

Remembering the martyred intellectuals



MD. ASADULLAH KHAN

AFTER being subjected to two decades of exploitation and humiliation and with the ultimate brutality inflicted on a sleeping nation on the night of March 25, 1971, the people of then East Pakistan, although unarmed, rose in rebellion against the perpetrators. The founding premise of Pakistan ideology as also the objective of keeping the two parts of Pakistan intact through a common religion was shattered. Though the whole country, meaning the then East Pakistan inhabited by Bangalee speaking people, suffered and witnessed torture, rape and massacre, none could stop its 75 million people from going their separate way after the fateful night of March 25, 1971.

Forman Ali, who was assisted by Brig. Bashir and Captain Qaiyum along with Bangalee masterminds like Ghulam Azam and Maulana Mannan, to name a few. Around November 1971, sub-zonal Martial Law Administrator Brig. Bashir began briefing the al-Badr and al-Shams about the plan. From December 4, curfew and blackouts were imposed in Dhaka city to facilitate the plan. From December 12, the operations were in full swing.

Similar heinous crimes were carried in different places of the country. The victims' crime was that they were enlightened Bangalees. They, after all, represented the main driving force of the nation. They were ardent patriots who believed that some day the nation would be free. They advocated the creation of an independent secular state as Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman articulated in his historic address at Race Course Maidan on March 7, 1971. By all reckoning, the nation became poorer at the loss of these best sons of the soil who were our pride.

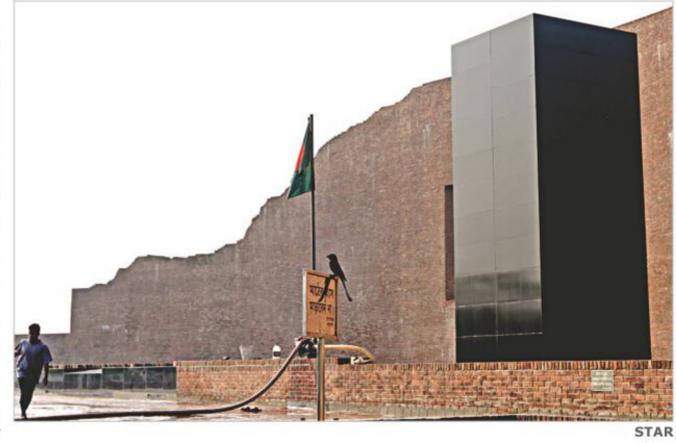
Forty two years after liberation, people with those ugly incidents of the dark days etched in their memory recall with shock and trepidation how the marauding Pak army carried

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the fiery leader, was taken from his house that night and flown to West Pakistan. To secure the supremacy of Pakistan the then president and Martial law Administrator Gen. Yahya Khan ordered his commanders in the eastern wing to start the cleansing process. It is pertinent to recall what some top brass in the 16th Division headquarters at Comilla said at that time: "We are determined to cleanse East Pakistan once and for all of the threat of secession even if it means killing two million people and keeping the province as colony for 30 years."

Just two days before our victory in the War of Liberation, the most heinous and sinister crime was committed by the Pak occupation army and their collaborators, al-Shams, al-Badr, and Razakars. They were deliberate, calculated and cold blooded assassinations aimed at crippling the backbone of the nation struggling to free itself from the clutches of the Pakistani hordes. The Pakistan army and its collaborators systematically rounded up the country's top intellectuals, including doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, litterateurs and journalists, and killed them in cold blood. Their bodies were thrown into the marshes in Rayerbazar and Mirpur.

The occupation forces had reasoned that intellectuals were a major threat to them. It was they who sowed the seeds of rebellion. It was from them that the voices of protest were the loudest and the courage to defy authority stemmed. So if the source of strength could be cut off, the remaining task of keeping the Bangalees under subjugation would be easier. With such a diabolical plan, the assassins worked and to a great extent succeeded. Now, 42 years after that terrible day, we not only mourn the loss of those brilliant minds, but also the intellectual and psychological void created by their untimely deaths when the country needed them most in the formative years.

According to documents released after the liberation war, more than 100 intellectuals belonging to different professions were killed. The plot to kill them was drawn up by Gen. Rao



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out its "kill and burn" mission.

Occasions like Victory day and Martyred Intellectuals Day, despite being recurring annual events, are far from repetitive experiences, and each year they carry an emotional load. Not only did we win freedom, we paid an enormously high price for it, and proved to the world that we are capable of snatching our freedom from an absolutely tyrannical regime.

