

BARE FACTS

## Lawmaker's many hats

### Abuse of position taken too far

WE have known ruling party lawmakers to be wielding power in various capacities. They have a mandated advisory role in the upazila parishad and have a say in the district councils as well. An add-on is their chairmanship of school managing committees.

In the latter role, the Awami League legislator from Jhenidah-4 constituency appears to be a record breaker. He is reportedly chairing managing committees at seven educational institutions in his area. Clearly, he has bitten more than he could chew.

More seriously, this is a violation of government rules. Although the rules themselves appear rather liberal as they allow for an MP to hold chairman's post in a maximum of four educational institutions, overshooting that threshold is patently unacceptable. In principle, professional people should be heading the school, madrasa and college managing committees.

The fundamental argument against preponderant role of ruling party MPs in management of educational institutions is two-fold. In recruitment of teachers they are alleged to have a partisan bias at the cost of merit and competence of the teachers taken in. In extreme cases, individuals have been put on the pay-roll but who wouldn't even care to visit a school except at the time of doling. In the process, quality of education takes the worst kind of hit; no wonder the dropout is 21 percent at the primary level.

Secondly, allocations to the education sector, though far from the ideal level, are on the rise. Substantial amounts of money flow down the funnel. Vested interests develop around the MPO (monthly payment order), that numerous schools are covered by, with them scrambling to get a finger in the pie. Little wonder, according to TIB studies, education sector, particularly the primary segment ranks high on the corruption index.

Our hope is that the education ministry which has achieved a measure of success in various of aspects of primary and secondary education will not be found wanting in getting to the bottom of the Jhenidah incident. If necessary policy adjustments would have to be made to determine composition of the management committees and reformulate their terms of reference.

## JU students going berserk

### Is this the way to ventilate a grievance?

OUTRAGEOUS is perhaps an understatement to describe the behaviour of some of the students of Jagannath University (JU) the day before yesterday. They were protesting the discontinuation of government funding of their institution, among other things. In the process they held up traffic for several hours and a large number of vehicles were vandalised. This is unacceptable and most contemptible even if they had a grievance to articulate. The situation was further aggravated by the action of the BCL cadres on the agitating students.

We wonder why protests must always take violent form, more so from a segment of the society from whom we expect sane behaviour. We wonder also whether the students realise the great inconvenience to the great number of people caught in the tailback that extended several kilometers. What was the fault of the stranded commuters and of those whose vehicles were senselessly vandalized?

Reportedly, there were about 3000 students that split into two groups for two different places. We fail to understand why the police did not get wind of what the students were up to. It takes time and effort to get so many people together. Why the reaction of the police had to wait till an MP's car got caught up in the melee, and why persuasion was not resorted to by the police before they went into action against the students?

When will we learn that civilised form of representation is a better way of conveying one's genuine problems? What the students of JU did will only help alienate people as they stand to lose the respect of the people.

However, the students have grievances that should be addressed immediately. Reportedly, they have been agitating on these issues, like enhanced tuition fees, university transport, and most of all freeing their halls of residence from illegal occupation, for the last two years, and we feel that if the authorities were mindful of the complaints of the students the situation might not have come

# Role of tourism in linking together world cultures



M ABDUL LATIF MONDAL

WORLD Tourism Day (WTD) is celebrated annually on September 27, aiming at fostering awareness among the international community of its social, cultural, political and economic value. The theme of WTD 2011 is "Tourism-- Linking Cultures." It has been chosen with the intention of highlighting tourism's role in bringing the cultures of the world together and promoting global understanding through travel.

The Egyptian city of Aswan will host the official 2011 WTD celebrations, which include a high-level think tank on this year's theme. Egypt, which is world famous for its rich history and cultural heritage, has rightly been chosen as the host for this year's WTD celebrations.

In his message on the occasion, Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Dr. Taleb Rifai, said that tourism helps bring millions of people from different cultures together and this interaction between people of different backgrounds and ways of life represents an enormous opportunity to advance tolerance, respect and mutual understanding. While terming culture as one of our precious assets, he stressed on the need for its preservation by asking people to conduct tourism in a way that preserves and enriches the cultural wealth of the world for future generations.

