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FOUNDER EDITOR
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Illegal Parking, a major cause of stifling traffic

Authorities must work together

WE all know that a large part of the choking gridlocks we face each day is due to the illegal parking of buses, trucks and cars. Buses stop in the middle of streets to take on extra passengers instead of designated bus stops. Malls, banks, hospitals and other establishments are built without car parking. Very little has been done to alleviate the problem.

Now the two city corporations and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) – all bodies responsible for traffic control and parking – are blaming each other for the chaotic traffic situation.

The city corporations say that the DMP's Traffic department is supposed to enforce the relevant traffic laws while the Traffic Department says it is the DCCs responsibility to allot parking spaces. Both parties have valid points but the question is: Why are they not working together to find a sustainable solution?

Illegal parking, say experts, is due to lack of monitoring, inadequate parking facilities and sloppy traffic management. Obviously none of the bodies concerned are doing their job efficiently. This includes Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) which should be monitoring whether multi-storied buildings being constructed have proper parking facilities.

The DCCs must designate spaces for on-street parking and the Traffic Department must penalize illegal parking, especially when there are large parking lots available left unused. Metered parking can also be introduced.

In addition the practice of vehicles plying on the wrong side of the road – something VIPs blatantly do and emulated by others, must be stopped. Unless government high-ups follow the traffic rules themselves and until the DCCs, DMP and Rajuk work in unison, effectively, efficiently and ethically, the debilitating traffic crisis will never be solved.

US-Israel tension over two state solution

Netanyahu's re-election dims the prospect of a peaceful solution?

NETANYAHU'S highly contested victory brings to the fore some very disturbing realities in the Palestine-Israel relations. Throughout his previous three terms in office, Netanyahu has blatantly projected a highly aggressive, militant, overbearing role of jingoistic, anti-Arab, fear mongering rhetoric, almost verging on racism.

Of particular concern was the election campaign of his 4th term in which he seemed to have banked on creating a fear psychosis – triggering the most extremist sentiments, declaring his stand that he would never agree to a two-state solution – a stand point after decades of negotiated positioning of a two-state solution endorsed by a succession of Israeli governments.

Netanyahu's ultra rightist position has soured relations with the US especially with the Obama administration, so much so that their differences became public. To Obama's credit, he has taken a firm stance against Netanyahu's anti-two state solution. European powers have been even stronger in their outrage against Netanyahu's position. Even Israel's president, Reuven Rivlin acknowledged that the comments made by Netanyahu should not have been made in a Jewish state or any democratic state.

After winning the election he has slightly modified his extremist stance, which, we feel, is nothing more than political posturing. We express our deep concern over this development in the Arab-Israel conflict and commend President Obama's administration and other western governments for their unambiguous criticism of Netanyahu's political stance. We hope that the US and the European powers will bring back the two-state solution as a centre point of peace in the Arab-Israel conflict.

An ad for a people

CHINTITO
SINCE 1995



NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

NO one was spitting on the street, right, left and centre. Sometimes the wind can take it backwards, I have discovered to my obvious displeasure. The entire day, and I got down in almost a dozen train stations, I did not hear one angry or loud voice, but I

went from back lanes of the suburb to wide streets of the financial district. I had to lay on the road to catch the full profile of a very tall tower on my digital SLR, although I 'can on' the older types (no free ads allowed), and my clothes were not the least soiled. This was Tokyo, which a little over half a century ago, was capital of a country ravaged by the Americans and their allies in a war this city lost.

That is another way of letting you know that I am now visiting the Japanese capital, but the dropping of the name of the camera, albeit in camouflage, was purely coincidental.

Every random person I approached (in crude sign language) for help, generally direction to a place, were most generous in going out of their way, or they bowed and bowed to convey in silence that they did not understand me, and that they were truly sorry. Rarely will you see a nation hand-in-glove with progress and humility, development and cordiality, success and civility. The Japanese are writing a chronicle for the world to follow.

Having the bitter experience of mistakenly being served pork (or so I thought) in another country, despite telling the waiter vocally and in signage that 'I do not take pork', I chose to go for Pizza in a hut (no free ads allowed), feeling certain that I could order a medium vegetable preparation of the Italian delicacy. No, I am not naming the other country, because I intend to visit it within the week, and their visa section is like a real visa section. At Tokyo's one of many outlets of the global pizza giant, I was

bowed out by seeing over three dozen varieties, and the food fragrance was nostalgically Roma, but everything was in written in Japanese, or so I guessed from the intriguing script. The very polite server and I made no headway in our half-minute exchanges, when I had the flash bulb of an idea: G****e translation. (No freed ad, I already explained) But, my phone did not have any net connection.

