Turning Emotion into Positive Energy

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It is usually said that people after fifty who are away from their ancestral abodes must feel bonded to their roots. This is an innately human pining for the lost or occasionally visited land of one's own! You might call it a flicker of patriotic wish on the part of Bangladeshi Diaspora or a genuine, spiritual, nostalgic metaphysical bonding felt to the land of one's birth.

But if that kind of intense feeling should be pervasive and centred around Eid festivities among people living in Bangladesh then we are surely in a potentially transformative emotional state of mind. It is both pleasurable as well as woe-stricken in many ways. The great lengths to which people of all walks of life take pains to celebrate Eid with their near and dear ones in their ancestral homes are acquiring an epical proportion. They overload the buses, launches, trucks and whatever they can ride on, sometimes at the unearthly hours they can manage to get on board.

The trains brimming on their fronts and up on the rooftops as flailing human limbs desperately cling to the sides so as not to be pushed into the throes of death. Of the countless scenes of desperation to get home, one remembers two for the fatal attraction that homebound Eid journeys have turned out to be. In one of the instances, a person on the roof of a train passing under the low ceiling of a bridge was hit on the head sending shivers down the spine of the onlookers as he breathed his last. On the same day, four other cliffhanging souls fell off the running trains to die, emptying the hearts of their dependants who saw their Eid mired in unmitigated pathos. Then there was the scene of a woman hanging from an over bridge to land on the roof of a train with the help of a forest of hands.

The sights may have been unseemly to many but there is no mistaking the groundswell of human compassion for fellow beings at launch terminals, on the decks, in and out of the trains and bus terminals.

They quietly put up with the long queuing for the tickets day and night, the traffic tailbacks for hours, despite modest improvement in road conditions, adding a great new dimension to the spirit of tolerance of our people. Only if our political leaders and managers had taken a cue from their voters.

The phenomenal desperation to celebrate Eid out of Dhaka can be substantially put down to an escapist attitude fuelled by the fire of traffic congestion, hardship living and many other discomforts city-dwellers' face on a daily basis. They have little recreation, the struggle for life is uphill, they crave for a breathing space. Driven by the trepidations of political uncertainty, being pushed to the newer edges of the ridge they are trying to cling to perhaps the last holding point before things get better, what could be their longing but to get some solace to a burning heart that Eid provides them!

We are a very emotional people topped up by a layer of talent, something which can release positive energies for astounding growth should our political leadership steady the rocking boat to reach the shore of our collective and highly legitimate aspirations.

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