

## STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING

# Will dead Laden be more potent than the living?

## Limon tragedy goes on

### High level intervention needed

A hapless victim of the use of arbitrary power by the law-enforcers, the teenage boy Limon has now landed in jail. The police have deprived the boy of a complete course of treatment of his amputated leg in order to produce him in a Jhalakathi court for hearing in an arms case. He was undergoing treatment at the orthopaedic Pangu Hospital in Dhaka after being shot in the leg by members of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) near his home in Jhalakathi.

It was a double jeopardy for Limon and his family members. The Pangu Hospital authority released him though he was still recovering.

Even the request from the chairman of the National Human Right Commission to keep the victim under treatment for some more days could not prevail upon the hospital authority.

This is how a victim of mistake by law-enforcers has now been subjected to further torture, apparently because the boy's father had sued the members of RAB for crippling his son.

This is not only an inexcusable wrong done to an innocent boy from a poor household, but also an instance of gross human rights violation. It would be worthwhile to note here that the RAB is already under scrutiny by the local as well international human rights watch bodies, the civil society and the media for their records in extrajudicial killings.

Manifestly, this is a reprehensible attempt by the police at covering up the grave offence of wrongly shooting college student Limon by indicting him in a trumped-up criminal charge.

Unfortunately, the home minister washed her hands of the matter by saying it is before the court.

Seemingly, the police, in connivance with the higher authorities are bent upon protecting themselves at the expense of a poor, unsuspecting citizen's career and life.

In this situation nothing short of the intervention from the highest authority can save Limon and his family from further tragedy.

## Gatekeepers as poachers?

### A new low in police behaviour

FIVE policemen were confined by angry villagers while fleeing after allegedly committing a robbery at a house in Ghasiara village in the early hours of Tuesday at Kaharol upazila in Dinajpur. In the mayhem that followed, mob set aflame the vehicle which carried the policemen, besieged the police rescue team and assaulted the DC. Such was the backlash.

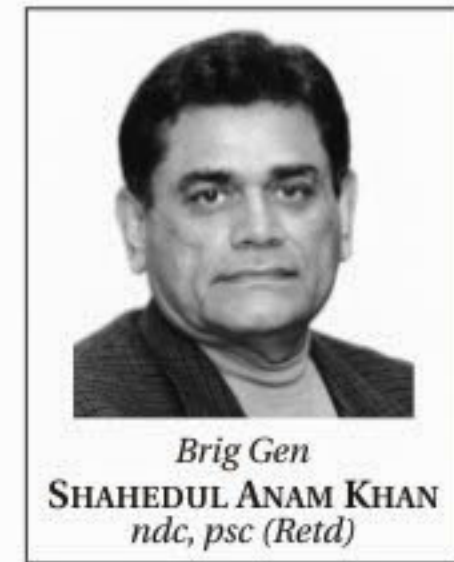
The captured cops, including the OC of Kaharol police station, were later rescued by a team of Rab and BGB. Seven policemen were suspended and the ASP closed along with 18 constables of the Birganj upazilla.

If the law enforcers, in whom we repose our trust and count on them for security, turn out to be the law breakers themselves, public trust in their institution naturally erodes. This brings the people and the police on a confrontational course. For all we know this is not quite an isolated incident because policemen were sometimes picked up indulging in offences.

It is also a reflection of the declining law and order situation especially in the rural areas where people's hearths and homes are susceptible to crimes. And there's the regular complaint against police highhandedness at rural police stations. Villagers are sometimes denied of their basic rights to lodge complaints with the police. It is still a colonial ambience in many places, where police acts more like a master. This must change.

We strongly urge the concerned authorities to embark on a serious investigation into the whole matter and mete out punishments to the perpetrators. We also like to point out that the hapless villagers should not be harassed by the police through instituting false cases en masse against them.

Just as police need to learn how to control mob so also



Brig Gen  
SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN  
ndc, psc (Retd)

THE jubilation in the US following the death of Osama bin-Laden is understandable. Never, perhaps, in the history of

the US had one man been so dreaded by a nation, certainly never one more reviled than the al-Qaeda leader, and surely never one whose end brought so much relief. His end has avenged the death of 3,000 US citizens but at the expense of thousands of Iraqi and Afghan lives.

The man who had broken the myth of US invincibility, and one who had succeeded in eluding the dragnet of the world's mightiest military machine for nearly ten years (as it turns out, with the help of some of those that were a part of a coalition in the GWOT) died in the hands of the very people that had helped him rise to prominence as a "freedom fighter" nay a Jihadist.

