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Vulture and anthrax

The other day a report in ATN news on vulture has admirably awakened my feelings while the country has been threatened by anthrax (A highly infectious animal disease, especially cattle and sheep; it can be transmitted to people). According to the news item, vulture, an ecologically vital bird, helps stop germs from breaking out after it eats dead cattle and sheep. In their absence if some other animals like dogs and cats or any other birds eat the dead cattle, it opens the road to dangerous diseases like anthrax. Because they do not have the resistance power to kill the germ even after digestion.

These birds are of great value as scavengers, especially in a country like Bangladesh. Vulture stomach acid is exceptionally corrosive,



PHOTO: SHAFIQ ISLAM / DRINKNEWS

allowing them to safely digest putrid carcasses infected with Botulinum toxin, hog cholera, and anthrax bacteria that would be lethal to other scavengers. This also enables them to use their reeking, corrosive vomit as a defensive projectile when threatened. Vultures urinate straight down their legs; the uric acid kills bacteria accumulated from walking through carcasses, and also acts as evaporative cooling.

Most of our countrymen believe, vulture is the sign of bleak future, but these birds are friends of people. We have to be seriously careful and abstain from killing these birds.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam
Tourism Professional

Unhygienic

While the whole nation is stumbling on the anthrax disease epidemic, the people of Muhammadpur area of Dhaka city are seemingly very indifferent to the danger of the lethal disease. A good number of cows are being slaughtered in this area every day, especially on Fridays, without taking any hygienic measures.

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) or the government agencies responsible for looking after public health and hygiene are nonchalant; so are the people.

Under the circumstances, the government should come forward to make people aware of the danger and take necessary steps immediately to ensure food hygiene.

Monzur Rahman
Muhammadpur
Dhaka

Iraq war

The most tragic incident during this decade is Iraq war that ended with the declaration of Barrack Obama, the president of the USA. The last US troops have left Iraq. The US vice president was present at that moment. Generally, the question arises in our mind -- what is the outcome of this war where the US govt. lost 3 trillion dollars. Today Barrack Obama could not say that the mission was accomplished and they are victorious. In the name of establishing democracy, the then US president Bush started the war against Iraq but his mission has failed miserably.

Mehebab Haque
One-mail

Tortured boy

Your Dinajpur correspondent's report of September 2 is disgusting reading. Is the 'madrasa teacher' a man or a beast? He should be taken to police custody, and criminally prosecuted; and punished in an exemplary manner, to set an example. To begin with; he should be immediately sacked from his job!

It is high time that cruel corporal punishments are stopped forthwith. Madrasa teachers are the worst example of such inhuman cruelty; where caning seems to be the "order of the day"; and a well established practice! Next are rural primary schools, where slapping and caning by teachers(?) is commonly practiced. Most "Huzoors" and teachers come to class with a whipping stick in hand; but possibly no books or notes!

In this case, the matter has reached extreme levels. Imagine keeping a child confined for a month, without informing his mother; while regularly torturing him! Is it a school, or a jail? Such institutions of cruelty should be disbanded.

We do not need war stories to learn about atrocities, it is right there in our back-yards! This madrasa teachers and members of the managing committee should be forced by the officials of the upazilla to pay for the full treatment and rehabilitation of the child.

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Naming and renaming

All the names given after Late President Gen. Ziaur Rahman have been changed on the plea of the court fiat that he was a usurper. The names of Zia International Airport,

Chittagong Zia Complex, Zia Uddyan at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar to name but a few.

After the recent verdict by the same court the former General and President Ershad has been categorized as an usurper, an illegal power grabber. So, people expect that all the names given by the usurper would be changed this time. The name of upazila, Chandrima Uddyan and some other establishments of the country should be changed. Otherwise, people may question the lopsidedness of the government.

