

## Deaths in shootouts

### Rule of law trampled

REPORTS of persons suspected or accused of serious crimes dying in gunfights with law-enforcement agencies are again in the news.

Take, for example, the death of Shah Alam alias Kailla Babu at Moghbazar in the city on Monday. Police say, during an arms recovery operation he was killed in an exchange of fire with the law-enforcers. But some locals who reside near the scene of the said gunfight gave quite a different version of the incident to reporters.

Last Sunday, in another shootout during another arms recovery drive, a young man of Mugda Thana of the city was killed. While the police said the victim was the member of a gun-running gang, his father differed with it. The victim had no previous police record of having committed any crime. Strangely, the police's version about the circumstances of the gunfights falls into too familiar a pattern of past encounters.

There is reason to be concerned once again about such deaths of 'criminals' in gunfights with the police. The police are supposed to be upholders of the rule of law, and if deaths occur in custody, it reflects adversely on their reputation.

We, like every peace-loving citizen, want that the government to control crime with an iron fist. But that does not mean that suspected criminals should not be allowed to go through the due process of law before they are punished. That this amounts to violation of human rights cannot be in question nor can it be condoned.

## Authorities' Eid promises

### Proof will be in results

EVERY year around this time authorities give out blazing outlines about how law and order shall be maintained during Eid festivities. And practically every year we see a deficit in implementation. Precisely how this year it will be different is something to be seen. The usual promises have been made regarding prevention of extortion of cattle traders coming to Dhaka. Yet only yesterday, the lead item in a national Bangla daily has pointed out that the bulk of the contracts for setting up these markets have been awarded to ruling party elements.

We cannot help but be somewhat sceptical of the concerned ministry's claims that proper precautions have been taken to provide security during the festival. Again, the installation of fake currency detectors has been promised to prevent counterfeit currency being transacted at the cattle markets. If the quality of these detectors is as good as those used to check cases of formalin in the less-than-successful drive against adulterated foods, we wonder what positive results they will bring. Highway police are going to be given binoculars so that may see from afar what extortion is taking place on the roads leading to Dhaka. Where some in the same outfit have been allegedly associated with toll collections in the past, precisely how binoculars will help is a mystery! If authorities are truly serious about cracking down on illegal activities that occur every year around Eid, they must be professional about tackling issues instead of being addicted to the phrase "zero tolerance".

## Education Day 2014: Way Forward

PROF. QUAZI FARUQUE AHMED

THIS year Education Day will be observed with focus on the slow implementation of the Education Policy - 2010 and the delay in the passing of the education law for which establishment of permanent statutory education commission, formation of teachers' recruitment authority and introduction of separate pay scale for teachers from primary to higher education level could not be realized.

There is no denying the fact that in recent years the education sector has witnessed several positive changes such as free distribution of text books to primary and secondary students, reform in the curriculum after 17 years, introduction of creative question, use of information technology in the publication of examination results, introduction of pre-primary class, steps to check coaching on commercial basis, development of the infrastructure of education institutions, stipend for girls, achievement of gender parity in primary and secondary education.

But the challenges in education are also manifold. To mention a few -- gradual decrease in the allocation for education, disinclination to be teachers, brain drain, reluctance of students to take up science subjects, anomalies and lack of coordination in the management of education and education institutions, absence of monitoring and presence of corruption in every tier and stage of education, lack of proper pre and in service training for teachers, moral degradation of a section of teachers, corporal punishment of students at the hand of a section of teachers, de-link of existing education system with the job market, slow pace of progress in the implementation of the Education Policy 2010, politicization of education and interference of the vested quarters in almost every sphere of education.

The impact of globalization in education in the country along with some progressive steps and decisions taken in the recent past however, make one optimistic about the future of education despite the crisis and challenges there. The creativity of our young boys and girls, the expanding cooperation between the government and the non-government organizations, the dynamism of a section of policy makers, forward looking ideas of some of our leaders irrespective of political allegiance and the role of the media also make one confident of our onward march towards progress. The causes which led to the education movement in 1962 and the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, all unmistakably show the way forward. This spirit is indomitable.