Unhappily, the saga written in blood and enormous sacrifice has not been faithfully recorded. Distortions were made, falsifications introduced and myths and false heroes were invented with every passing year. And this doctored history has been going on till date. Through half-hearted homage paid to the liberation heroes and martyrs, the significance of the Liberation War is not properly understood, but rather greatly minimised.

Our best tribute to the martyred intellectuals can only be paid through whole-hearted upholding of the spirit of liberation in both words and deeds.

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Are the EC Commissioners delivering on their oath of office?

SHAKHAWAT LITON

BEFORE entering office in February 2012, the CEC Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad and four commissioners had taken the oath to preserve, protect and defend the constitution. They also have sworn that they would faithfully discharge the duties of their offices according to law.

They are now doing their most crucial task of holding the January 5 parliamentary election. Their success and failure to do the job well will determine largely the fate of country's democracy, which still survives mainly on elections. Their activities centring on the election however triggered many questions along with fear of continuation of democratic process. Are they performing their duties according to the constitution? What are the duties of their office and how are they performing these and how are they preserving, protecting and defending the constitution?

The Appellate Division in its verdict on the Constitution's 13th Amendment case said that "The onus for violation of the constitution must be put on the election commission on its failure to hold the polls in time," stated Justice ABM Khairul Haque, then former chief justice who led the apex court to declare the 13th amendment to the constitution illegal and void. He made the observation analysing the EC's constitutional obligation and the failure of the EC-led by Justice Aziz to hold the parliamentary polls in time.

The SC delivered the verdict in May 2011 and the text of it was released in September 2012. In some other cases, the Supreme Court had also discussed the importance of the EC's functions. More than a decade ago the Appellate Division in Noor Hossain versus Nazrul Islam case observed, "Time and again this division held that it is the responsibility if the Election Commission to see that the election is conducted justly, honestly and fairly..."

Considering the significance of the EC's responsibility, the framers of the constitution have provided the EC members with protection and honour. To ensure free, fair and impartial elections, the constitution declares that the EC shall be independent in the exercise of its functions and be subject only to the constitution and other laws. And the constitution also says that an EC member can be removed only on the grounds and in the manner a judge of Supreme Court may be removed. This protection was given to maintain their independence and freedom from political and executive influence. The constitution also imposes a bar on the government to take any arbitrary decision regarding the EC members' remuneration. The constitution states that their remuneration, privileges and other terms and conditions of service shall not be varied to their disadvantage during their term of office.

Like the constitutional post-holders, including the president and prime minister and Judges of Supreme Court, the remuneration, privileges and other terms and condition of the CEC and the commissioners have been determined by an act of parliament. So that the holders of these offices may perform their duties free of any consideration except that of public interest. Not only that, to ensure their independence and neutrality, a person holding office of the CEC and commissioners shall not be eligible for appointment in the service of republic.

Parliament may make any legislation to strengthen the EC more. But it can not do anything to curtail the EC's constitutional authority. "Parliament may by law regulate the exercise of the power by the Commission, but such a law has to be in conformity with the constitution and it cannot in any way curtail or diminish the effectiveness of the Commission in holding free and fair elections," writes former attorney general Mahmudul Islam in his book "Constitutional Law of Bangladesh."

Given the above facts, it can be stated that the constitution speaks emphatically for a strong constitutional institution, EC, for holding free fair elections, a fundamental of democracy. Rakibuddin and the four other election commissioners have been enjoying all the constitutional protections and honour since their appointment in February 2012. But what they are now delivering in the name of holding the parliamentary election has undermined the dignity of the constitutional offices they are holding.

The January 5 parliamentary election is already mired into controversy. Candidates in more than half of the 300 constituencies are set to be elected uncontested. In absence of the BNP-led opposition and other parties in the polls, the ruling AL ensured such uncontested victory of their candidates in a compromise with others candidates nominated by AL allies.

Allegations of undue influence by ruling party candidates have marred the electoral process in many areas. Jatiya Party candidates were kept forcibly in the election fray as per the government wish. Many unpleasant incidents have taken place. But the EC under leadership of Rakibuddin remains silent. Like the AL-led government, the EC has also been desperately trying to hold the election on January 5 at any cost. Their activities apparently prove that they are much loyal to the government that appointed them.

