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Put the sick Rhino to sleep

Malaysia's New Straits Times published a horrible picture of the lone Great One-horned Rhinoceros in Dhaka Zoo under its news caption 'Bangladesh zoo management face charges of serious incompetence' published on 18th September 2009 [vide the internet site: http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/articles/20090918145003/Article/index.html].

If one looks at the picture taken sometime in mid-September he or she would be able to count the num-

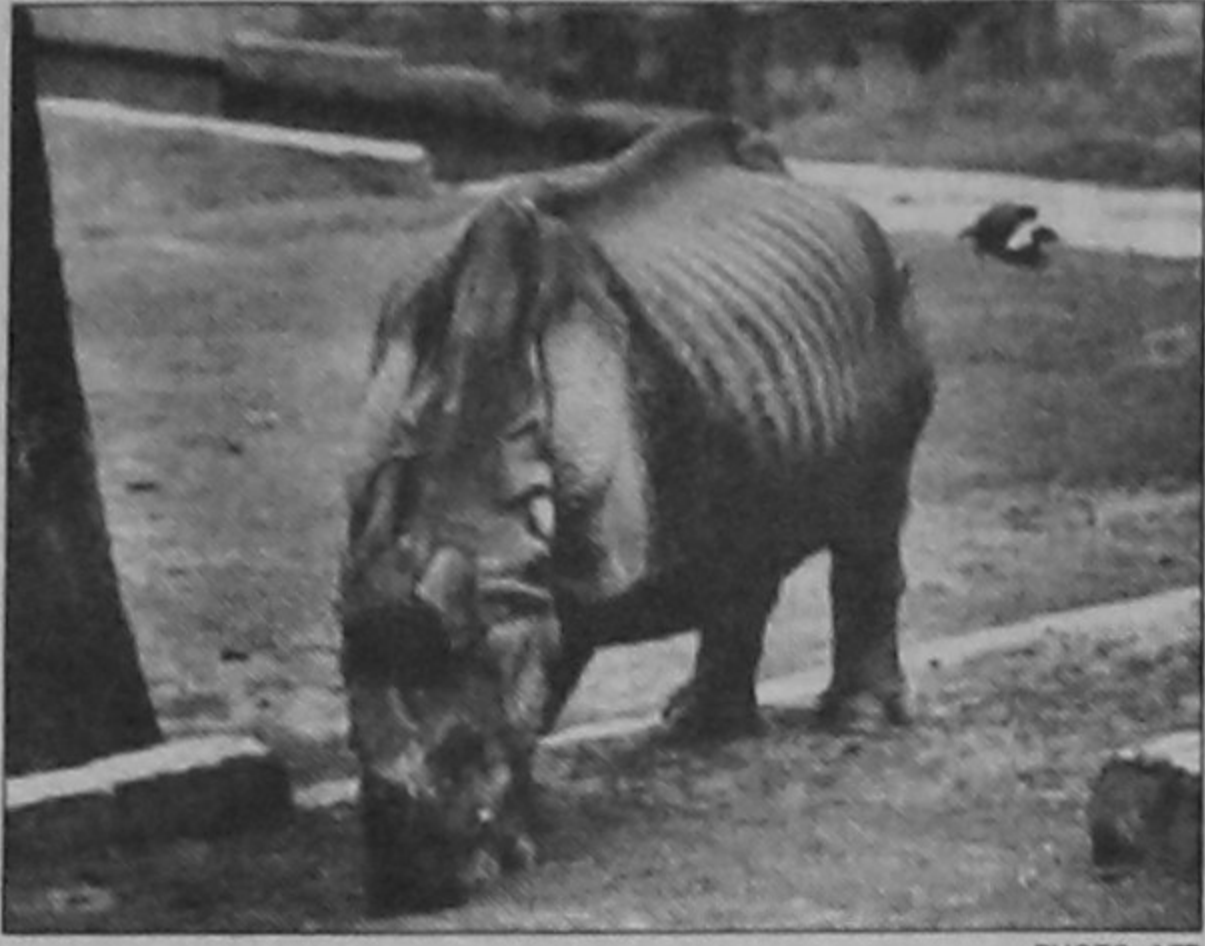


PHOTO: AFP

ber of ribs as because the Rhino seems to be too emaciated, malnourished and very, very sick.

