

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

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## Welcome 2014

*But what awaits nation?*

THIS is a moment to wish a very happy New Year to each other but we are having to do so in a backdrop that makes it sound like a mockery of the greeting. Because here we are in a state of trepidation wondering what to make of a new year with political conflict about polls breaking out into a crescendo. The ruling party is going ahead with an unacceptable election as the opposition pushes the nation deeper into the tunnel of indefinite blockades.

Yet the sun of the turbulent, often bloody, year of 2013 having set, we want to embrace the new dawn of 2014 with hope that peace will return, politicians will be able to put their house in order and the nation and its economy will again be back on track. The land of possibilities will come alive.

While the year that has passed into the mist of eternity, its memory has not. The first attempt at healing the gashing wounds of the nation's bloody birth was made through starting the trials of those who committed crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation in 1971. But the abettors of the Pakistani occupation forces, the Jamaat-e-Islami, were still out there and active not only to thwart the process of justice, but also push the nation into the throes of a vortex.

In the fresh sun of New Year, we wish to give a decent burial to those nightmares. Coming out of the woods however entails sagacity of political leadership that has been sadly missing in the preceding year.

Happy New Year to our readers, patrons and well-wishers.

## DMP Commissioner's misstatement

*It contradicts what was seen*

IN an unabashed misrepresentation of facts the Commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) took pains to explain that ruling party cadres marching through the streets on December 29 were carrying national flags and not sticks. Indeed, given the emphasis put on what was passed off as an innocuous technicality, despite the presence of live footage to the contrary, the commissioner preferred to prevaricate. We are baffled to see such a high official of the city police going out of his way to pull wool over the public eye. There was little doubt in any mind that the city was in the grip of the police and ruling party loyalists on that day, and that the latter were on the rampage. In fact, the manner he spoke on a number of issues raised more questions than answered. Could one be woefully wrong to ask whether he is an official of the Republic, using his remit even-handedly, or a party spokesman?

The commissioner must surely be aware of the fact that his position in the capital's police force obliges him to be impeccable in his public statements. We cannot emphasise enough the need to keep the image of the police force above reproach, especially in testing circumstances.

# Of Gopali, of Dorji . . .

## GROUND REALITIES



SYED BADRUL AHSAN

HE has been prime minister of Bangladesh twice. She has been in politics for thirty years. Life has treated her well; and fortune has smiled on her. Experience in politics has been hers, deservedly or otherwise. And yet when Khaleda Zia disdainfully addressed a police officer as Gopali on Sunday, she not only disappointed us but also had us ask whether or not she was getting her politics all wrong. Sadly for us, it was not a politician we saw on Sunday. It was not a former prime minister we heard. It was the spectacle of an angry woman who simply forgot that she happens to be the leader of a major political party in the country. To our horror, she informed us that Gopalganj would not be there any more, that it would become history. Leadership was forgotten in that outburst. Because your rival comes from a particular region in the country, because that officer is from that region, you do not have the right to denigrate people who inhabit the place. We do not expect Sheikh Hasina to go around insulting people with roots in Feni. We did not expect Khaleda Zia to stoop to this level in her anger at the powers that be.

The image of the BNP chairperson took a body blow on Sunday. It is not her politics we speak of. It is not a question of whether or not we subscribe to her political thoughts. It is simply this: that when a politician has her utterances getting the better of her judgment, a whole country is left feeling low and humiliated. Khaleda Zia spoke of Lhendup Dorji. She did not mention Sikkim. She did not speak of India. But through her words, through her body language, she demonstrated her absolute dislike of Dorji, the first chief minister of Sikkim once it became part of the Indian Union in the 1970s. Worse, without taking Sheikh Hasina's name, she insinuated that the prime minister was conspiring to have Bangladesh become part of India.

