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## Sirajganj rail accident



PHOTO: ABDUL KUDUS

I read the news of Sirajganj rail accident carefully in The Daily Star of 12th October captioned 'Who is to be blamed?'

1. Did Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku, President of Sirajganj district unit of BNP, take permission from the relevant authorities for holding mass rally and meeting in that area?

2. The meeting place was not the usual one and not suitable for holding public meeting.

3. The meeting place was only 15 yards away from the railway tracks, and BNP volunteers had no control over the meeting goers. The volunteering and organising efficiency was poor.

4. They should not have allowed people to sit on the railway tracks. Railway track is meant for trains only.

5. A train may be delayed for many technical reasons. The organisers should not have taken the train schedule for granted.

So, from the analysis of the incidence it appears Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku, as the chief organiser and President of Sirajganj district BNP unit, should be blamed for the death of five persons.

Proper action should be taken against such irresponsible destructive elements. Nobody is above the law.

Dr. SN Mamoon  
One-mail

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Burning and torching vehicles is very common in Bangladesh. If a small accident occurs at any place, and the vehicle which has caused the accident quickly runs away from the scene, the nearby people immediately gather at the spot and start breaking all the vehicles, no matter whether those vehicles are responsible or not. None at the spot enquire about who was at fault - the victim or the driver. Accidents happen everywhere in the world. In the USA, no vehicle runs away from the scene. It is the police who rush to the spot.

Of course, death of 5 people in this incident is tragic and we feel sorry for those who lost their lives. But death in an accident cannot be made an issue to oust the government. I don't think democracy will ever be able to take strong roots in Bangladesh.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

## The moribund power sector

Power sector in Bangladesh seems to be a terminally sick patient, with no hope of recovery. The doctor has changed (From BNP to AL), but the patient is still in serious condition! Cynics and sceptics feel that there is a powerful 'Candle Manufacturing Lobby' behind all this. They are out to replace the electric lights, fans and air conditioners by candles and old rope-pulled manual 'Pankhas', that may still possibly be seen in remote rural 'kacharis'. That will be our domestic and commercial picture of power supply in the next few years. Meanwhile, day-by-day, our old fuel-guzzling power plants will be scrapped. By 2015, our actual

electric power generation capacity will be well below 3000MW.

Today our power demand is officially given as 5330MW; whereas, in reality it is at least 6500MW. The gap of 1170MW today, represents the saga of load shedding, now approaching to cover 50 percent of the 24-hour day (ie: 12 hours) black out across Bangladesh! Can candlepower be far behind, with the 'pull-pankha' also following it?

By the next decade, we will be back to the 1900 era of office work. The pen will replace electric typewriters, computers and other modern electronic calculators. Gone will be e-mail, wireless and internet and other global electronic telecommunication links. We will be back to

postal mail, with postal mail sorters, the railway mail service, and in rural areas we will have 'postal runners' who will be running across the country, carrying the mail sack on their backs!

The flip side will be that employment opportunity in the postal sector will increase by leaps and bounds! So will be the growth in railway and river steamer traffic to cope with the tons of mail and postal orders moving to and fro, supported by a few hours of telegraph service, totally dependent on in-house postal electric power generation! After all, we know that every dark cloud has a silver lining, as the wise men say!

S.A. Mansoor  
Dhaka



AMDAUL HUI/DRIKNEWS

## Dodgy doctors

It refers to The Daily Star's editorial titled 'Doctors' truancy costing dear.' Why are they leaving their duty stations? The absence of significant numbers of skilled professionals is one of the signs of a society's total or partial inability to allow those professionals to grow and thrive. While the causes of such an exodus may vary, the message that must be drawn is harsh: such movement almost invariably implies that our society is relatively less capable of supporting in logistical, technological, scientific or financial terms the activities of this special workforce.

We believe that physicians belong to this special workforce and that their exodus is highly significant. The debate surrounding physicians' absence trends is highly charged, but beyond sensationalism and scoring political points. We need to take a serious look at the issue because, even though the statistics

appear to suggest a slight improvement, the exodus from Bangladesh is real. Beyond mere figures, there is a "qualitative" exodus. As highly skilled physicians with special expertise depart, they leave behind hospitals incapable of providing extra-specialized care, surplus work for colleagues who remain and a weakened teaching base.

Coercive measures concerning physician employment must be eliminated. We have to take a fresh look at how our system is managed and find new ways to fund it, while still maintaining the principles embedded in the Bangladesh Health Act. Health care and the biomedical sciences have to aim for excellence. If we do that, then perhaps we will be able to offer our physicians a more attractive environment.

Gopal Sengupta  
Canada

## Trial of war criminals

The article entitled, "Don't try to save war criminals," in the Oct 7<sup>th</sup> of The Daily Star has drawn my attention. As an expatriate Bangladeshi, I would like to express my feeling and put forward our demand for trial of war criminals.