As a zoologist, oldest Bangladeshi zoo manager, nature lover, and a law abiding citizen as well as an expatriate helping the government to enrich its exchequer, I urge upon the government to take immediate steps for mercy-killing of the Rhino to save it from its untold sufferings that should not be tolerated in a modern society.

However, if the authorities decide to put the Rhino to sleep they must form a committee with veterinary surgeons and persons from Vet Med professions, who are not attached to Dhaka Zoo, possibly private veterinary doctors and human surgeons, MOEF secretary, secretary of fisheries and livestock services as members to determine the real cause of the sickness of this very rare animal. Also this committee will oversee that its every part is being studied in veterinary laboratories of different agricultural universities and private laboratories for gaining knowledge so that they can avoid future mistakes and its bones are preserved for a national museum to be studied by students and researchers. It is to be remembered that none of the Bangladeshi Vets are likely to get a second chance to make an autopsy or post mortem of another Rhino in their lifetime.

Dr. Reza Khan, Zoologist

Misapplication of law?

One hundred and twenty three more cases are to be dropped. The govt. scrutiny committee finds them 'politically motivated'-- cases filed during the last BNP-Jamaat coalition and the subsequent caretaker rule. As many as 241 applications were placed at the seventh meeting and of them 123 cases have been recommended for withdrawal. The government has so far decided to withdraw 572 cases filed against the leaders of ruling Awami League and its allies and only Moudud Ahmed from main opposition BNP (The Daily Star, 17-09-09). Those who filed those cases seem to have done it by misusing power with ulterior motive at the cost of govt. money. In the process of doing these unjustified activities, lots of valuable Govt. manpower hour and money have been exhausted.

As common citizens we are confused and perturbed as to whom we should believe. We observe that people in power are all perfect and saint like and remain above corruption. Ironically, the fact is that the same people when they are out of power are found to have committed too much corruption when they were in power.

We also saw during the last caretaker govt that the present prime minister and leader of the opposition were detained in special prisons where huge manpower and money had to be spent but later on it was found to be not necessary. Apart from the above, many bigwigs and stalwarts of mainly political and business class were detained for months together during the caretaker regime. Ultimately, almost all have been released from jail. In the process a huge amount of money and manpower were spent from the govt. exche-

quer. This is nothing but systems loss of the legal department. If such a huge amount of money could be saved, I believe the country could be relieved from extreme poverty gradually.

Those who are responsible for such loss of money and manpower need to be taken to task and be punished to create an example for the future.

Md. Delwar Hossain
East Rampura, Dhaka

Crossfire

There have been a lot of controversies on crossfire issue in my native land, Bangladesh. The civilized nations, especially the West, are against it, calling it violation of Human Rights. Of course it is a violation of Human Rights but in Bangladesh context it became necessary and is still necessary to contain crime. Killing a man by law enforcement agencies in the guise of crossfire is an extra-judicial killing and surely the civilized nations have the right to criticise us. But when the action is taken for security and safety of other innocent lives in desperation, it may be condoned.

Killing in crossfire is unacceptable, at the same time killing by cutting throats of innocent peace-loving people is unacceptable. The terror is should also not be allowed to cut throats, rob people or create panic among the public. To punish a killer by the courts, the magistrates require evidences, witnesses and credible proof of involvement of the killer in the killing. The police give charge sheets and forward with it some witnesses. While trial is underway, no witness appears before the magistrate for fear of life of his own and his entire family members.

The terrorists are a big enemy of the nation. Even the

foreign investors are reluctant to come to Bangladesh to invest for fear of extortionists, terrorists and militants because even our law enforcement agencies are unable to protect their interests from the hands of these elements.

So far, our knowledge goes, the law-enforcement agencies have not killed any innocent man.