It is not surprising that Laden, and the Mujahideen of which he was an integral part during the anti-Soviet war, was venerated by the US. "These gentlemen are the moral equivalents of America's founding fathers," was how Ronald Reagan described the Mujahideen leaders while introducing them to the media on the White House lawns in 1985. Not only did the US government glorify them, it gave them billions of dollars in military aid, which eventually toppled the PDPA, a pro-woman secular government.

That he was a CIA creation there is no doubt. Former British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook's comments "bin Laden was a product of a monumental miscalculation by western security agencies. Throughout the '80s he was armed by the CIA and

funded by the Saudis to wage jihad against the Russian occupation of Afghanistan," add credence to Laden's being "their man." And he was one of the many that became Frankenstein for the US.

In view of the contradictory statements from Pakistan and the US about the operation, there can be many theories, and delving on these will be a waste of time. But one cannot help ponder on some of the questions that the military action and

the military forces of the two countries for some time. And this is bound to shape their future bilateral relationship. On the other hand, it will be difficult for Pakistan to explain how bin Laden got to be ensconced in Abbottabad. All the explanations from Pakistan, some of them self-contradictory, appear tardy and facile.

It is difficult to accept that the ISI was not in the knowledge of the presence of the world's most wanted terrorist in Abbottabad, a garrison

on him, to escape the wrath of the al-Qaeda.

But moving away from the world of speculations to the realm of reality, the question is what next? It is true that al-Qaeda's capability and his hold over the Muslim world had been overestimated. He was credited by the West with more than Laden or al-Qaeda was capable of. Certainly he pulled many Muslims towards his cause by exploiting the double standards of the West and the US on the issues of Palestine, the occupied areas, and generally the Middle East. But his method was abhorred by a great majority of his ideological adherents and the Muslims in general. In fact the al-Qaeda's influence and trans-frontier capability had been on the decline. And it is not a well-structured political entity either whose writ had been becoming narrower.

However, to elate at Laden's death as being the death knell of al-Qaeda, or indeed religious terrorism, may perhaps be a bit premature. There are objective conditions which, if not addressed with sincerity, may find more stepping into his shoes. And that is what the world must concentrate on and ensure that the causes which help foster such forces are eliminated altogether.

President Obama has delivered on the commitment he made during his election campaign that the US would not hesitate to pursue Laden even inside Pakistan territory should it have credible and actionable intelligence. Justice has been done, but only partly. The death of bin Laden has put a greater burden on Obama to see that justice is fully done. The end of Laden has given Obama a political windfall. The world is waiting to see whether he will use it to deliver on his commitment to ensure a just world.

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killing of Laden has thrown up, particularly those relating to the future conduct of operation against the war on terror and Pakistan's role therein, future US-Pak relations and the question of Pakistan's national sovereignty, and above all, will the end of Laden see the end of religious terrorism.

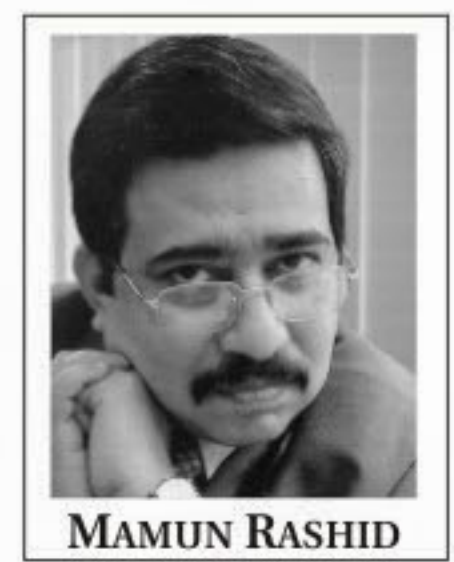
If anything it has confirmed the severe deficit of trust between the US and Pakistan, an issue that had beset the operational relationship between

town in a border district close to the Kashmir frontier, hundreds of miles from the Afghan border, whose access to it from Islamabad is extremely limited. The question is whether the Pakistan government was in the knowledge of it.

It is an equally plausible explanation that the establishment in Pakistan was fully aware of the presence of Laden but did not go for him because Pakistan did not want to be seen as having pulled the trigger

## THIRD EYE

# Sorry Mr. Ibrahim Khaled!



MAMUN RASHID

COURTESY Bangladesh Economic Association, I know Mr. Ibrahim Khaled since 1982. He studied in Dhaka

University's science faculty and then completed his MBA from Institute of Business Administration. Apart from creating excellence in commercial banking, he did a very good job even at the central bank as its deputy governor. Before that, he worked in Agrani Bank, Sonali Bank, Bangladesh Krishi Bank and Palli Karma Shayahak Foundation. Besides, he was the president of Bangladesh MBA Association and was also engaged with many socially active organisations.