The writer is the Chairman of Initiative for Human Development. He was an organizer of 1962 education movement.  
E-mail: ihdbd@yahoo.com

## Our UN experience . . .

### GROUND REALITIES



SYED BADRUL AHSAN

Bangladesh's arrival at the UN was not a sudden event. Indeed, since the beginning of the War of Liberation in late March 1971, its leaders had been pressing the world body to take cognizance of the tragedy unfolding in the occupied country owing to the brutalities resorted to by the Pakistan army. As the UN prepared for its General Assembly session in autumn 1971, the Bangladesh government-in-exile appeared ready to send Foreign Minister Khondokar Moshtaque Ahmed, accompanied by a team of Bengali politicians and diplomats, to New York to speak for the country.

But Moshtaque would in the event be compelled to stay at Mujibnagar. The reason was simple and grave. It had been revealed that in New York, the foreign minister of Bangladesh would in all probability decide, on his own, that Bangladesh was ready for a confederation or similar links with Pakistan as a way out of the crisis. His rightwing views had manifested themselves earlier on when he told a group of Bengali luminaries that the choice was between getting Sheikh Mujibur Rahman freed and having Bangladesh achieve liberation. His contacts with American diplomats in Calcutta only reinforced the suspicion that once in New York, Moshtaque would torpedo the entire course of the War of Liberation.

Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad, in a shrewd move, decided what needed to be done. He stopped Moshtaque from proceeding to New York and entrusted Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, formerly vice chancellor of Dhaka University and at the time directing Bangladesh's diplomacy in London, with the responsibility of speaking for Bangladesh at the United Nations. Justice Chowdhury did travel to New York, where he sought an opportunity to address the UN General Assembly on the Bangladesh issue. For understandable reasons and since a very large number of UN member-states considered the crisis an internal matter for Pakistan, Chowdhury was not permitted to speak at the UNGA. Asked later by newsmen if Bangladesh's cause had been pushed aside, he replied that he did not think so. He was sad, though, because 'we have not been heard.'

In a curious move of its own, the Pakistan military junta of General Yahya Khan thought that one way of deflecting attention away from the Bangladesh war would be to have a Bengali head the Pakistan delegation to the UNGA. It was the rightwing politician and at that point a fervent supporter of the military repression in Bangladesh, Shah Azizur Rahman, who was chosen leader of Pakistan's UN team in 1971. With Shah Azizur Rahman was Syeda Razia Faiz, who had served as a member of the Pakistan national assembly in the Ayub Khan era. Ironically, in post-1971 times, both Shah Aziz and Razia Faiz would find places in Bangladesh's politics. The former would be prime minister under General Ziaur Rahman, with the latter serving as a minister under General Hussein Muhammad Ershad.

Towards the end of 1971, the Bangladesh issue became a matter of intense concern at the United Nations, especially after India and Pakistan went into direct military conflict on 3 December. The war would turn out to be a swift, surgical affair with Pakistan's forces in occupied Bangladesh getting a battering from the Indian army and the Mukti Bahini. Pakistan's air force was destroyed in

Forty years ago, the People's Republic of Bangladesh made its entry into the United Nations as its newest member-state. The event was not only a reaffirmation of the country's determination to play an active role in the international community as a sovereign nation but also an acknowledgement by the global body that the aspirations of seventy five million people, as Bangladesh's population was at the time, could not be ignored.

Bangladesh by Indian bombing. On the western front, Indian soldiers were making deep inroads into Pakistani territory. As town after town stood liberated in Bangladesh, a number of moves were made at the United Nations Security Council to have a ceasefire take effect. Resolutions to that end were proposed and then rejected. It was the Soviet Union which vetoed all resolutions that called for a halt to the conflict. To Bangladesh's intense gratitude, the Soviet leadership made sure that all resolutions be thrown aside until Dacca (as it was spelt then) was liberated. And that is precisely how things happened.

At the UNSC sessions, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (who had been appointed deputy prime minister and foreign minister by President Yahya Khan in a cabinet led by the Bengali Nurul Amin as prime minister), put on a show of amusing theatrics. Irked by reports that Pakistan's soldiers were losing the war, he told the UNSC that Pakistan would fight for a thousand years and emerge victorious. It was real life drama at its worst. Bhutto tore up what was given out as a copy of a proposed UN resolution for a ceasefire and stomped out of the Security Council chamber. Bangladesh stood liberated on 16 December. Bhutto returned to Rawalpindi four days later, to be sworn in as truncated Pakistan's new president and chief martial law administrator.

