic effects (products produced in the factories); but we all appreciate (instinctively) the beauties of Nature. Why our politics looks so unashamedly artificial? It is the hidden motivation--- human, of course. We like high noise levels, and beat the drum all the time-mistuned. Call it be-tal politics.

What have we learnt in three decades [read unlearned]? Like our riverbanks, large chunks are falling off into the waters. How to rehabilitate our lame politics, which is limping all the time?

Notice the physical health condition of many of our senior politicians--govern from the hospital beds? Now the past speakers have been drawn into the mire.

What are the boundary conditions of the game? The JS (parliament) can neither monitor nor control the political tantrums. How to handle the spoilt child? There is no help service in the guise of political baby-care centres.

The caretaker government concept was tried for two years in good faith. Money cannot buy faith; but there is some leakage in Dhaka. Drip, drip, monsoon rains--- sounds like lullaby. Don't confuse with the dozing drug addicts!

Andaz
Dhaka

A new beginning

A dream came true when Bangladesh were able to chase 312 runs against Zimbabwe. A victory against 312 was really tough. August 16 was the historic day for Bangladesh cricket.

Bravo, Tigers! Bravo, Bangladesh!

Md. Mofakhrul Islam Shah
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development
BSMRAU, Gazipur

Book review

A grand page of Book Review that appeared on the National Mourning Day.

A brilliant idea indeed that was given a concrete shape with synopses of as many as sixteen quality books covering various aspects of Bangabandhu.

Perhaps it will remain the best page ever on book review. Sincere thanks to the editor of the page.

Monju Rahman
Dhanmondi
Dhaka

Real tigers!

The symbol of Bangladesh national cricket team is tiger, yet their performance was not tiger-like in the past. Especially in Test matches, their performance was very poor. For this reason our cricketers and all Bangladeshi people were desperate for a Test win.

They have won a Test match. They have won a Test series!

Congratulations!
Md Saydur Rahman
Dhaka University

Our export basket

Our traditional export market of jute, jute-goods, tea, raw and tan-hide had long been lost due to national policy missteps and international trade imbalance. In the early eighties of last century some innovative and talented entrepreneurs of our country emerged on the scene with a new commodity for sale in the global market with a huge promise and that is today's RMG. Although faced with tremendous handicaps like absence of backward and forward linkage, poor infrastructure, perennial power-shortage, inefficient port facility and paucity of skilled professionals etc. the RMG industries on their own achieved a fantastic growth over the years. Today it is not only the biggest employer in the country but also it accounts for nearly 80% of our total export earnings, second only in volume to the earnings from our overseas workers.

But presently it seems the steam is cooling. Many strong players of South and South-east Asia, East-Europe, Latin America have appeared in the market equipped with far more competitive edge. The situation has doubly worsened due to unprecedented economic recession the world is currently combating.

The situation having been so we as a nation have to urgently cast a wider look at the larger canvas of global market and undertake policy, strategy and action programmes to diversify products in our export basket.

To my thinking there are many high potential fields which can be explored and supported by all means to achieve this goal.

For instance, top of all is the pharmaceutical industries. Even in nascent stage our pharmaceutical products have earned worldwide reputation. We can make huge breakthrough in this field only if we provide adequate monetary and policy support for their unhindered growth with a 'strong regulatory body' in place to ensure product quality. It is interesting to note that only a few sectors which are least hit by the recent worst-ever economic downturn are the health-care and education.

The second sector which needs shepherding is the shipbuilding industries. We learnt that most of the world-class shipyards are fully forward-booked for years with orders for large bulk-carriers; no room left there for medium and small vessels. We have a few standard yards and expertise to grab these orders easily. There is immense scope to widen our export base in this area in as much as value-add component in such trade is pretty lucrative.

The third area to cite is the home-textile product. This is more innovative in nature and less capital intensive. We as an LDC stand a better chance in this field.