Do all those actions conform to the constitutional obligation and duty of Rakibuddin and his team? Are they working to preserve, protect and defend the constitution? Are they discharging their duties faithfully according to their oath?

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Majority rule: How good is it?

M. WAHIDUZZAMAN

WE should not be surprised or dismayed to see what is happening today in the political arena of Bangladesh. This does not dilute our brilliant and glorious past of party politics that brought us nationhood and gave us democracy.

The ongoing political crisis is essentially the result of majority rule, a concept, a theory or a system on which modern democracies are managed and run. The crisis could have been less, much less, if not absent. What is happening in Bangladesh today does not exceed the ramifications of crisis of majority rule as so beautifully spelled out in the book The Myth of Majority Rule. How good a system is depends on how well we manage or operate it.

Historically, majority rule came in the wake of kingship, monarchy, dynastic rule, one party rule and rule of the few -- oligarchy -- and is seen as sine qua non for democracy. However, majority rule does not deliver according to the desire of the people anywhere in the world. It does not promote democracy of the people, for the people and by the people as it should. Maybe, it does somewhere, yes somewhere. It is seen as majority rule over the minority in the legislature. In that case the minority acts out its plan and strategy to become a majority in the next election. The spiral goes on and on unless the vitiated atmosphere of democracy comes to normal.

The practitioners of democracy see no alternative to majority rule, but they have researched and analysed what causes crisis in majority rule and how this crisis can be mitigated and resolved.

The woes of majority rule come from the binary voting

system in which the voter supports one candidate and rejects the other -- in which one wins and the other loses. According to an academic, this creates a psychological problem for the loser because nobody wants to become a loser. So, the minority in the legislature feels challenged to prove that the one-time voting decision was wrong and, equally, the majority in the legislature also feels challenged to act to retain its rule.

politics, political parties and majority rule more clearly than party leaders. They understand the value of tolerance, understanding, mutual trust, compromise and consensus to foster democracy, good governance and welfare of the people. All this we read in the literature on democracy and majority rule. Taking a consensus on how to hold the ensuing general elections in Bangladesh has become an urgent and immediate necessity.

But facing a crisis of this sort at the end of the five-year term of a majority rule is a perennial problem of majority rule in Bangladesh. It must not be allowed to happen, particularly because majority rule, or democracy for that matter, is seen as an alternative to kingship, monarchy, dynastic rule, one party rule and oligarchy. Democracy is not a game and democracy does not deliver through party squabbles. Democracy allows holding of different opinions but major and national issues must be settled on consensus.

Consensus on major issues brings credibility to majority rule. To avert arising of crisis under majority rule major issues should be settled as and when they arise -- at the national assembly or at any other place or venue -- through compromise and concession. And for that we sometime need to come out of party wall to attend a parley or a party.

Could we throw a party now?

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Political entropy: Monarchy to "mobocracy"

QUAMRUL HAIDER

ORIGINALLY introduced by Rudolf Clausius in 1865, entropy -- a Greek word meaning "turning into" -- is a well-defined quantity arising from the second law of thermodynamics. It is a quantitative measure of disorder for a microscopic system. According to the second law, the entropy of a naturally occurring process always increases and is "irreversible." In other words, nature has an affinity for chaos. It moves from a state of less disorder towards a state of more disorder.

The concept of entropy is not confined to physics only. Although an abstract quantity, it has begged for universal application and has been widely applied in other disciplines, notably political and social sciences, psychology, evolutionary biology, and information theory, but often with different definitions and interpretations of the term. In the physical sciences, entropy has been characterised variously as randomness, "heat" death, energy dissipation, arrow of time, etc. In the social sciences, it carries the connotation of disorganisation, anarchy, dystopia and apocalypse.

Social scientists apply the concept of entropy to understand the degree of satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction in the human society. It is also used to determine whether a society will eventually decompose to a state of total disorder or anarchy as its complexity increases with time.

Political scientists, on the other hand, use entropy to study how nations, starting from monarchies, a state of less disorder, progress toward aristocracies, which in time gives way to autocracies. As the entropy increases, the political system changes from autocracies to democracies to dictatorships. Any dictatorial regime that is oblivious of its people's demand contributes to the increase of the political entropy, thereby leading to "mobocracy." Unlike thermodynamic entropy, political and social entropies are "reversible."