Kash Shaf
Purana Paltan
Dhaka

OSDs

An editorial was published in the DS on 31.08.10 on OSDs, containing a few logical arguments in favour of the OSDs which in some ways may console them. The Daily Star deserves thanks for bringing the important issue to the knowledge of the citizens of the country so outspokenly. Outwardly, the arguments are partial and inadequate to describe the predicament of the incumbents. There are some posts of the republic which some people have to fulfil or serve either on pursuit or dictat of the concerned ministry like: Directors/Director Generals (DG) of he Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Deputy Commissioners (DC), Divisional Commissioners, Private Secretaries (PS) to the Ministers or top brass of any government etc. Generally, bureaucrats of capability, knowledge, honesty and repute are chosen or selected for those positions. Though sometimes partisan people also get those honourable positions, thanks to their political tilt, but in most cases honesty, reputation and efficiency are the main considerations for these postings.

But right after the change of any regime those apparently committed civil servants become the first victims of their so called 'lucrative' previous postings and are made OSDs. Without considering their service to the republic, efficiency and reputation as good officers, they are made the scapegoats.

I know a few people who were never involved in any political activity, whatsoever, and they were regarded by their colleagues as outstanding performers. They have been made OSDs.

No government ever tried to understand that getting posting to those positions is not the only criterion for being considered partisan or does not prove their political bias. Does the nation not deserve to be served by efficient, honest and sincere officers? Are those OSDs only entitled to get their salary at the end of the month without giving any service to the nation at all? Is there anybody to answer these questions?

Munir Babu
Purana Paltan
Dhaka

Trucks

During daytime hundreds of overloaded trucks enter Sylhet city which make the lives of commuters hazardous.

The traffic authorities should look into the matter.

Raju Kumar Das
Dept. of Business
Administration
Shahjalal University of
Science & Technology, Sylhet

Poor performance

The Planning Commission's extension by two more years of the project implementation time for shifting the hazardous tannery industries outside the capital city exposes the government's wanton disregard for public health. This decision shows the government's negligence to ensuring affordable health service to poor and rural people. The NGOs and the private clinics are capitalizing on the poor health services in the public hospitals that suffer a lot from shortage of doctor. The doctors find no time to attend the rural health centres as they are busy making money working in the private clinics in the upazila towns. But who is there to monitor them? Health being one of the major human rights, the government cannot look the other way while the teeming millions wallow in ailments.

Tinku
Lalpur, Natore

Princess Diana

We lost Diana in 1996. This loss can never be compensated for. Her death got massive media coverage which raised several questions. Some people say that to escape the journalists, her car faced the accident. If so, journalists must be more tolerant in their attitude towards the celebrities. It is regrettable that some people were unduly interested in her personal life.

She had taken several initiatives to upgrade the living standard of the helpless people. She obtained international recognition for her work. Her sudden death was shocking news for millions of people all over the world.

Her death reminds us of the maxim "Those who are loved more have to leave the earth earlier."

Diana is one of those lucky persons who deserves immortality for both her activities as well as her unparalleled beauty. I do not find any exaggeration when Blair

says "The death of Diana was a global event like ". Just five days after her death we lost another great woman-- Mother Teresa.

Would we ever get another lady like Diana who could lead us towards the path of peace and development?

Pradip Das
Lecturer
BHPI, CRP

Ensure quality

Some companies by dint of quality of their products and service prove themselves qualified and acceptable to all concerned and become branded. In this way they earn confidence of the people. If the products of the companies fail to give desired results it goes against the name of the company and earns bad name. As for example GE, Siemens, ABB etc. Likewise educational institutions also get branded. Students coming out of these branded institutions are obviously good and subsequently are also found good while performing in their respective fields. As for example, Dhaka University, BUET etc. The branded companies further upgrade their products and the institution takes pride in their students when they are found performing as per expectation. When they fail the companies and the institutions are blamed for their bad performance. After getting the feedback they try to correct themselves to improve the quality of their products so as to maintain the quality as before or better.

Recently, many questions have been raised about the performance of many MPs inside parliament and outside. The responsibility naturally goes to the political parties and the Election Commission for not being able to produce qualified ones and it indicates that restructuring of the system is necessary.

The PRO needs to be updated to meet the present day requirements.

Md. Delwar Hossain
East Rampura, Dhaka

A talk show

Some time back during my stay in Dhaka I happened to witness one of such programmes on Diganta TV channel. The interviewee was a veteran politician-- A.S.M.A. Rab.