I raced back to my hotel room in the same block, although I had not had any lunch, but you gain strength when you can smell the food you think you will have. Earlier my in-flight breakfast after we took off from Shanghai was marred when co-passenger on

done excellently in this sector, and Tokyo is one of them, is reliable, efficient and inexpensive in comparison with the local cost of living. Moving about is not a problem if you can read the well-organised layout maps, and the connections between lines is mind-boggling. Thankfully the station names are also written in English. As a grumbling query was brewing in my mind as to why more instructions were not in English, I quickly realised how difficult it must be for the Japanese who knows no English in the London Underground. I also noted that every third person on a train was thumbing his or her mobile, which is now a world-wide malady.



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

the next seat, a Hong Kong real estate facilitator called Natina, admitted that most of it was pork. In my Wi-Fi room, I quickly translated vital sentences like "I don't eat this and that" and that "I want a pizza made only with vegetables", which translated looks like 'yasai'. But, in any non-English domain, I do not trust my eyes and I always show the foreigner what came translated on my mobile.

By the time I returned to the PHD people, the server had changed and this man could even say 'shrimp' after I flashed him the translated sentences. My night was saved with a most delicious half-half that I downed with a C**e Nothing in two go's.

Public transport in the cities that have

Ever since I went to cover the 1998 FIFA World Cup in France, I have been pledging to learn the language the first thing I would do on my return, but alas, I have not yet taken up French, or later Spanish, or Portuguese, or for that matter Indonesian or Chinese or Korean or Mongolian; Japanese is the latest addition. I absolutely envy people who can speak in a language I do not understand, and that pretty much includes everything outside Bangla, English, Hindi and Urdu, even if those wonderful utterances be the words they learnt from their mother.

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Saffronisation of secularism

BETWEEN
THE LINES



KULDIP NAYYAR

NOT many in Pakistan, still fewer in India, recalled that this March 23 marked the 75th year of the Muslim League's resolution to demand partition of India. The Lahore resolution, as it was called, said: "That no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, namely, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

The word 'Pakistan' was not mentioned either in the body of the resolution or in the speeches following it. But major Indian papers, owned by Hindus, described it as the "Pakistan Resolution." Mohammad Ali Jinnah had found a message for the Muslim masses. But he lived to rue the day he had used in the resolution the words "such territorial readjustment as may be necessary" because this very expression was used to justify the split of the Muslim majority States of Punjab and Bengal when the subcontinent was partitioned.

Even more so, Jinnah subsequently must have realised how catastrophic it was to have used the phrase "independent States" because later the supporters of an independent East

Bengal (now Bangladesh) argued that the creation of two independent countries, one in the "North-Western" and the other in the "Eastern" zones of India, was conceived in the Pakistan Resolution itself.

Jinnah tried to explain this later by saying that it was a typing mistake that made "State" into "States." Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto, a young leader, quipped that he would be careful of his stenographer in the future. Yet Khaliqzaman, a Muslim League leader from UP, who seconded the Pakistan Resolution, said that he changed the word State to States "without any intention" while drafting a resolution (reiterating the demand for Pakistan) on behalf of a Muslim League convention held in April 1946 at Delhi. He also utilised the opportunity to exclude the phrase "with such territorial readjustments" which had found a place in the Lahore Resolution.

I am against the partition. Yet I wish that if it was inevitable, it should have been on the basis of the resolution. The areas should have been demarcated as were demanded. It would have been a geographical division. What eventually happened was the separation on the basis of religion.

More than 10 lakh people were killed in the religious frenzy that followed. And there is no end of it, particularly in India where roughly 16 to 17 crore Muslims live. What happened in Hashimpura some 18 years ago is only one example. Just taste this.

Sixteen Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) personnel were acquitted in the 1987 Hashimpura massacre case. Giving them the benefit of doubt, the court said there was lack of evidence, especially regarding the identity of the accused. It further referred the matter to Delhi State Legal Services Authority for rehabilitation of victims.

Some 19 PAC personnel were facing trial for allegedly killing 42 people in Meerut in Uttar Pradesh in May 1987. Three of them died during the trial. The

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killings had allegedly occurred during riots in Meerut city after the victims were picked up from the Hashimpura mohalla of the city.