The transition from dictatorship to mobocracy depends on the psychodynamics of the dictators. Most of the dictators are egoistical, narcissistic maniacs, completely detached from their people, surrounded by stooges and overzealous, greedy enablers. Their mind is programmed to

believe that they are indispensable to the stability and well-being of their nations. Hence, they control the entire machinery of the state and its security apparatus.

Dictators use patriotism as a trump card to gain the support, or at least the acquiescence, of the citizens. They use state terrorism to wield their power and consolidate their reign. They fill the torture chambers with those who take their opposition beyond the limits fixed by them. While the repressive acts of the dictators remain as ruthless as ever, their image makers are busy giving them a face-lift and portray them as crusaders of democracy.

To perpetuate their rule, dictators fine tune the constitution more to their liking by eliminating amendments after amendments and introducing new amendments with the argument that times have changed and surely the founding fathers wouldn't want them to live in an age that is horribly out of sync with the digital age. Moreover, with the manipulation of public employees, the unlimited state-funds available for political campaign,

When dictatorships tend to become hereditary, the country descends into mobocracy which is a state of high entropy. Once the maximum is reached, dictatorship comes to a violent end and its leaders are either exiled, or do time at The Hague.

the terror, the provocation, the favours and the promises repeated incessantly, the dictators rewrite Machiavelli's The Prince to prevent their opponents from participating in elections.

The behaviour of the enablers, the so-called sophisticated and cultured political Harlequins, is anything but honourable. Before an election, their words are the most beautiful ever uttered on behalf of democracy. Their objectives respond to the deepest needs of the country. Their moral attitude is admirable, courage is moving and patriotism is above reproach. But once elected or perhaps selected, they conveniently become amnesiac and their eyes become focused on the nation's treasury.

When dictatorships tend to become hereditary, the country descends into mobocracy which is a state of high entropy. Once the maximum is reached, dictatorship comes to a violent end and its leaders are either exiled, or do time at The Hague. Examples of a few tyrants who met the above fates are Idi Amin of Uganda, Charles Taylor of Liberia, Ceausescu of Romania and Gaddafi of Libya.

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By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Give addresses

6 Zigzag

11 Met out

12 "Manhattan" director

13 "Blowin' in the Wind" singer

14 Ticked off

15 College house

17 First-rate

18 Hip-hop devotee

20 "In your dreams!"

22 Wilder's "Town"

23 John or Paul

26 Fluttering insects

28 Different

29 Without text

31 Ring setting

32 Trade show

33 Traveler's aids

34 "Waterloo" group

36 Amorphous mass

38 Painter Rivera

40 Island ring

43 Game show announcer

44 Multiplex show

45 "I Can't Satisfy"

46 Dog show category

DOWN

1 Peculiar

2 Artist Lichtenstein

3 Ultimately good

4 Sorrowful

5 Writer Buchanan

6 Fighting

7 Snobby

8 Multiple choice

9 Julia Louis-Dreyfus show

10 Finishes

16 Phone bug provider

18 Big flop

19 Channel marker

21 Flue flith

23 Pronto, in memos

24 Bound

25 Music's Yoko

27 Pencil cross-section

30 Hold up

33 Power

34 Sick as

35 Bitterness

37 Fold

39 Member

41 Tell tales

42 Was ahead

Yesterday's answer

10 Finishes

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A XYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

On letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-14 CRYPTOQUOTE

LYDOD KOD GJWF LMG

RTHLKEDH GJD BKJ RKED

KWGJZ LYD OGKX LG LOVLY;

JGL ZGTJZ KWW LYD MKF.

KJX JGL HLKOLTJZ. - IVXXYK

Yesterday's Cryptoquote:

CHANGE IS THE LAW OF LIFE. AND THOSE WHO LOOK ONLY TO THE PAST OR PRESENT ARE CERTAIN TO MISS THE FUTURE.

- JOHN F. KENNEDY

BEETLE BAILEY

TURN ME AROUND

BLIPS IS TEACHING SARGE TO DANCE

NOW SPIN ME OUT

I'LL HAVE TO RE-WORD THAT

HENRY

I ALWAYS FEEL FATTER WHEN I STAND ALONGSIDE SLIM, HENRY!

by Mort Walker

by Don Tranchte

QUOTABLE Quote

"The leader is one who mobilizes others toward a goal shared by leaders and followers... Leaders, followers and goals make up the three equally necessary supports for leadership."

Gary Wills