I was taken aback and bewildered soon after the first introductory question was thrown at Mr Rab which I quote for the readers "You are a Japanese. Isn't it?" In reply the politician remained calm, silent and made no expression including his body language whatsoever. Incidentally, Mr Rab was born in Ramgati, an offshore island within the district of Noakhali. If an imminent presenter could go down to that level in his thinking and outlook about fellow Bangladeshi nationals and utter such things in front of the viewers, what can we expect from ordinary citizens? Most unfortunate though is that ordinary Bangladeshis are seen addressing each other by the districts of their birth and even expressing contempt towards each other at times. Mr Rab probably could have taught him a lesson by addressing him as 'Ghati' and watch his reactions. Maybe he did not want to go down to his level.

I remember during the Pakistani days anybody over-hearing Bangla in public at Karachi used to get attracted to other fellow East Pakistanis and feel so close to each other. Our unity used to be rock solid in those days. But soon after creation of Bangladesh that sense of oneness vanished into thin air and people got overwhelmed in their thinking and narrow outlook that only districtism and regionalism became the prime concern.

We are so lucky that we almost all speak one language and the vast majority of us have the single faith, while having good regard for other religious faiths. It is also equally true and undeniable that we as a nation are narrow minded and we all suffer from complex. Our outlooks are regrettably very poor. It was the leaders who right from the start failed to instil the feeling of nationalism among us. This is detrimental to our national unity and is a clear sign of falling apart. We are divided and subdivided in so many ways though mostly created by the political leaders. This has been sowed right from the beginning when district quota for jobs became the criterion ignoring fair selection through open competitions on the basis of merit. The government of Sheikh Hasina has fuelled the situation beyond all proportions by openly declaring her policy and siding with her party cadres.

The political leaders must change their age old attitude and try to bring the nation together as one Bangladeshi alone. They must discard petty party interest and abolish district quota etc. The children from the primary level must learn national

anthem and take oath in the assembly to be worthy Bangladeshi nationals.

History has proved that nobody can win fighting against the people of the land. In absence of rock solid unity and strong feeling of nationalism, one day our hard earned freedom will disappear. It is the prime need of the hour whether we eat or not. By addressing each other in such a silly manner, we are causing irreparable damage to our national unity and future generations. Any one can be born anywhere in Bangladesh and that should have nothing to do with one's rights and entitlements. We all must learn to be Bangladeshi first and not Bengali. After all, we have our own distinct culture and identity, quite different to other Bengalis living outside our boundary.

As regards renaming the district of Noakhali it deserves consideration. Though the greater district has become

one third of its former size but the tiny area still bears the old name though in reality it has no significance. There is no place or even a village inside the small district by this name. All districts are known by its headquarters but not Noakhali.

Yamin Zakaria
Stanwell, Staines
Middlesex, UK

Tony Blair's memoir

With respect to Prime Minister Tony Blair's new memoir "A Journey" I would like to offer the following comments.

Former U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair's new memoir "A Journey" is an odyssey into moral and political corruption. The book unwittingly justifies a totalitarian mentality and explains why most of our democracies today are, in reality, thinly disguised totalitarian regimes. Blair writes: "Politicians are obliged from

time to time to conceal the full truth, to bend it and even distort it" in order to force their agenda on the people.

Blair also talks of Al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein as sharing "a common set of attitudes: indifference to human life [and] the justification of mass killing...". Nowhere in his book does he express any regret for his own policies that sanctioned and advanced the use of contraceptives and the practices of abortion and euthanasia i.e "indifference to human life [and] the justification of mass killing".

Proud of his achievement in the advancement of homosexuality he also looks upon the illicit affairs of politicians - not with any moral disdain - but with a "fairly worldly eye".

Tony Blair is not alone. His book makes it clear that his kind is the norm in governments throughout the "free" world. A sad state of affairs!

Walter Clarkson
London, United Kingdom

RMG workers



PHOTO: TANVIR AHMED / DRINKNEWS

Recently, the government announced the new wages of the garment workers, though it has been rejected. As a result, the workers vandalised the garment factories and commercial buildings in Gulshan, Banani and Tejgaon. The aggressive workers also set fire to many

vehicles. The demand of increasing their wages has been there for many years.