Fourth is the high-end leather product industry. We have obviously no dearth of raw materials for this. Only

requirement is the novel design, craftsmanship and astute marketing-skill.

Fifth is the fruit and fruit processing enterprise. We are blessed with ample natural bounty of mango, pineapple, jackfruit, lichi, guava etc. all over Bangladesh. These fruits as whole or processed can earn a considerable amount of foreign exchange for the country.

Sixth is the gift items for the high-spending developed world. Our indigenous artisans of gold, silver, brass, clay and conch shell if provided with adequate resources can easily attract the bemused exotic buyers.

Last but not the least is that we have to revisit our age-old trodden area of jute export. This has been all the more necessary because a new awakening and urgency have struck mankind for keeping a pollution free good earth for its survival. As such jute has become an automatic choice and remedy for such campaign to succeed. Why not we seize this golden opportunity at once?

It is no rhetoric that we are a nation of unlimited economic potential; so it is incumbent upon the government and people alike to exploit all available resources to liberate our beloved motherland from the shackles of poverty and deprivation.

S.A. Samad
General Manager (Retd.)
Janata Bank
Dhaka

Valuable minerals

Through your daily I would like to thank our Honourable Finance Minister AKM Muhith for granting me an interview on 20th July, 2009.

During our brief meeting I apprised the minister of the need for development and commercial utilisation of our valuable beach minerals--rutile, garnet, magnetite, monazite and zircon etc known as 'Black Gold' of Cox's Bazar worth billions of US dollars which are lying unused, uncared for, wasted and lost into the sea for decades together.

The honourable minister told me that he had the information that the beach sand minerals were not economically viable.

Informed the minister that he might have not got the correct information. I said that if the beach sand was not economically viable the foreign mineral companies of Australia and Singapore would not have applied to our Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources for a mining license and permission for export of our beach sand containing valuable minerals stated above.

I opposed export of our beach sand for cogent reasons and suggested that a team of our government experts and journalists may visit Cox's Bazar with me to see for themselves some of the mineral deposit sites.

I strongly feel that a co-ordination meeting of the concerned officials/representatives/experts of the Prime Minister's

Save the poor farmers

To save the poor cultivators in severely flood affected areas and to make the next harvest better to sustain the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country, the crying needs are:

- (a) Quick identification of the severely affected areas.
- (b) Quick prioritisation of the affected areas.
- (c) Timely supply of fertilisers to the flood-hit farmers.

(d) Reduced-rate/free fertilisers to the poor farmers.

(e) Assistance like supplying electricity used in irrigation in paddy fields at a cheaper rate, hassle-free access to agricultural loan, field-level fuel subsidy for the cultivators etc should also be ensured.

SM Najmul Haque Emon
Santahar, Bogra



FIROZ GAZI / DRINKNEWS

Secretariat, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Commerce may be held to consider, examine and to find the ways and means for the development and commercial utilisation of the valuable minerals 'Black-Gold' without further loss of time.

If we fail to take necessary steps now, the valuable minerals 'Black-Gold' may be lost for ever due to world climate change and rise in the seawater level.

OH Kabir
Dhaka

"Reviewing injustices in the military"

I came across the post-editorial bearing the above title in your daily dated 16 July 2009. The writer is Brig-Gen. (Retd.) Shahed Anam. I quite appreciate the concern expressed by him. To a certain extent I accept that in numerous cases actions have been taken on whims or mere hearsay, not even bothering to listen to the other side.

I would like to add that in the old King's Regulation which regulated the conduct of King's commissioned officers, there is a clause stating--

"The Crown reserves the right to dispense with the services of any officer without assigning any reason."

I understand that during the British period this clause used to be judiciously and rarely used. This clause was meant to deal with officers who acted far below the required mark, especially during operations, and early dispensation was necessary to

maintain the standard.