For all its triumph on the battlefield, though, Bangladesh would not become a member of the United Nations until three years later. Soon after liberation, the process of the country's entry into important global bodies -- the Commonwealth, World Bank, International Monetary Fund,

*Bangladesh's arrival at the UN was not a sudden event. Indeed, since the beginning of the War of Liberation in late March 1971, its leaders had been pressing the world body to take cognizance of the tragedy unfolding in the occupied country owing to the brutalities resorted to by the Pakistan army.*

Non-Aligned Movement, International Labour Organisation -- would be undertaken and implemented. But Pakistan's friendship with the People's Republic of China, which itself had attained UN membership in 1971 after decades of American opposition to its entry, precluded Bangladesh's admission into the world body. Pakistan still considered Bangladesh its eastern province of 'East Pakistan'. Taking Pakistan's emotions into consideration, China exercised its veto on Bangladesh's entry into the UN twice -- in 1972 and 1973. In 1973, UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim visited Bangladesh for talks with Bangabandhu. Only after Pakistan recognized Bangladesh as an independent state in February 1974 did Bangladesh's UN objectives find fulfillment. At the UN General Assembly in September 1974, with no country making use of the veto on its membership application, Bangladesh became a member of the global organization. Foreign Minister Kamal Hossain raised Bangladesh's flag, among the panoply of flags representing other UN member-states, at the UN plaza in New York.

On 25 September 1974, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, spoke to the world in his native Bengali -- from the podium of the UN General Assembly -- of a peaceful world order his people dreamed of.

In subsequent years, Bangladesh would seek and attain membership of the UN Security Council. Humayun Rashid Chowdhury would serve as president of the UN General Assembly. The country would become a major partner in UN peace keeping operations worldwide.

The writer is Executive Editor, The Daily Star.  
E-mail: ahsan.syedbadrul@gmail.com

## Did Hamas win?

### THE WORLD IN WORDS



MKHAIMAR ABUSADA

provide such a solution?

Before the latest war erupted, Hamas was politically isolated. It had lost traditional allies in Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah. Most damaging, the ouster of former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood government had deprived Hamas of its lifeline of supplies and armaments.

Egypt's military regime, led by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, has been unrelentingly hostile toward Hamas, blaming it for the fighting in Sinai between the army and insurgent groups. Egypt even mounted an operation to destroy the tunnels between Gaza and Sinai, isolating Gaza completely.

Hamas faced an intensifying crisis. Unable to pay the salaries of more than 40,000 public employees in Gaza, it was being slowly strangled by the Israeli and Egyptian authorities. And the unity government that it established with the Palestinian Authority in June brought no relief.

With nothing to lose, Hamas decided that another round of fighting with Israel was the only way to shake things up. Despite its modest military capabilities, Hamas managed to hold out for 51 days -- and, in the process, place itself at the center of Palestinian and regional politics.

Israel, by contrast, failed to achieve any of its goals -- beginning with restoring its deterrent capacity. Indeed, despite Israel's best efforts, Hamas continued to launch long-range missiles at major populated areas from Haifa in the north to Ashkelon and Dimona in the south, and it repeatedly crossed Israeli lines using underground tunnels.

Such achievements shattered the indomitable image of the Israeli army, exposing a weakness that other radical Islamist groups may attempt to exploit. Against this background, it is perhaps unsurprising that Hamas managed to compel most Israelis living in areas adjacent to Gaza to flee, with many Israelis accusing their government of

This summer's 51-day war on Gaza left more than 2,100 Palestinians dead, over 11,000 injured, and vast areas of devastation that will take years to rebuild. After the third Israeli war on Gaza in less than six years, many Palestinians are questioning the purpose of continuing to fight -- and hoping for a solution that does not increase their suffering. Can Hamas, with its newly acquired position at the forefront of Palestinian politics,

failing to protect its citizens adequately.

In short, the war in Gaza shook the status quo. It did not, however, bring about any progress toward resolving the outstanding issues underlying the dispute between Israel and Hamas, or change the conditions that spurred the latest conflict in the first place. Israel did agree to terms much like those that ended its last assault on Gaza in 2012; but that agreement was never implemented.