That was quite a change. A year after her visit to India, twelve months after her silence on India, where she met nearly every Indian politician of note, she gave out a broad hint of the anti-India sentiment which still underlines her party's politics. She did more. She warned police officers not to be slaves to the wishes of the ruling party. The country, she said in words you do not expect from a seasoned politician, was being sold out. It is a sentiment we have heard down the decades. And then she served up the old untruth once more -- of men of religion, of alem,

being murdered by security forces in May last year. You tend to ask: does she really believe that? And what happens to truth when a prominent political leader begins to peddle the exact opposite of it?

Khaleda Zia, in those frothy moments of indignation, held Sheikh Hasina responsible for the murder of the fifty seven army officers at Peelkhana in February 2009. In any civilised country, that accusation would have taken the accuser all the way to court, unless she had proof to back up her statement. The former prime minister believes, if it is belief at all, that this government murdered thousands of Hefajati men in May last year and those military officers nearly five years ago. It therefore becomes necessary once again to remind people of the innumerable murders and disappearances of army and air force officers and men in the years when her husband exercised military rule over this land. There are yet families who do not know where their fathers and husbands and brothers, seized in the many abortive coups against Zia, have gone missing. Who speaks of the tears shed by these families? Who remembers the pains borne by the children of Khaleda Musharraf, Abu Taher and M.A. Manzoor?

Leaders do not explode in anger in public. Provocation does not push them into being indiscreet and intemperate in behaviour. When Khaleda Zia rounded with fury at women police officers in her compound, because they were in conversation with one another, and ordered them to shut up, it was not an image we wished to see. When, not long ago, she would not go beyond telling us that Pakistanis had 'hurt us' with that resolution on our war crimes in their parliament, we were left wondering. She was hurt and not shocked? She did not see the degree of interference by Islamabad in Dhaka's internal affairs?

On Sunday, Khaleda Zia's response to the crackdown on her party by the government could have been more political, more dignified than it turned out to be. Politicians worldwide learn in office, and outside it. Indira Gandhi learned the ropes in power. And she became a better politician out of power in the Janata years. Aung San Suu Kyi does not wield power, was a prisoner for years and yet bitterness has not infiltrated her soul. Dilma Rousseff governs well in Brazil; and Michele Bachelet has returned to the presidency of Chile for a second term. Neither woman humiliates her country, or a part of it.

Gopalganj, or that sneering term 'Gopali,' will come back to haunt the former prime minister. You just have to wait to see it happen.

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*On Sunday, Khaleda Zia's response to the crackdown on her party by the government could have been more political, more dignified than it turned out to be. Politicians worldwide learn in office, and outside it.*

## Teenagers like Keshab Roy bring hope

FRANK PETERS

PICK up any English-language Bangladeshi newspaper and the news pages are chock-a-block full with doom and gloom and reports of political unrest, sheer madness, disgraceful conduct, mayhem and human misery beyond belief.

It is truly a sad state of affairs when innocent children attempting to pay a social visit to their ill grandparents end up in hospital in excruciating pain and scarred for life with burns to 90% of their body. To those responsible and those who encourage or condone such inhuman behaviour there is no glory to be gained.

In view of that horrific backdrop, a relatively small report was published in *The Daily Star Magazine* (Dec12) that stood out like a beacon of hope. Above all it was a beautiful little story.

The story centres on 18-year-old Keshab Roy from Nilphamari.

Keshab was one of seven recipients of the Youth Courage Award presented by the United Nations earlier in the year for battling against child marriage and promoting education for all children. He has succeeded in preventing 25 child marriages in his area, and he's counselled over 50 dropout school students to continue with their education. A praiseworthy and remarkable achievement.

He himself quit school when he was in class six, after his father became ill, and worked in a pawnshop earning a paltry sum of Tk.300 per month to provide for his family. He was determined to complete his education and was fortunate to gain the kind support of Kanchon Chandra Roy, president of the NGO Surjomukhi, who also persuaded Keshab's father to allow him to return to school.