Tourism brings peace and cooperation among nations, and builds bridges. While speaking to more than 60 tourism ministers from Muslim countries in Baku, Azerbaijan in September 2006, Francesco Frangialli, the then UNWTO secretary-general, called on world leaders for strengthening tourism links to promote cross-cultural understanding, and to use the power of tourism to build new global gesture of understanding between states.

Tourism is also known as human history. Fa-Hien and Hsuen-Tsang, the earliest Chinese travelers to visit the Indian sub-continent during the rules

of Chandragupta II (375-413) and Harshavardhana (606-647), respectively, have left us reliable accounts of the politico-socio-economic and religious conditions of the sub-continent during the period of their visits.

Marco Polo, a Venetian traveler, journeyed through Asia for 24 years, reached China and became a confidant of the Chinese ruler Kublai Khan (1214-1294). He traveled the whole of China and returned to tell the tale, which became "the greatest travelogue."

Mahasthangarh in Bogra, Paharpur in Noagaon and Mainamati in Comilla speak of the old civilisation that flourished in the geographical area that now constitutes Bangladesh.

Mahasthangarh, the oldest archaeological site of the country, is an imposing landmark in the area, having a fortified long enclosure. Beyond the fortified area, other ancient ruins fan out within a semi-circle of about 8 km radius. Several isolated mounds surround the area. According to Banglapedia, Mahasthangarh is not only the one city site among the

and Hindus alike.

About 8 km to the west of Comilla lie the low hills known as MainamatiLalmaj ridge, an extensive centre of Buddhist culture. It houses a treasure of information about the early Buddhist civilisation, spreading over five centuries starting from the 8th century.

Star mosque and Husaini Dalan in Dhaka city, Kantaji temple at Dinajpur, Adinath temple at Moheshkhali, Cox's Bazar are among the important religious sites of the medieval period to attract tourists.

Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha are the two most important religious festivals of the Muslims whileDurga puja is the most important religious festival of the Hindus of the country.

Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla year, is celebrated in a festive manner. The 21st February is observed in remembrance of the sacred souls of the martyrs of language movement of 1952. These are secular celebrations widely participated in by the people of all religions in the country.

The music and dances of the ethnic minority groups like Chakma, Marmas, Tripuras and Murangs in three hill districts of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari and of Tripuras, Manipuris, Khasis and Mandis (Garos) in Sylhet region are our valuable cultures.The tourism industry of the country has not yet been able to exploit the rich cultural heritage to make Bangladesh an important tourist destination. It has not yet succeeded in establishing an effective bridge between Bangladeshi culture and the world cultures, and thereby attracting tourists from abroad. This is due to a number of factors, which include poor image of the country as a tourist destination, poor infrastructural facilities, comparatively poor knowledge of the policy makers about the prospect of tourism, insufficient investment from public and private sectors, etc. The earlier we can address these constraints, the better it will be for our tourism industry.

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LITON RAHMAN/ DRINK NEWS

*Tourism helps bring millions of people from different cultures together and this interaction between people of different backgrounds and ways of life represents an enormous opportunity to advance tolerance, respect and mutual understanding.*

The Moroccan traveler Ibne Batuta, one of the greatest travelers of all time, journeyed through the entire Muslim world of his days plus Ceylon, Byzantium, China and south Russia for 29 years. We get an account of his journey from his famous *Rihala*, or The Journey, that he dictated to Ibne Juzayy on completion of his journey. From *Rihala*, we come to know about cultural variation of the peoples in the regions and countries he visited.

As for Bangladesh, she can take pride in her rich and vibrant culture. The archaeological sites at

mostly religious sites in Bangladesh but also a city going back to the distant past (3rd-2nd century BC). It is contemporary with the early historic sites of the Gangetic valley -- Vaisali, Pataliputra, and Kausambi to name only a few.

