

## Dastardly killing of RU professor

### Menacing trend must be stopped

WE condemn in the strongest terms the brutal killing of Professor Shafiul Islam of Rajshahi University. The fingers are being pointed at extremists groups, and even one such group has claimed responsibility for the killing. It seems that the Rajshahi University has become unsafe for teachers given that in the last ten years Prof. Islam is the third teacher to be killed, all victims of religious extremist groups.

One fails to understand the motive of the killing. The deceased was an affable person given to sedentary way of life.

It may be true that some people may have differed with his views but does that give one the right to kill a person? If those who claim to have perpetrated the grisly crime have done so for religion one wonders what religion they are talking about. Certainly Islam does not sanction such acts of violence.

What sort of country are we living in where university teachers have to seek protection of their life? But such is the case with the university and its surrounding areas that is predominated by religious extremists and the police apparently able to do little. Given the volatile character of the area one wonders why there is lax police presence there.

We understand that several persons have been arrested, including two teachers of the local Islamia College, in connection with the killing. We would want to see quick investigation and prosecution of the culprits and at the same time want the authorities to curb the extremist activities in the area to prevent such painful incidents in future.

## Get into winning habit

### Don't rest on small laurel

BANGLADESH has sealed its most successful Test series victory ever by whitewashing Zimbabwe 3-0. It was also our maiden Test whitewash series.

Our heartiest felicitations to the Tigers. Now with a big victory comes an even bigger responsibility, and that is to continue winning. Not that we haven't booked a Test victory before, but it's the sheer margin of victory that stands out this time around. Now that we have been consistent in one series, the expectation will be that we retain the trend.

Most of 2013-14 has not been remarkable for us in any form of cricket but now it appears like we have finally overcome the hump. With a five match one day series ahead, our players should focus on winning it by displaying to the best of their abilities. With the venue being at home, players at their peak, and no shortage of young talents at hand, this shouldn't be a difficult task. But yes, we should aim to win abroad in the most daunting Test and ODI matches against the high profile teams.

Previously, we had seen how the Tigers slumped to losing after performing well in a series. In order to prevent any agonizing recurrence of the same our players and concerned personnel should put their shoulders to the wheel to build up on the winning momentum that we have just generated. The win should not get into the head of our players, rather they should imbibe it as a habit.

# Climate change agenda: Challenges ahead



SYED MANSUR HASHIM

THAT the US and China came out with a joint announcement on putting a cap on climate change and energy has brought some glimmer of hope. We of course will only know the roadmap when the climate summit concludes in December of this year. That aside, China and the US represent the two heaviest emitters of CO<sub>2</sub>. Given the present levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the world will have to rethink its position on fossil fuels to stay below the 2 degree upper limit. Either that or we continue to be battered by rising oceans, severe droughts and heat waves.

It is estimated that China alone contributed to about 28% of the global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions this year. The US has been held back on checking its emissions by the fact that successive governments have resisted going down that line without firm commitments from China to act too. It is now hoped that since these two giant energy consumers have come onboard, some changes may actually take place. The joint declaration calls for three things to happen. There will be short term commitments to be met by 2030. Deep decarbonisation by 2050 with the US plotting a course to reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> by as much as 80% and committing serious investments in research and development in "low-carbon energy technologies." As stated in an article in the Financial Times, "specifically, China and the US committed to joint R&D in building efficiency, clean vehicles CCS, smart cities, and other areas." China's declaration that "it would increase the non-fossil fuel share of its energy mix to around 20% by 2030" has given new impetus to the renewable energy industry. But such a move would mean the country would have to come up with an estimated 1,000 gigawatts of new energy from wind, solar and nuclear. It would also mean that China would shut more than half its coal-fired power plants.

It remains to be seen in the forthcoming summit, precisely what sort of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction plans will be committed to by these two countries by mid-century. For the Obama administration, any path to reduction in fossil-fuel power will be heavily contested in both houses where Republicans now dominate. Indeed, Republican Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell has stated publicly that his party will oppose any such deal. US public opinion is likely to back a comprehensive deal, especially in light of

the natural calamities suffered recently in the US east coast that included heat waves and flooding. That argument aside, Republicans in the US Congress have lambasted the deal stating that it will lead to higher utility rates and far fewer jobs. Indeed, the Republican Speaker of the House, John Boehner, has hinted that legislation may be moved in the House to limit the president's ability to deliver the carbon pollution cuts promised. Attacking the deal, Boehner stated: "Republicans have consistently passed legislation to rein in the EPA and stop these harmful policies from taking effect, and we will continue to make this a priority in the new Congress."