Keshab is the kind of young man Bangladesh needs -- the world needs.

People, like Keshab, who demonstrate unconditional love for their fellowmen and provide practical support for the greater benefit of others are rare and richly deserve the encouragement, support and respect of all.

During these times of political unrest when master puppeteers cast brother against brother and respect for the common man and property is put on hold, there is an even greater need for uplifting stories like that of Keshab's.

Every day most column centimetres of newspapers are crammed with negative, depressing news that entice you to slit your wrists before you've read all of them and zaps you of whatever little hope you had for Bangladesh. Surely it can't be all that bad... or is it?

Any report that induces a smile, a warm inner glow feeling, and offers respite and hope from the current bilious reports would be a welcomed relief.

The writer is a human rights advocate, and a former newspaper publisher and editor.

## VISIONARY VOICES



LI YONG

faces a stark choice between rising prosperity and a cleaner, more sustainable environment. In fact, with new technology and fresh thinking, policymakers can strike a durable balance between these competing interests.

In developed countries, consumers are increasingly recognising that, while their material well-being may be higher than ever, their quality of life suffers if the environment is damaged. For poorer countries, such concerns are dismissed as a rich-world luxury. Industrial expansion is the best way to eradicate poverty, and must surely trump environmental concerns.

No government, rich or poor, can ignore the imperative to encourage economic growth. The manufacturing sector creates jobs, makes affordable products for cash-strapped consumers, produces vital tax revenue that can be used to support social goals, and brings in foreign currency in the form of export revenue. In short, a well-run manufacturing sector spreads wealth across society.

However, trying to satisfy the seemingly endless material demands of consumers at all levels of the economic pyramid has placed an unmanageable burden on the natural world. Resources are being consumed more quickly than the planet can replace them. The manufacturing sector is particularly voracious, devouring over half of all raw materials, around 30% of the world's energy, and 20% of its water. In the process, it produces too much waste for our fragile ecosystems to absorb.

Now, public opinion is starting to turn against what is increasingly perceived as plunder on a global scale. Policymakers may not be able to compel citizens to ration their consumption. But governments can encourage manufacturers to change how they operate, so that they use fewer resources and eliminate unnecessary waste.

Technological innovation and recyclable inputs can make a huge difference to the way the world produces and consumes. Like the dramatic changes once wrought by mass production, there is similar potential in the development and application of 3D printing, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and other resource-efficient technologies. And management thinkers from the late C. K. Prahalad to Jaideep Prabhu have shown how industry can be reconfigured to produce high-quality products cheaply and cleanly.

Indeed, these technologies and management ideas

# Greening the New Industrial Revolution

MANUFACTURING industries present society with a dilemma. A healthy manufacturing sector helps an economy to grow, thereby raising living standards -- an especially important goal for developing countries. But, as factories try to meet ever-growing consumer demand, they deplete the world's natural resources and pollute the environment. For some, the world now

amount to something of a new industrial revolution—though one that will be very different from the Industrial Revolution that made Great Britain the dominant world power in the nineteenth century and helped it build a global empire. The current transformation will be more democratic, spreading through global supply chains and modern communications to all countries that are integrated into the global economy. And it will be characterised by partnerships between government, the private sector, and civil society.

Our challenge, and our historic opportunity, is to recognise this potential and find ways for diverse groups to collaborate and realise it. A Green Industry Conference held recently in Guangzhou, China -- following similar events in Manila in 2009 and Tokyo in 2011 -- provides a



template for this kind of broad cooperation. Delegates shared best practices, discussed ways to accelerate change in a range of sectors, and sought innovative solutions to old management problems.

No one need be left out of this revolution. Even countries with abundant natural resources do not have to fear the shift to a greener world. By adopting new economic models, their large but finite reserves will not be rendered useless; they will simply last longer. At the same time, countries facing shortages will gain greatly from being able to reduce their own resource needs.