Somapura Mahavihara, built by Pala king Dharmapala in the eighth century at Paharpur, is among the best known Buddhist *viharas* in the Indian subcontinent and is one of the most important archaeological sites in Bangladesh. It was an important intellectual centre for Buddhists, Jains

# Remembering Tiger Pataudi

FAROOQ SOBHAN

THE first time I met Tiger Pataudi was in October, 1961. We met in his rooms at Balliol College in Oxford. He had invited some friends to listen to some Indian classical music. He provided the accompaniment on the tabla. Tiger by then was already the most famous student at Oxford. The Nawab of Pataudi was rated as the best batsman to have ever played for Oxford. He was without doubt something of a legend at Oxford. He cut a dashing figure, with his aristocratic features. But what made him special was the kind of cricket he played. Cavalier, swash-buckling, flamboyant are some of the words that come to mind. He was a treat to watch.

A close friend and contemporary of ours at Oxford, Mueen Afzal, had this to say about Tiger, or as we affectionately referred to him, as the "Noob": "Sad to hear of the death of the original Noob. The year 1961 was when he was at his best. I was fortunate to see him bat against the leading bowlers in English cricket: Statham, Truman, Titmus, Illingworth, Tattersall, Wilson et al. That summer, the Aussies came to Oxford and played the Varsity on the Christ Church grounds on Ilfley Road. Benaud, Mackenzie and some others played although Davidson was rested, but the Noob found the bowling no trouble at all. When the bowlers brought midwicket or mid-on in,

he would just go down the wicket and place the ball over their heads to the boundary. His fielding was outstanding in the covers and his throw would come in like a bullet."

While still at Oxford, Tiger had been selected to play for India at the ripe old age of 20. He was then involved in terrible car accident and lost the sight of his right eye. The entire cricketing world thought that Tiger's cricketing days were over. Well Tiger had other plans. He was back at the nets within a few months of his accident. Not only did he play for India within months of the accident but was also selected during the Indian tour of the West Indies in 1962 to captain the Indian team. At the age of 21 he was to become the youngest person to captain a test side in the history of cricket.

During my stay in Delhi as High Commissioner from 1992-1995, I had the pleasure of meeting Tiger on a number of occasions, but perhaps my

most memorable recollection of him was a cricket match in Lahore in December 1992. I had gone to Lahore to attend the wedding of the daughter of a close Oxford friend of mine, Farid Riaz, who was married to Tiger's sister. Farid's son-in-law was none other than the son of Shahryar Khan, former foreign secretary of Pakistan and later to be president of the Pakistan Cricket Control Board.

The day after the wedding a cricket match was held on the grounds of Aitchison College in Lahore. The match was to be the Bhopal XI captained by Sharyar Khan versus the Pataudi XI, captained by Tiger. After some debate it was agreed that the only person qualified to umpire the match was myself. I readily agreed.

When Tiger came out to bat, there was clearly a great sense of excitement and expectation. Tiger at the time was one month short of his 52nd birthday and had not played cricket for some 15 years. Imagine the disap-

pointment when failing to play any stroke to the first two balls, Tiger was plumb LBW to the next ball. Well as umpire I emphatically rejected the appeal. The next ball there was a clear snick, again the shout of "how's that" was heard from the fielding side. I said "no ball." This caused some surprise to the bowler, since he was well within the bowling crease. I was then obliged to inform the bowler that the large crowd present had come to see Tiger bat and not to see him get out. We were then treated to some vintage strokes before Tiger was out for the third time. This time I very reluctantly raised my finger. As he walked back to the pavilion the thought did cross my mind that this was certainly the last time that we would see Tiger at the batting crease.

Perhaps the only time that I can recall that Tiger visited Bangladesh was in June 1996. I arranged for him to be invited to join the team of election observers from the Commonwealth. When I rang Tiger in Delhi to ask him whether he would be interested in coming, he said "most certainly'." He enjoyed his short trip to Dhaka very much and expressed the hope that he would have an opportunity to visit again.

Tiger was an iconic figure. Nawab Sahib or my dear friend, the Noob, may your soul rest in peace.

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## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

September 27

1529

The Siege of Vienna begins when Suleiman I attacks the city.

1669

The Venetians surrender the fortress of Candia to the Ottomans, thus ending the 21-year long Siege of Candia.

1928

The Republic of China is recognised by the United States.

1940

World War II: The Tripartite Pact is signed in Berlin by Germany, Japan and Italy.

1996

In Afghanistan, the Taliban capture the capital city Kabul after driving out President Burhanuddin Rabbani and executing former leader Mohammad Najibullah.