He played a significant role in reorganising the erstwhile almost sick Pubali Bank Ltd. Throughout his career, he was very firm in his conviction and committed to the causes of people. He was extremely strong against trade unionism in the state owned banks and even put his foot down for bringing in discipline in those banks. He was always loud and clear for democratic causes, chain of command and maintained uncontroversial ethical standards.

He retired from Pubali Bank and decided to dedicate his rest of the life to the cause of children and juveniles as the "Dada Bhai," or director, of *Kachi Kachar Mela*, the oldest juvenile organisation in the country. Despite a few people having some uneasy feelings about his being too blunt about democratic standards, he was posted as the chairman of

Bangladesh Krishi Bank. Readers might feel I have written a testimonial for Mr. Khaled. Not really, I am rather writing a sorry note for him for what is happening around him lately. In view of the massive debacle in the country's bourses, the government looked for a "strong person" to enquire into the causes of the stock market crash and come up with some appropriate policy recommendations, and he was chosen.

The time given was two months and he was given two colleagues to help him initially.--Dr. Taufiq Ahmed

Chowdhury, Director General of BIBM, and Mr. Abdul Bari, a partner in leading accounting firm, (also former president of Institute of Chartered Accountants, Bangladesh). Later, the country's noted legal counsel and a knowledgeable person in capital market issues--Nihad Kabir joined the team.

Those of us who always thought that whatever was happening in our bourses, and especially in the regulatory body, was mainly a moral issue, welcomed the move and were confident that the team would do a good job. The team consulted almost all stakeholders possible within the stipulated time and submitted the report in time. Though the report could have been little more extensive, the team did a respectable job with regard to finding the possible causes

of the debacle in the primary market as well as secondary market, and most importantly came up with a good "health check" and "policy recommendations." The report revealed serious moral, competency and capacity issues in the regulatory body, and a few tycoons making best use of those to their benefit.

The report showed that people from all walks of life, more importantly "those who matter in Bangladesh," were involved with the "pre-IPO capital raising process." The issuers and intending issuers made

best use of the policy and guideline disconnects and made big-time gains for their sponsors. The Bangladesh market being predominantly retail driven and commanded by the issuers with small "off loads," the issuers as well as a few "big brothers" in the

secondary market made best use of the ignorance of the retail investors as well as their idea of "one-way traffic" the stock prices can only go up.

They either hoodwinked the regulatory body or got it on their side. The enquiry team found serious faults with regard to price discovery in book building process, initial capital raising through private placement, valuation of the stock, reduction of the face value, omnibus account, margin loans, extraordinary exposure of banks to the capital market, etc.

The committee therefore made

some drastic clean-up recommendations for the watchdog body and suggested a few policy options to keep the retail investors protected in future. Though I have my points of difference with some of their findings and recommendations, I thought the underlying tone of the report was very relevant to the desired future of our capital market. I always thought an investor was an investor, wholesale or retail, and people joining the bourses should do their "home work," irrespective of the classification.

It is not only the large issuers who are to blame, rather the watchdog body, which was susceptible to pressure or connived with the issuers or a few "big brothers," should bear the responsibility the most. Everywhere in the world big business houses want to take advantage of the inadequacy or ambiguity of the guidelines.

However, the music now being faced by members of the enquiry committee, especially its chairman, has pained me and compelled me to announce my wholehearted solidarity with the enquiry committee. The engaging authority, specially the present political regime, should stand up and protect themselves--and especially Mr. Khaled, who all along followed their "core values." Otherwise, the incidental expenses could be very high, and nobody will join an enquiry committee or clean-up drive. Stakeholders who supported the "change drive" put up by the present regime will become frustrated.

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## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

May 5

1215

Rebel barons renounce their allegiance to King John of England -- part of a chain of events leading to the signing of the Magna Carta.

1260

Kublai Khan becomes ruler of the Mongol Empire.

1821

Emperor Napoleon I dies in exile on the island of Saint Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean.

1941

Emperor Haile Selassie returns to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the country commemorates the date as Liberation Day or Patriots' Victory Day.

1945

World War II: Canadian and UK troops liberate the Netherlands and Denmark from Nazi occupation when Wehrmacht troops capitulate.

1946

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East begins in Tokyo with twenty-eight Japanese military and government officials accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

1955

West Germany gains full sovereignty.