Israel is now expected, for example, to ease its blockade of Gaza and allow the transport of humanitarian and construction supplies. But more complicated issues, such as the release of Palestinian prisoners and the establishment of a Gaza airport and seaport, will be left for next month's discussions. And there is no guarantee that Israel will accede to Hamas's demands without disarming Gaza.

The stakes for Hamas could not be higher. By breaking Gaza's political isolation, the ceasefire has fueled hope of relief from economic and financial deprivation. Given Hamas's leading role, it will be held accountable not only for the success of Gaza's reconstruction, but also for any further delays in Palestinian reconciliation.

Hamas also faces pressure from the international community, which, despite supporting the Palestinians' demand for an end to the Israeli siege and blockade, is adamant that Israel's security concerns also be addressed. As United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned, "Any peace effort that does not tackle the root causes of the crisis will do little other than set the stage for the next cycle of violence."

In other words, achieving a lasting peace deal will require compromises from both sides -- the kind of compromises that Hamas has long resisted. For its part, the international community must embrace Hamas's involvement in the pursuit of a peaceful settlement of the Palestine-Israel conflict.

Former Israeli President Shimon Peres once said, "The real challenge is to transform any crisis, however large, into new opportunities for action." It is time for all of the relevant actors in the conflict between Israel and Palestine to address this challenge, and to take concrete, productive, and creative action to bring peace to Gaza at last.

Hamas has proved its staying power. After decades of standoffs and stalemate, perhaps it can focus less on its own survival and more on helping to achieve a just and lasting peace.

The writer is Professor of Political Science at Al-Azhar University-Gaza.  
Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2014.  
www.project-syndicate.org  
(Exclusive to The Daily Star)

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Irregularities in some private universities

Recently in a seminar the education minister said they will cancel the registration of fifteen private universities. He also said that most of the private universities including Darul Ihsan University are involved in certificate business. Nowadays we have so many private universities in Bangladesh and thousands of students have been studying there. Some of these universities are unauthorized, while some act just like business entities selling certificates. Many a teacher of such universities lack proper qualifications and experience. Students of these universities are deprived of standard higher education. The education ministry and the UGC must look into such gross irregularities in some private universities and take steps to remove those in the greater national interest.

Asrafat Islam Russel  
Chunarughat, Habigonj

### Mitigating crop loss due to flood



A crop field in Bogra damaged by the recent flood.

The recent flood has damaged huge amounts of crops especially paddy. This will cause shortage of rice in the country. We should grow more crops particularly rice in winter to meet up the shortage. That way the price of rice will remain stable in the market.

Shafkat Rahman  
BIAM Laboratory School  
New Eskaton, Dhaka

### Complexity of Ukraine crisis

This refers to the report, "Impossible to win conflict by military means alone" (Sept.9). This realisation should have dawned on Ukraine government from the beginning of the Ukraine crisis. Being a puppet in the hands of the Western powers will not help the Ukraine government. It should also take a lead in convincing the West that sanctions against Russia are also another means of conflict. Negotiations across the table are the best way to solve the Ukraine crisis. The sanctions against Russia are in name only, as there is Russian-US cooperation in space -- Russian rockets carry the cargo for the US space ship. Europe is dependent on gas from Russia and this includes Ukraine also. Russia has clamped down on a restaurant run by a US-based global food chain. There is unemployment in France and Russia has placed orders with France for supply of naval ships. Eventually, commerce wins over politics.

Deendayal M. Lulla  
On e-mail

### Comments on news report, "Pro-BNP teacher assaulted on SC premises," published on September 14, 2014

Kiomi Ida

Day by day we are becoming uncivilised.

Kamrul Hassan

Time has come to put a stop to teachers' politics. I am hurt. I think teachers' politics is ultimately responsible for such heinous incident. Look how he is selling this assault to gain favour in the future. Albeit he was assaulted yet he went with his torn shirt to attend another programme where his leader Khaleda Zia was addressing.

\*\*\*\*\*

### "Overtaking the West by 2050?" (September 14, 2014)

Afreen

Thanks to the writer for such a good article. I believe if government is proactive enough, Bangladesh can do a lot by 2040.

Fazlul Kader

Thanks to the contributor for such a timely write-up. We need blue economy to touch the desire lines.

\*\*\*\*\*

### "Surprising indeed" (September 14, 2014)

Genuine Musafeer

In our society highly educated distinguished dignitaries change their stance to prove their partisan loyalty.