It was the present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who urged the opposition leader Khaleda Zia not to try to save the war criminals. It appears to be a great shame for the whole nation that after four decades of our independence, we have not yet been able to try the war criminals. The grand alliance under the leadership of the Awami League got the people's mandate to hold the trial of the war criminals through the landslide victory in the general election of 2008.

One, who really loves the motherland, loves the mother tongue, witnessed the horror and genocide of 1971, has feeling for the martyrs and the abused mothers and sisters, can never stand against the trial of war criminals. A recent opinion poll, carried out by The Daily Star, revealed that 88% of the people want the trial. The issue has already got momentum among the politicians and civil society members of the European countries and also other parts of the world. The trial issue has already obtained international support. The vast majority of the expatriate Bengalis support the trial of war criminals.

The trial of war criminals is essential for the reasons as mentioned below:

1. To save the history of our national independence from decomposition.

2. To counter repeated attacks from the anti-Liberation forces.

3. To counter religious extremism.

4. To enable our new generations to learn the real history.

If Khaleda Zia does not change her mind towards implementation of the trial of war criminals, it will indicate that she and her party have sided with war criminals. The common people also expect that BNP will not be a troublemaker in the process of holding the trial of war criminals.

Khorshed Ahmed  
Norway

## Treacherous people

I have had the rare opportunity to have a treasury bench member as my tenant for more than a decade. Upon coming back home from the oath taking ceremony at the national parliament, during the first tenure of AL, I happened to meet him. He said to me, "We are going to fix the country now." I simply replied, "You cannot." He got annoyed and asked me why I was saying that. I said, "Pardon me, I am neither a politician nor an intellectual, with my little learning and wisdom, I find the people treacherous." Hearing this, he got even more annoyed. I said, "Please allow me to explain."

I began to explain to him the following things: Let us begin from 1757. Who was Mir Zafar? He was a Bangalee and he betrayed the Nawab at the battle of Plassey paving the way for British rule in India for nearly two hundred years. Then let us come to 1947, Pakistan was the brainchild of a great Bangalee Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque. Late Jinnah, capitalising on the idea put forth by the great leader, became the founding father of the nation. In 1971, Bangladesh emerged as an independent country under the leadership of late Bangabandhu. Then in 1975, Bangabandhu was assassinated Bangalees. Late General Ziaur Rahman took charge and subsequently became the president of the country. He too, was assassinated in 1981. Then late Justice Sattar became the president and was subsequently taken over by General Ershad.

Then I asked the Honorable MP to tell me how he was going to fix the country. Hearing all these, he became dumbstruck and quietly left the place.

Saleh Ayub  
One-mail

## Governor Azam Khan

I was delighted to read in The Daily Star of 07<sup>th</sup> Oct Megasthenes' stroll down memory lane and to the governorship of Azam Khan in the then East Pakistan in the early 60s.

Though 'khaki' to the core, Gen Azam Khan was nevertheless a person who personified efficiency, incorruptibility and humanism in every action during his short time here. I can relate two incidents, which I know personally.

1. In 1960, Queen Elizabeth was due to visit East Pakistan on an official visit. The government gave great importance to it and spared no efforts to make her visit memorable. One flaw was, of course, the narrow, winding road from Tejgaon Airport to Shahbagh passing, which she would have to traverse, which was unthinkable.

The town plan called for a broad, straight, tree-lined avenue, but all efforts to vacate the area were mired in court cases and writs and other obstructive measures. With time running out, the DIT turned to the governor.

Gen Azam Khan asked just one question with the blueprints before him "Is this road in the Master Plan?" Receiving an affirmative reply, he thought for a moment and said to the R&H engineers - "Have your wrecking machinery ready at 6 am tomorrow at both ends of the road!" Next morning, he himself flagged off the bulldozers, etc. and ordered them to roll over anyone who obstructed them, even if they waved a writ. Within a week the road was open to traffic.

2. On 7 Oct 1960, a tropical storm of tremendous velocity lashed Chittagong lasting about one hour in the late evening (wind speed is said to have exceeded 250 mph). Chittagong was totally devastated within this short time and the damage was incalculable. It is not known when Gen Azam got the news, when he arrived in Chittagong or how, but it is a fact that he had been at relief work already for a couple of hours, when the unfortunate Deputy Commissioner, in a suit and tie, turned up. I wish there was some way we could repay him.

Sikander Ahmed  
Gulshan-1, Dhaka

## A great achievement!

Sheikh Hasina has been awarded by the UN for achieving one of the MDGs, which is reducing child mortality. Both the print and electronic media are highlighting this as a great achievement of the ruling party.

The Awami League has been in power for around one and a half year. And they have done a tremendous job in the area of child mortality! Ridiculous! The contributions of BNP and the caretaker government in achieving this goal must be admitted.

The govt. has to improve all other areas like: law and order, power crisis, traffic jam, gas crisis, prices of essentials, etc. In fact, the condition of all these has deteriorated dramatically. The people of Bangladesh should be awarded for their patience.