The crossfire victims are all top terrors who maintain high profile terror networks and are capable of striking anyone anywhere.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

BSF atrocities

BSF men have been killing Bangladeshi cattle traders, businessmen, farmers, general people in the border areas for no reason. It has been reported that in the border areas BSF killed dozens of Bangladeshis in the past couple of months. Tension mounts as killing continues in the border areas.

Bangladesh, apparently a good neighbour and friendly with Indians, though, the Indians wouldn't stop killing Bangladeshis in border areas.

Bangladesh has a long border with India and "no man's land" facilities too. But still the BSF would cross the internationally recognised "no man's land" and keep killing Bangladeshis. It is so pathetic that the slain receive no compensation from the Indian authorities.

There is no border area in the world other than Bangladesh-India where killing takes place on such a regular basis.

Our concern is: why the border area would become so, if we call each other a brotherly and friendly neighbour? Indeed, India is one of the biggest countries and has been raising weapon of mass destruction capacity (Praful Bidwai, the eminent Indian

columnist wrote in DS on 14 September).

The Indians should soon start to act as friendly neighbours and sustain peace and harmony in the region.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS correspondent
Social Worker
Gopalganj

A future leader!

A BCL activist, as reported in your daily, has already made himself a 'star'. He is a budding future leader of the country. In about a decade's time or so he is sure to become an MP or even a Minister. Once this goal is achieved, he will start raping the country. This has become the order of the day. May be he shall become the most powerful Minister in the cabinet. He has already made his mark in the political arena. Subsequently he shall adorn himself with sumptuous titles philanthropist, social worker etc.

Had this been the case in the United States, he would have been destined to pass the rest of his days in jail. Law reigns supreme in the States. It is subservient to none. All is equal before the law. That is what makes the United States the world leader. But here in Bangladesh law is subservient to the ruling regime. Law is used to any extent to serve their interest whether moral or immoral. Once a political party is sworn in they set up the administrative machinery in a manner so as to best serve their interest. It is made sure that there would none to protest their wrong doings. There are always ready and willing intellectuals to serve the cause of the regime whether right or wrong. These are all signs of bad omen.

Until and unless it is made sure that Law is supreme and subservient to none, all efforts to make Bangladesh what it ought to be shall go in vain. Saleh Mohammad Ayub
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Flooded footpaths

Last Thursday I went to the diplomatic area in Gulshan. I saw drains and manholes full of filth and water. And water flowing from these was flooding the footpaths of Natunbazar-Mallbag Road.

You know in the diplomatic zones foreigners live and they use the footpaths. S M Mahubul Alam
New Eskaton Road
Dhaka

Significance of zakat

The Quranic word 'zakat' not only has the meaning of charity, alms, official tax and voluntary contribution, but it also has a strong spiritual motive. The way the Holy Quran induces the well-off to give zakat is courteous yet firm. If they give the poor their due, Allah will pay back them many times over with blessings in this world and the next (57:11, and 73:23). That is why, alms giving is often represented in the Holy Quran as a transaction between man, who is temporary, and Allah, who is Permanent, the Generous -- Who has created everything. The Holy Quran says, "Who is it that will lend Allah a goodly loan so he multiplies it to him manifold? And Allah withholds and extends and to Him you shall return."

The pious Muslims give zakat from the best they have in order to avoid the slightest injury or humiliation to the feelings of the recipient. But unfortunately the way of giving zakat in our country is now just the opposite. Majority of the millionaires, Ministers, MPs and leaders do it for their social and political gain and every year many poor people lose their lives under extreme pressure of crowd. There is no doubt that in doing so those so-called zakat payers are loading their accounts with grave sin, instead of blessings. Our religious preachers working in mosques under those influential people approve this sort of practice to gain some advantages. Some religious scholars seen on different TV channels show their mastery in criticizing rival groups for trivial matters which are neither Farz nor Wajib. But they hardly criticize the present tradition of giving zakat, probably for the fear that they will lose the favour they are enjoying. Following the Quranic instruction, we should take care to give from the best we have. Instead of giving zakat to hundreds of people, we can give it to a few persons in the form of capital goods, taxi or rickshaw etc. It is like teaching how to catch fish permanently instead of giving them fish once.