That the current administration will be fighting an uphill battle is echoed by Michael Levi, an energy and environment Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations: "The US target looks like it's going to be really tough to meet without new laws." New legislations are going to be very difficult to pass with Republicans in control of Congress; hence one may ask whether the plans are implementable at all. Coming together and issuing a joint

communiqué in itself is a serious diplomatic breakthrough. But working out the details of carbon reduction and inking a deal that will chart out a roadmap will take serious negotiations and time. Experts agree that meeting such deep cuts is technically feasible, but whether they will be "politically" feasible is quite another matter given the current political scenario in the US. It is still too early to be very enthusiastic about the statement

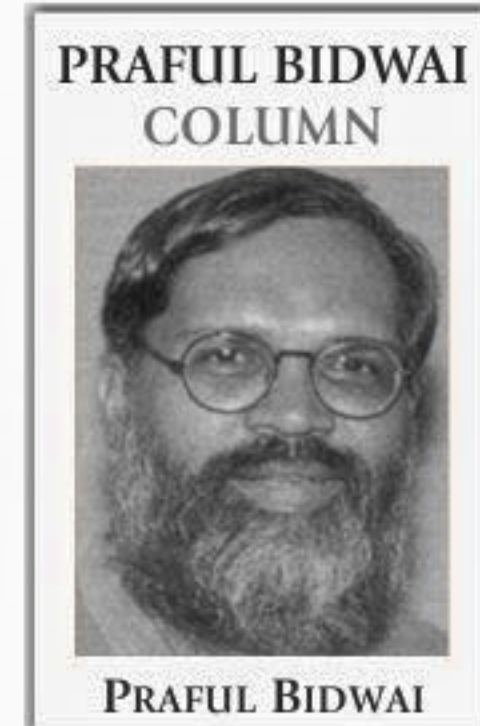
issued in early November. Too many variables and unanswered questions on precisely how big a cut China will commit to and to what extent the US president will be able to ride out the Republican opposition to amending Environment Protection Agency (EPA) regulations.

What should remain the focus for both sets of policymakers in the US and China is that we stand on the edge of a precipice. The lack of collective action over the years has basically negated the 2007 UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report that the world could stay below 2 degrees Celsius. Since the world's greatest polluters went into cutting emission-hibernation for the last twenty years, present emission cuts will have to pay heavily. To put it bluntly, the UN's IPCC stated in April, 2014: "If we want to stay below the 2 degree Celsius limit, global greenhouse-gas emissions would have to decline between 1.3% and 3.1% each year on average, between 2010 and 2050."

The writer is Assistant Editor, *The Daily Star*.



## Politics gets more cynical



PRAFUL BIDWAI COLUMN

PRAFUL BIDWAI

THOSE who expected Prime Minister Modi to fulfil his promise of cleaning up Indian politics of money-power and crime, discarding caste-and-community calculations, and placing merit above loyalty, would be sorely disappointed at his cabinet reshuffle, adding 21 ministers.

The composition of the council of ministers reflects great paucity of talent in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and doesn't augur well for governance.

Ninety-two percent of its members are *crorepatis*, with average assets of Rs. 14 crores, or double those of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) ministers. Almost one-third of them have criminal charges against them; 17% have serious charges, including rape, attempt to murder, and rioting.

Eight new ministers also face criminal charges. The junior minister of education (of all portfolios!), Ramshankar Katheria, is indicted in 21 cases, including attempt to murder, provoking communal disharmony and forgery. Hansraj Ahir has 11 cases, including assault and criminal intimidation. Giriraj Singh is connected with the Ranvir Sena, Bihar's Bhumihar militia responsible for several Dalit massacres.

The cruellest irony is the media-planted story that Ahir was rewarded for "whistle-blowing" in the coal scam -- although he was acting for and fed information by one of Maharashtra's most predatory business groups, with interests in coal. He's close to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and represents the district to which RSS chief Bhagwat belongs.