At last, the government accepted their demand. But the situation is not under control.

Sohel Rana
Pallabi, Mirpur, Dhaka

"Judicial overreach"

I could not agree with Ahrar Ahmad as to his contention of "judicial over-reach", published in The Daily Star on September 04, 2010. Constitutionally, the Supreme Court has authority to interpret or declare any law unconstitutional, if it so appears. Mr Ahmad may minutely go through the verdicts regarding 5th and 7th amendments. The Court has not passed any law. The parliamentary commission has already started to work towards re-writing the constitution as per the judgments. Yes, it's parliament which

enacts law or amends constitution, but the Apex Court has the inherent authority to interpret or correct the same in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, as it is also in the United States and other democratic countries.

Hafeezul Alam
A former civil servant

Billion dollar loan

In his letter of August 16 Mr. Ali wrote that the billion dollar loan provided by India's Exim Bank is on the key condition that 85% of all commodities purchased through the loan money will

have to be from India. This means that 85% of the billion dollar, i.e. 850 million dollars, will go back to India. I quote from the letter "Repayment of a billion dollar loan will severely deplete our foreign reserves. Bangladesh could've spent the billion dollars internally to develop its infrastructure, which would have positive effects on the local economy, instead of spending 850 million dollars in India." If it is so, I must say that by this so called loan of friendship, India is simply strengthening its market in Bangladesh.

Dr. M. Mahboob Hossain
BRAC University
Dhaka

These people should have been released through the court appeal process.

Reda

The govt is virtually encouraging criminals, murderers, etc by engaging in all these activities.

S. Ali

Politically motivated cases should be properly investigated by the highest court of the land before releasing any one from the jail. How to protect innocent but punish the criminals should be an urgent discussion among experts & the govt. In the last few weeks, we have seen dropping of charges and pardons etc. These should be properly investigated & explained to the people. We should not set an example for the criminals that after committing crimes they can be pardoned, if they belong to a certain party. Also we need to protect innocent people from politically motivated cases.

Dr Rahman

First, there was something wrong when 20 persons were convicted for one murder. All of them were not equally responsible for the crime. Secondly, pardoning all 20 is not also proper as we now come to know that six were not released as there are other charges against them. They should have scruti-

nized the cases very carefully.

Anonymous

In Bangladesh the highest office bearer is not an elected person, and it is considered as an institution above political bias. It should have been above controversy. The law ministry did not do a good job by tainting its image.

Sheikh Monirul Islam, Opee

At a time when society is threatened by crimes against humanity, and criminals are gaining both in strength and number, the political government of the day has opened up the Pandora's Box of leniency against convicted criminals, the accused, and the suspected murderers. The benefit of this milk of human kindness is reserved for persons professing AL creed and ideology only. The judiciary has been mocked, trampled and left bleeding. The due process of law remains incomplete. The law ministry and the president out of nowhere intervene in the middle to release the alleged murderers. This is indeed unheard of.

Dr. Iftikhar-ul-Awwal

The nation would like to see that the president is for 150 million people of the country, not for a particular section. For consolidation of democracy, it's very important.

Dr. Islam



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Wholesale pardon under question

14 out of 20 death convicts in Gama killing case step out of jail; president's mercy draws mixed reaction (September 8, 2010)

Another example of the law not working equally for all. Powerful people can play with the law also!

Nilufar Yesmin Biswas

No comments. Who cares about our comment or opinion? Look at the on-line opinion polls conducted by major newspapers. Most of the on-line opinion polls went against this government, with a very clear message.

Nasir Tarafder

The blanket power of clemency to anybody was given to the president of the republic in good faith and the nation expects he will exercise his powers judiciously. There is a large grey area between lawful and unlawful acts and the presi-

dent has certainly stepped into it. The most disturbing, though, is the advice of the law ministry.

Jumana Sarwar

The souls of the convicts who were hanged will cry at night at the corners of our courts and presidential palace for being treated differently and shown no mercy.

Anonymous

Since liberation of Bangladesh, this verdict of execution of 20 persons for murdering only one person is a unique one. It seems to me that the IO could not identify the real killer.

Muhammad Abul Hossain, PhD