Nuruzzaman  
Polashpara  
Chuadanga

## Culture of peace

Peace is not only the absence of direct physical violence and war, but also the elimination of structural violence. It refers to the inner freedom and spiritual elevation of the individual.

While religion may be a direct source of inter-group violence, it appears that religious conflicts have more to do with how people and culture define themselves than with religious doctrine. Intolerance ignited most wars, fuelled religious persecutions and violent ideological confrontations in Europe and elsewhere.

Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement

## Remembering Che Guevara

If he had been alive today, Che would have turned 82 this year. His life was cut short at the age of 39 on October 9, 1967. Yet, 43 years after his death in captivity, he is very much alive and ever remembered.

Che lives in his ideas and in the struggle being waged by the people the world over for a better future for mankind. Che was a man of amazing courage and astonishing combative spirit. Full of sanguinity, optimism and faith in humanity, he never wavered in his convictions. During the most difficult days of the guerrilla war he always volunteered to undertake the most dangerous operations.

I wouldn't consider my death a frustration, but... I will take to my grave only the regret of an unfinished song', he wrote to his father from a prison in Mexico in 1956. Che was not only a heroic guerrilla. He was 'also a person of visionary intelligence and broad culture, a profound thinker', as Fidel told a memorial rally in Havana on October 18, 1967.



Che realised that the building of the new society, the revolutionary transformation required two pillars: the education of the new man and the development of technology. The excellent results achieved by Cuba in its development at present in both these fields show the potency and validity of Che's thought.

'Foreign trade should not determine policy, but should, on the contrary, be subordinated to a fraternal policy toward the peoples', he told the Afro-Asian Conference in

Algeria on February 24, 1965. This principle is today beginning to assert itself among member countries of the ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America) - a group of progressive countries in Latin America.

Che was above all an internationalist. Born in Argentina, he led the Cuban Revolution and died in Bolivia in an attempt to liberate its peasants.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam  
Faculty, NHTTI  
BPC

of the culture of war and violence by a culture of peace.

To establish a culture of peace, we need to consider that the other cultures and religions should not be misrepresented. Educational institutions and media outlets should not be used to propagate or perpetuate hate against any group of people and their recognised faiths and values. Islam, unfortunately, is still the target of stereotyping and misrepresentation.

Concern for the well-being of others should stimulate our efforts to reach a common ground for action.

Each group must encourage and facilitate a shared responsibility to create a more sensitive, and welcoming environment for our diverse people.

Mohammad Rajja  
Nepal Student Society  
Dhaka

## Secularism back

We hail the decision of the High Court, that Bangladesh

is now a secular state since the original constitution of 1972 has been automatically restored following the Supreme Court judgement on the Fifth Amendment. In this secular state everybody has religious freedom. Nobody can be forced to wear burqa, tupi, dhuti or shindur. I also think that there is no need to carry out religious processions and rallies.

Rubab Abdullah Shukla  
Dhaka Cantt.  
Dhaka

## Global warming



WAHID ADNAN/DRIKNEWS

"Home", an environmental documentary about Earth, depicts the future effect of global warming. How Bangladesh would be directly affected has been illustrated in it. While the impact of global warming has become a great concern for the people of the world, we have taken very few steps to combat it. The documentary warns that the future would be devastating if the pollutions are not minimised immediately. Dhaka, one of the most polluted cities in the world, would face massive prob-

lems.

The documentary provides very significant information like:

--5000 people a day die because of dirty drinking water.

--1 billion people have no access to safe drinking water.

--1 mammal in every 4, 1 bird in every 8, 1 amphibian in every 3, is threatened with extinction.

Let us play our part to combat global warming.

Mohammad Hossain Titu  
Fatullah  
Narayanganj

## Politicising the judiciary

As a conscientious citizen, and as a member of the youth who will inherit the current ills of our nation and society, I cannot help but deplore the manner of choosing the Chief Justice recently. Isn't the judiciary supposed to be independent? Even Barrister Rashna Imam says so in her article on judicial supersession.

I might not have an in-depth knowledge of the law or even legal philosophy, but like

any other lay citizen I can reason, and my reason tells me that allowing politics or politicians to meddle in the affairs of the judiciary will lead down a slippery slope from which there will be no return. Even the military in our country is not beyond politics. Rashna Imam argues on merit, and as a student who has to sit for exams every few weeks, I can appreciate choosing on merit.

We want a non-politicised judiciary.  
Altaf Mahmud  
Student  
North South University

## Load shedding

Winter is approaching slowly. It is mid October. We thought, at least at this time of the year, there would be less or no load shedding. But it seems that our expectation will not be fulfilled. The power situation is still the same as before. Today we experienced load shedding six times, and each time for one hour.

Please, do something urgently.  
Rana  
Mirpur  
Dhaka