Like all unimaginative reshuffles, the cabinet accommodates certain hitherto-excluded caste and regional interests -- from Himachal, Andhra, Telangana, etc. Even so, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, which defied the Modi wave, remain under-represented. Greater Jat representation is meant to assuage community sentiment in Haryana, where a non-Jat has been made chief minister.

Even more significant is the caste-based induction of ministers from Bihar, where elections are due next year: Rajiv Pratap Rudy (Thakur), Giriraj Singh (Bhumihar) and Ram Kirpal Yadav. The BJP faces a formidable alliance in Bihar between the Janata Dal (United), Laloo's Rashtriya Janata Dal and Congress. It's preparing the ground by fomenting 170 communal incidents since June 2013.

More visible than these calculations is the RSS stamp in the choice of Manohar Parrikar, and five more RSS loyalists. Much has been made of the administrative competence of Parrikar (defence) and Suresh Prabhu (railways).

Parrikar's none-too-distinguished experience is limited to tiny Goa. But he's a Modi loyalist. Besides, Goa is where Modi got a reprieve from being sacked after the 2002 Gujarat carnage, and where he was anointed the party's prime ministerial candidate.

Parrikar never managed to break the nexus between Goa's politics and the iron-ore mafia. He temporarily shut down iron-ore mining, plunging the economy into a grave crisis. The closure became prolonged, but he lost numerous opportunities to turn the economy around. Why he's considered fit to handle the defence portfolio remains a mystery.

Former environment minister Prabhu cleared numerous ecologically unsound projects. But he cultivated Modi and was named his sherpa for the G-20 summit.

Even more questionable is J.P. Nadda's appointment as health minister after he engineered the transfer of a Central Vigilance Officer who unearthed scams.

Y.S. Chowdhary's induction further discredits the government. He defaulted on a Rs. 317-crore loan to a public-sector bank. Similarly, Giriraj Singh reported a theft of Rs. 50,000 from his Patna home, but the police recovered Rs. 1.25 crores!

The new cabinet inspires no hope. Modi's ultra-authoritarian style is likely to prevent even the more competent ministers from working with functional autonomy. Modi has been meeting secretaries directly and disrupting the normal chain of command.

All decisions, including middle-level official appointments, are concentrated in the Prime Minister's Office. The dictat that no personal staff serving under UPA ministers can be employed is polarising the bureaucracy.

In Maharashtra, India's second largest state, the BJP won a confidence motion in a controversial voice-vote despite lacking a majority. It could have won a proper division-based vote with the Nationalist Congress's support, but didn't want to be seen associating with that highly tainted party, with

which it colludes clandestinely.

The Shiv Sena is in a bind after botching up seat-sharing talks with the BJP. It's hard to say how the Sena-BJP stand-off will end. But it's clear that the BJP is playing a devious game under RSS-loyalist Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, whose ascent represents retrogression. He's the first Brahmin to head Maharashtra after the Sena's Manohar Joshi, "remote-controlled" by Bal Thackeray.

Fadnis will find it extremely difficult to deal with Maharashtra's countless scams, ranging from irrigation to highways, and housing to sugar cooperatives. His suave style and "clean" reputation notwithstanding, he's implicated in numerous ways with Nagpur's Sancheti group.

He used the multi-crore irrigation scam to the hilt against the Congress-NCP government, but didn't mention the Sancheti link in his deposition before the committee that investigated it. He's likely to face questions on this and the Adarsh scam, in which the Sanchetis are named.

Fadnis has vociferously demanded a separate state of Vidarbha for years, which is why Vidarbha's votaries backed him strongly. But Modi opposes this. Sooner or later, this contradiction could catch up with the BJP. Its natural instinct will be to become yet more brazenly cynical.

The writer is an eminent Indian columnist.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Traffic chaos at Gulistan

Gulistan is the busiest area of the capital. But the traffic management system of this area is very poor. Passengers have to jump off the buses in the middle of the road. The buses coming from Narayanganj force passengers to get down at wrong points of the road. The lane just beside the Bangabandhu stadium is very risky as bikers have the tendency to drive on the wrong side of the road. Why don't the traffic police arrest/punish violators of traffic rules?

Why don't the authorities concerned deploy more traffic police in this area? Are we waiting for a major accident? We should improve the traffic system at least in this busy area of the city.