It is hoped that in future the poor people who will be benefited in this way will themselves be able to give zakat, if Allah wills.

Mohammad Jamir Haider
Babla
Lecturer in English
West Banshkhali U. College
Banshkhali
Chittagong

Artist Shahabuddin

There is no doubt that one of the all-time best artists of Bangladesh is Shahabuddin Ahmed. The bold and prominent figurative compositions of the artist with his ideal use of sprawling space across the canvas provide the connoisseur's eyes with soothing retreat. Speed, dynamism and strength are some of the elements which Shahabuddin intertwines while portraying his creations.

The tempo of his fast-pace brush strokes and vibrancy of shades with trailing wash of subjective settings instantly fill the viewers' minds with a sense of fulfilment and buoyancy that

creates a special appeal.

The artist's yearning for freedom from all sorts of oppression and injustice is one focal point of his subject. Being a freedom fighter during our War of Liberation, artist Shahabuddin still continues his relentless battle against social odds and irregularities; his most invincible weapon being the painting medium.

The creations of Shahabuddin resemble some sort of mesmerizing musical note to fascinate the viewer's psyche.

Aziz Amirul
Dhaka



PHOTO: M A TAKER

Frequent tremors

Lately, there have been a few quakes that jolted Dhaka, Mymensingh, Sylhet encompassing a vast swath of Eastern Bangladesh. Experts say tremors, if frequent, are precursors to a catastrophic earthquake. Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated regions of the globe having a population of 150 plus million living in an area measuring about 55 thousand sq. miles. The country sits on a fault line having active Himalayan tectonic plates. The UN has also designated Dhaka as the most vulnerable city to earthquake close on the heels of Teheran.

Dhaka's skyline has undergone a phenomenal change with high-rise buildings dotting the landscape. The quakes that shook our places had epicentre in neighbouring Myanmar and adjacent region recording 5 to 6 plus on Richter scale. Heart wrenching memories of mass deaths as a result of gigantic quakes in Agadir, India, Northern Iran, Afghanistan smashing habitats, killing thousands of inhabitants still haunt us. Given the number of tall scrapers that developers built hurriedly to turn quick bucks, and with scant regard for safety, a quake of the magnitude of 6 and above will spell a land Sunami of horrific dimension.

Nature sends tell-tale signs if we only know how to heed them. Unless we wake up from

our proverbial slumber a quake of the magnitude of 6 and above is apprehended to cause a cataclysmic doom taking an unprecedented toll of human lives the world has never seen before.

Mere wishing away a disaster won't keep the wolf from the door.

G. Mostafa
Tucson, Arizona, USA

To the prime minister...

I write this letter to inform you of a news report that caught everyone's attention a couple of weeks ago on television. The news was read so fast that we missed out on the names that were mentioned and I apologize for not being able to provide that information but I assure you any news sources will be able to confirm the incident. The story is about a very young schoolgirl who was raped and murdered in her own home and left it to her parents to find her upon their return from work. The news was a follow-up of the incident. I am not writing to talk about the crime that took place. It is unimaginable and a disgrace to the human race. I am writing about the follow-up which mentioned that until that day the girl's parents have not seen the light of justice. That is because they are threatened by some men close to the miscreants, and the police officer in charge of the investigation was recently transferred without being able to re-assign the particular 'file' to the new investigation officer.

I know Honourable Prime Minister, you are surely deeply hurt by the incident mentioned above. You might be a bit surprised as well. How

is it possible that no arrests were made in spite of witnesses being there? How is it possible that the officer in charge was transferred at the right time? How is it that the most vicious crime case in the district was not reassigned? I know you too are asking all these questions. Who would be so powerful to put a stop to the judicial procedure? From the day this nation wrote its own laws we all knew that no person is 'above the law.' Who are these people going around proving it wrong?