After 1947 both India and Pakistan retained the above clause in their MIML and MPML respectively with only replacing the words "The Crown" by the words "The Government". Bangladesh followed suit. In Pakistan this legal provision has been widely used and still being used. In Bangladesh it is being exhaustively applied. It has been observed that the criterion regarding removal from service and/or awarding promotion etc. has changed with the political party in power. There has been interesting instances of officers being promoted to the rank of Major General and released or retired on the same day or the day following. However, the above clause does not empower "Dismissal" which must follow legal process and specific offence. In 1973 quite a number of repatriated officers, who happened to be located in then East Pakistan, but did not or could not join the Liberation War in 1971 found themselves summarily dismissed. On appeal to Bangabandhu either individually or collectively, their cases were converted into retirement.

Promotion in all services must be according to service rules coupled with performance reports and efficiency. All service personnel are loyal to the country and the government in power. Alliance and obedience to any political party should not be the criterion.

In the developed democratic countries, even in India, promotion and removal of officers are strictly according to service rules. After their disastrous experience in 1962, I think politicians in India stopped meddling in service affairs.

Instead of trying to look into the injustices of the past, the political govt. should ensure that except for service code, no extraneous consideration, should be made in the career-development and promotions of service personnel. Digging into the past will keep on repeating with the change of political govt. No one should consider that they are here for eternity.

QAFMA Raquib
Lt-Col (Retd.)
Jessore

Ruling party men

Hardly a day passes without the news of some misdeeds committed by the ruling party activists. Mostly Chhatra League and Jubo League are involved in these incidents.

From the August 13, 2009 issue of The Daily Star we learned that the ruling party cadres are out to grab business and clashed with rivals. The BCL men snatched tenders from the contractors in Manikganj. The ruling party cadres assaulted opposition BNP men allegedly for refus-

ing to pay illegal toll.

These are not isolated incidents, from all over the country news is coming to us about outrageous incidents. Educational institutions are hostage to them. At Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, classes and exams could not be held on August 12, 2009 as the BCL enforced strike on the campus.

It seems that the activists of the Awami League have gone berserk, they are creating chaos everywhere, being confident that they can get away without punishment, no matter how grave the offence might be.

It is high time for the Awami League government to realize that people are very unhappy with the goings-on. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina must take stern action against the culprits.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Killing, mugging...

Every day after getting up from bed when we have a look at the newspaper, killing, mugging, smuggling etc come to our eyes first. We get utterly surprised when we hear the news of the crimes taking place in broad daylight. Now our country is burdened with some major problems like poverty, and militancy. Again the country is in a precarious position over the issues like Tipaimukh dam, maritime boundary with its neighbouring countries. In this situation if the country is to struggle with its internal affairs, then it would be like a suicidal act. During the rule of the caretaker government, we experienced a drastic reduction of crime as most of the godfathers, top terrorists were in jail. But now it's a political government and we feel the comeback of the top terrorists with their notorious activities. So it is clear that these are none but the party men of the AL who are giving shelter to the criminals.

Our countrymen voted this party into power hoping for a fresh beginning. But the way the crimes are rising, it apparently seems that this government is about to fail. The situation is being exacerbated by the complete silence of the home ministry. The ministry is yet to issue any statement, assurance or even any reaction regarding the sharp rise in criminality. So, the countrymen are quickly losing their confidence in the government.

Now is the time for this government to act decisively. Though much harm has already been done, it is never too late to mend. As a first step to restore confidence of the countrymen, the government should make the home ministry more functional.

Golam Mostafa
Jahangirnagar University
Savar, Dhaka

Ship breaking



R.S. ANJAN / DRINKNEWS

I would like to bring to your attention the fact that the government is discouraging primary steel production in your country. The ship breakers are restraining the steel producers from entering due to their influence in the ministries. Because of this the people of Bangladesh are suffering through paying a high price for steel.

Bangladesh has high reserves of iron ore and it should use it for producing steel.

It is high time your government takes some action against these corrupt ship breakers who are restraining such investments in the country.

Sushant
India