Businesses, too, have been quick to adopt new practices. Many now routinely monitor and report on their environmental impact. Some are even starting to organise around new industrial concepts such as the "circular economy," which focuses on reducing waste through multiple rounds of recycling.

This revolution may have been borne out of necessity; but, with ingenuity and cooperation, it will prove to be profitable, over the long run, for countries, manufacturers, and consumers worldwide.

The writer is Director General, United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2013. www.project-syndicate.org (Exclusive to The Daily Star)

# LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

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## Who is to blame for the killings?

We are at the end of year 2013, but can we look forward with hope to the year 2014? No, because people who are in power and are responsible for the welfare of the country have taken a dangerous path; they are talking of democracy, when actually they are strangling it.

In the December 27, 2013 issue of *The Daily Star*, Sheikh Hasina's speech at a public rally in Faridpur was published. At one point she said, "We believe in justice. The opposition leader will be charged with giving orders for killing and burning people to death."

But as a matter of fact, we did not hear Khaleda Zia openly giving order to kill and burn people, but with deep regret we still remember when an activist of Awami League was killed at Baddarhat in Chittagong in the previous tenure of Sheikh Hasina, she openly said, "Ekti lasher bodoley doshti lash chai. Amader kormira ki shari, churi porey boshey achhey?" What an order from a prime minister!

We urge the government to shun the path of hostility, not to use law enforcing agents for holding the farcical election which people will never accept, and prove that Awami League truly believes in democracy and will do everything to uphold it.

Nur Jahan  
Chittagong

## Cruel joke with people's voting right

Our honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina often takes great pride in her so-called restoration of the voting right of the common people through the 15th amendment to the constitution. Now when we see that about 50 million voters out of a total of 91.9 million have been deprived of their voting rights and that as many as 154 candidates have been elected uncontested in the upcoming 10th JS polls, apparently as a consequence of the incumbent PM's unilateral decision of abolishing the CTG provisions through the controversial constitutional amendment in question, her assertion of restoring people's voting right sounds like a cruel joke to us.

Asaduzzaman (Jewel)  
University of Rajshahi

## Politics killing poultry sector

The poultry owners recently staged a different type of protest by distributing chicks free among people to attract attention of the people in politics of the fact that the poultry industry is on the verge of collapse due to the present political impasse. They urged the political parties to resolve their problems immediately through reaching a consensus and save the country's poultry industry which is providing employment and meeting people's food and nutritional demands.

Professor M Zahidul Haque  
Dean, Faculty of Agriculture  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University  
Dhaka

## Comments on news report, "Khaleda hits the roof," published on December 30, 2013

Nnworx

It is encouraging to see a former prime minister of Bangladesh standing up for what matters to Bangladeshis. Bangladesh is not for sale.

S.M. Iftekhar Ahmed

Her frustration is totally understandable. This kind of behaviour from the government could actually benefit them.

Imagologue

Poverty is better than slavery and dishonour. Bangladeshis know it more than anyone else in the world. They know the taste of slavery from 224 years of foreign rule. All concerned Bangladeshis should be wary of wolves in sheep's clothing.

Tonmoy Ahmed

She said publicly that they will start a new type of government, that they will not only change the institutions' names but also the names of zilla and upazila. All this was in her mind which she expressed yesterday.

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## "Hasina then and now" (December 30, 2013)

Disqus

This is not democracy. It's about duping the people. The leaders of the nation constantly and unashamedly speak utter lies, regardless of what party they belong to. People are not stupid anymore. But they continue to be powerless as they will just be killed off, by politicians and their cronies, with total impunity, if they speak out. There is no justice...

Nds

Is it not expected when opportunism constitutes the dominant principle of politics? It is always claimed that politics is an art of compromise. What does it actually mean? Compromise for what purpose? Definitely for achieving self-interest. Hasina is simply following that classical system. What is wrong with it?

Imagologue

What the concerned citizens are saying is not in the constitution! It's set in stone this time around.