Please forgive me Prime Minister if you think I am over-stepping my boundaries; for I am not being sarcastic at all. This is not the time. I am simply sympathizing with the innocent girl's parents, and on their behalf appealing to you as our nation's highest law maker. I know you are thinking that I am someone who is not aware of the so many vicious crimes that take place in our country every day and also asking why would this one matter more. This one matters on the face of law as equally as any other involving innocent victims of crimes. However, this one matters more because you have taken a small amount of time from your busy schedule to read this letter, and this one would matter the most when in response to this letter you yourself will make that phone call. This one matters because the parents of this country still have 'hope.'

Before I finish this letter I want to thank you most in advance for making that phone call. Because I know you will. And if you don't, no one else might.

Concerned citizens abroad

Volleying back....

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

10 BCL men rape girl (September 30, 2009)

I was ashamed when I read this news. Can we just imagine the fate of the raped girl now? If these types of mentally deformed people are involved in political groups, then we can simply guess what could be the future of this nation. Minhaj Ahmed

First we heard about the tender manipulation and extortion by the BCL members, now we hear about the gang-rape by them. The government must do something about this. Mobaiddul Huq

This kind of criminal acts by BCL gangs and their escape through the mercy of the party set very bad examples. How would the top brass of the AL justify this? Rubena Ahmed

I think we can not any more ignore these issues. The prime minister and the opposition leaders are women. They should come forward to stop these incidents and save innocent girls from being raped. Faqur

I feel very insecure with the way police acted. I would appeal to Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League leadership to bring the culprits to justice. May Allah protect the helpless people and destroy the oppressors. Tormented citizen

If this is the picture of law and order, where will the poor people go? Habib Ehsan

These incidents are happening so frequently. This cannot be tolerated any more. If the police have protected them we have police at the upper level too. They cannot keep their mouth shut. Speak out from upper level for this helpless victim. Afreen

What's the problem of the BCL? In every place some of its members act like hardened criminals. Abdullah Al Babul

We shall wait for the action taken by our respected home minister. M. Mohiuddin

Please continue reporting on this issue until the culprits are punished. Sarwar Hossain

I wonder what the human rights activists and others are doing. The police cannot evade their responsibility. Nuruddin Azam

I can't imagine the future of a country where leaders and people responsible for restoring law and order display such inhuman behaviour. Shame! Tamanna Haque

The poor girl! May Allah Help her to forget it as soon as possible. Give the criminals the punishment they deserve. Nazmul Karim

Our political leaders must be ashamed of their junior followers. Nizamuddin

Bangabandhu Medical University 11 doctors dismissed (September 30, 2009)

Very sad indeed. Any person of average intelligence knows that the university teachers do have the freedom to support a political party of their choice. If the termination of the BNP appointed professors is hailed now, what will be the reaction of AL when the professors appointed by the AL will be terminated by the BNP when it comes to power? M. Hossain

Professors/ Associate professors are always appointed through open advertisement unlike other services. Doctors deal with our lives which is the most important matter. We want to see most competent persons in all places. Can't we keep the doctors away from the political play field? A citizen

A long awaited bold step by BSMMU authorities. Dr. Mahmood Hassan

The systematic political cleansing that has begun in government services on flimsy pretext will set a dangerous precedent, as it will encourage government employees to affiliate themselves with the ruling party. Asfi Siddiqui

Each one plays the same game. This is nothing new. Nesar Ahmed

Unexpected, undesirable and unethical. If this is called changed politics, the country will continue to suffer. Nasarullah

What a shame! They are the experts in their field and are being treated shabbily. This is the reason why a country like Bangladesh is facing brain drain. Syed Javed

Price spiral



PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJAN

Prices are going up and up exceeding the limit of tolerance and patience with no relief in sight. It has proved wrong the age-old maxim - "All things that go up must come down." It seems that price escalation has reached levels beyond the mortal's control, and only Allah knows when it will come down! Market mechanism misunderstood and unknowingly mismanaged by drives and dictate has set the chain reaction and price overheat which is now beyond the control of the administration.

We cannot question why. The authorities have been trapped and have no way out, and they have more or less accepted the bitter pill, leaving the matter to be sorted out in course of time.

S M Najmul Haque Emon
Santahar (Chabagan), Bogra