That such incidents are taking place in a country which adopted a secular ideology after independence is not only reprehensible but also disconcerting. We must admit our failure to inculcate secular values in the minds of the people. The situation is getting worse. Prime Minister Narendra Modi gets instructions from the fanatic Hindu organisation, RSS. Many bureaucrats living in the parochial atmosphere are themselves imbibing the divisive outlook.

True, the preamble of our Constitution still retains the word of secularism despite the efforts to drop it. But this is more of a sham. The minorities live in fear. Today, the communal forces are not even on the defensive. They believe as if it is their right to follow the Hindutva ideology and the constitution is being saffronised so that the pretention of being liberal

goes on. The Modi government has done enough damage to the country's ethos. I still has four years left in its tenure.

The introduction of Sanskrit and the compulsory teaching of Gita in Haryana are ominous signs of what is yet to come. Maybe, the BJP is testing the waters. Once it finds that its hidden programme of introducing the Hindutva philosophy does not create the furor which it did earlier, the party will go full speed to implement it.

It's strange that the liberal forces have joined hands to oppose the land acquisition bill and staged a protest march the other day under the leadership of Congress president Sonia Gandhi. But when the very idea of India being threatened, they were busy with their petty agenda leaving the field open to the parochial forces. Even when the Modi government's real intention has been exposed now, the liberal elements remain inactive. One sees at times a concerted effort on their part to stall the BJP's programme. But this is only an exception, not rule.

This is the time to recall the genesis of Pakistan Resolution which ultimately got reduced into the division, not territorially but religiously. Unfortunately, one helplessly watches that Pakistan is going the Taliban way because of the fundamentalist forces increasingly holding forth. India should have been the shining example of secularism as has been the case after independence.

Even in the earlier rule under the leadership of A.B. Vajpayee, the BJP did little to change the country's ethos. Vajpayee himself, although once the RSS pracharak, was conscious of the fact that the diversity of India was its strength and that any one religion's pre-eminence would destroy the soul of the country. Unfortunately, Modi remains tethered to the RSS philosophy. It's a pity.

The writer is an eminent Indian columnist.

COMMENTS

"I won't serve third term: David Cameron"
(March 25, 2015)

Bellal Hossain

And Bangladeshi politicians are desperate to serve until their death!

"Arson attacks take four more lives"
(March 23, 2015)

Farah Nusrat

Unfortunately we have become tolerant about these heinous crimes. Only the people who suffer can realise the pain.

Saiful Islam Sojol

Both AL and BNP are responsible for the death of innocent people. They do politics for whom?

"Many people in my area say they will commit suicide if I don't run in the city polls."

--Dhaka-7 MP Hajj Selim

Munim Chowdhury

What a joke!

Zabir Ahmed

Should I cry or laugh? Please someone advise me.

Shamim Abedin

Flattery is bad for the listener as well as the teller!

Medical negligence

This refers to the article, "To deal with medical negligence" (March 16). Medical negligence is a man-made calamity for both the victim and patient's family. There have been reports of medical instruments being left in the body of the patient. In some cases, hospitals hold back the body of the dead patient over unpaid bills. Nowadays, patients are fleeced in hospitals. Unnecessary medical tests result in inflated bills and God alone knows whether the results of different lab tests are manipulated or not, to further fleece patients
Deendayal M. Lulla
On e-mail

Undeserving students in MEPHI

Building the Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) is not the only job Rosatom (State Nuclear Energy Corporation of Russia) does. They are also responsible for maintenance, supervision and staff training wherever they are building NPP. As part of training professionals, they rely on MEPHI (Moscow Engineering Physics Institute), a specialised institution with a view to training skilled personnel for the Soviet military and atomic programmes only. But as of now MEPHI has opened a specialised programme for incoming students from different countries where Rosatom is building NPP and providing them with extensive theoretical and practical education required to work in different posts in a nuclear power station. Because of the placement guarantee and stipend, students get it's no surprise that freshers, sophomores or even seniors from different famous universities are also coming here.

Last year from Bangladesh, 10 students were demanded for this specialist programme through the ministry of education but unfortunately the information was not easily available for most of the students and thus some cunning students of questionable calibre have availed this invaluable opportunity. The syllabus for programme is carefully devised and is meant for students of very high aptitude. It is feared that if this continues in the coming years, then some of the most prestigious and sensitive posts in our first nuclear power station will be chaired by some unworthy greenhorns. It is expected that proper intervention of the Bangladesh government and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission will prevent any such consequence by actively engaging in selecting and monitoring the coming students for the nuclear programme.

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