Pradip Das  
 One-mail

### Did Imrul fall prostrate to kiss the pitch or pray?

I was really surprised to read the caption of the front page photo of TDS on November 13. It says Imrul Kayes kisses the pitch after reaching his century. Is that what he was really doing? He was actually showing gratitude to the Almighty Allah by performing 'sijdah' and not kissing the pitch, which is very obvious in the photo. If the photographer does not understand the difference between 'sijdah' and 'kiss', then we question his professionalism.

Anonymous  
 One-mail

### Why this propaganda against Bt brinjal?

I was astonished to read the letter of Samshad Nowreen on Bt brinjal published on Nov. 1 in your column. I am a farmer and a government employee and tagged myself directly with farming and cultivation with modern scientific methods and technologies for many years. During the first exhibition of BR-11 rice (Gazi), some journalists rushed to publish news that it would be injurious to health and farmers would face loss. The same propaganda took place against IRRI rice and hybrid variety of rice.

It's clear to me that the writer of the letter doesn't know about bio-tech and genetically modified organism. Gene technology can change the biological pattern of any organ which was misinterpreted by the writer.

All insecticide companies in Bangladesh are afraid of facing loss in their business due to GMO technology. So those giant companies are spreading propaganda against modern technologies. Bt brinjal is a GMO product which can revolutionise agriculture in our country. I firmly believe one day science would be capable enough to produce all agricultural products without using injurious and costly insecticides.

Md. Ali Hossain  
 Upazilla social services officer  
 Trishal, Mymensingh

### Comments on news report, "Cheers for BCL," published on November 13, 2014

#### Ahmed Aziz

The way they are driving Bangladesh, it may reach a dangerous destination.

#### Saifur Rahman

I am not surprised to hear the news. Nepotism in the administration is going on since long.

#### S.M. Iftekhar Ahmed

Favouritism is another name for Awami League.

#### New Generation

This is the saddest news for other job-seekers who are meritorious but not BCL activists. So, it is again proved that this government is only for Awami League people.

#### Proddut Balerina

What will happen if they recruit all without any exam?

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### "Housing for garment workers" (Nov. 13, 2014)

#### Alif

This is an extraordinary move from the central bank and the BGMEA to subsidise housing for our garment workers. Bangladesh is one of the leading exporters of garments in the world because of the hard work and dedication of our garment workers. None of the previous governments paid attention to the garment workers' housing problem. The present Awami League government deserves full credit in this regard.

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### "New 'cantonment' by Padma bridge" (Nov. 13, 2014)

#### Azad

I don't think that another cantonment is needed.

## Was this the Oxford of the East?

ABDUL MATIN

THE University of Dhaka was established in 1921. The faculty of the university included some of the renowned scholars of the sub-continent, including Prof. S.N. Bose after whose name a sub-atomic particle was named Boson. Because of its academic excellence and residential character, it was once known as the Oxford of the East! The students of the university earned the admiration of the people for their historic roles during the Language Movement of 1952 and the War of Liberation of 1971.

All former students normally have great sentimental attachments to their alma mater. They visit their old institutions during re-unions and also whenever they get an opportunity. They reminisce their old days and are usually welcome there. Such visits also help to build a bridge between the old and new students. Accordingly, a former female student of the University of Dhaka, now residing in Canada, went to see her alma mater on November 5 together with her sister and uncle who is a renowned photographer. What happened later will put anyone to shame. The uncle described the incident as follows: "I along with my two nieces went out for a rickshaw tour. We stopped by the pond near Shahidullah Hall around 4:30pm. Suddenly, four unidentified youths came and asked us about our identities. Before hearing anything, they started beating us. They also tried to harass my nieces sexually. Later, the locals rescued us and took to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. However, the miscreants managed to flee immediately." How could a disgraceful incident like this ever happen in broad daylight at a place that once earned the reputation as the Oxford of the East? It shook the conscience of the whole nation. It is reported that a probe body has been formed and the miscreants have been identified. It is important that, no matter who they are, the miscreants get exemplary punishment. It is also strange that no onlooker came forward immediately when the victims cried for help. What kind of security does the university provide to its students, faculty and visitors?

It is reported that the police cannot take any action inside the campus without permission of the proctor. In that case, shouldn't the university have its own security with modern communication and electronic surveillance systems? How can the students pursue education without security to life, property or honour? It is hoped that the probe body will recommend not only exemplary punishment to the culprits but also improvement of the internal security of the campus so that an incident like this can never happen again.

The writer is a former chief engineer of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission.