

## A forceful message

### Errant law enforcers cannot escape the hand of law

IT is indeed heartening to see justice finally meted out to Md Helal Uddin, who as the OC of Khilgaon Police station picked up Abdul Kadar, a meritorious Dhaka University student, tortured him in custody and later tried to arrest him on trumped-up charges. The judgment indeed sets a precedent in the country's criminal justice system that hardly sees law enforcers put on the dock for custodial torture and lodging false cases.

We laud the judiciary's timely intervention in a matter of severe infraction of law based on reports in the press. This will help restore respect for the rule of law, which is the basis of good, benevolent governance. We also believe that Kadar's tenacious pursuit of law to vindicate his position will inspire other victims to unwaveringly fight for their rights.

The incident also magnifies the extent to which some members of the law enforcing agencies flout the law and indiscriminately use violent means to falsely implicate the victims. Through this judgment the expected role of the police as protector of the citizens has been dinned into the ear of an errant official. It is a forceful reminder to the police about desensitisation of their role and holding them to account for their malfeasance.

## Focus on South-South cooperation

### Potential for connectivity must be realised

THE high level international meeting on 'South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Post-2015 Development Agenda' that ended yesterday has highlighted the need for sharing and exchange of development solutions – of knowledge, experiences and best practices – among countries in the global South. This will facilitate the realisation of targeted SDG goals. We applaud the initiative for stronger political, social and economic coalitions and partnerships among governments, private sector, civil society organisations in the South. South-South cooperation can be an impetus for economic development, enabling developing countries to reduce their dependency on the North. If road connectivity among all South Asian countries can be ensured, it alone would add 1.5 percent to the region's GDP.

However, despite the enormous potential of South-South cooperation, it must be acknowledged that no enduring and effective changes can take place without the political will and commitment from concerned governments. The ambivalent relations between some of the most powerful emerging nations in the South may cast a shadow over the rapid realisation of the potential for cooperation. It is unfortunate that South-South trade is considerably more costly than South-North trade and North-North trade. Southern countries, as such, should work together to facilitate trade and increase access to markets by reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers.

In the end, commitment to connectivity – physical and digital – must become a cornerstone of regional as well as national policymaking thrusts.

## COMMENTS

**“Ananta isn't dead, we are”**  
(May 15, 2015)

**Nirjon Pranto**

I deeply condemn Ananta's killing but at the same time, I am tired of the hate speeches spread through online. If one is a free thinker, s/he shouldn't hurt others' beliefs.

**Ummid Ashraf**

These fanatics are creating a bad image of Muslims. It is the government's responsibility to ensure justice to the victim's family. And it is the responsibility of the atheist bloggers to realise that they shouldn't hurt the religious beliefs of others.

**Rakibull Hassan**

This government uses religion as a political tool and allows extra-judicial killings and abduction to suppress political opponents. This government has taken away people's democratic rights. They have also offered presidential pardons for convicted murderers. There is no evidence that Avijit and Ananta were killed by the religious extremists. For all we know the police (who act like ruling party goons nowadays!) let the killers of Avijit run away and the government did nothing. The government also failed to arrest the culprits who attacked women in broad daylight in the DU campus. The government should stop with all the lies and start taking some real actions.

**“2 foreigners arrested for human trafficking”**  
(May 14, 2015)

**MD Rasel Hossain**

Exemplary punishment should be given to the culprits involved in human trafficking so that no one will dare to commit such a crime ever again.

# “Waiting for the Esquimo” is over

## From enclaves to national integration

M. ASADUZZAMAN

BRENDAN Whyte, a social scientist, published from University of Melbourne in 2002 a paper titled “Waiting for the Esquimo”. In this he has argued, as referred to by Brig. Anam Khan in his May 14, 2015 op-ed in *The Daily Star*, that an Esquimo (Eskimo) pilot i.e., an unlikely leader would be needed to resolve the enclaves' problems between Bangladesh and India. This has now happened and is a reality.

As Brig. Anam Khan has rightly pointed out, the Noon-Nehru agreement or at least the Bangladesh-India agreement of 1974 certainly could have been implemented without foot-dragging. Still, better late than never. I would like to supplement a little on the history of the origin of the enclaves as a kind of reminder as to how long this baggage has been carried. Also now that the inter-country problem appears to be over, we need to give some thought to immediate works for the integration of the enclave residents into the broader nation.

The Kingdom of Coochbihar came into existence from about 1540 AD under King Bisva Singh. At one time it spread over much of central and eastern Bangladesh just past present Chittagong to the south under the reign of Nar Narayan around 1560. About 1575, the Mughal army confronted the Coochbihar kings but the border remained fluid. In about 1661 Mirjumla conquered Coochbihar. Yet, the tussle continued between the two sides and ended in the early part of the eighteenth century when the Coochbihar king ceded certain parts of the kingdom to the Mughals. This to and fro between the two sides resulted in backwaters remaining in areas controlled by the two parties and later formalised through treaties in 1711-13. Within Coochbihar, certain small areas remained loyal to Mughal authority. The same happened with Coochbihar kings retaining control through lease in certain areas mainly in present day Rangpur Division, then under the Mughal authority. This resulted in the present enclaves; although over time some changes had taken place, but not much. Apparently these lands were owned by or leased to the King or on his behalf to Koch zamindars. At present these lands although in possession now of private households were initially actually khas lands.

In any case, the enclave formation led sometime to geographical aberration such as the only counter-counter-enclave in the world. The main Indian enclave of Balapar Khagrabari is/was 6415.06 acre which surrounds a Bangladesh counter enclave named Upanchowik Bhajini of 110.97 acres which then completely surrounds the counter-counter enclave of Indian Dahala Khagrabari of only 1.70 acres.

The enclaves, counter-enclaves and the only counter-counter enclave have no natural physical boundaries between them and many are in very close proximity to

each other and are of all shapes and sizes. The border between any two, sometimes marked with pillars, may lie through a crop field, possibly a house or middle of a national highway, an irritant to the extreme to those who have to live and earn their livelihood there through means, fair or foul, and administrators who have to administer those areas. In any case such historical baggage now being shed, the time has come for integration of the enclaves and their erstwhile residents into the national mainstream. However, one needs to be cautious in the process.

The proper identification of these enclaves (including their ownership status, private or State i.e., origi-

under the enclaves and counter-enclaves, this needs to be decided once and for all. Secondly, when exchange of people, if it takes place, happens, unscrupulous people may try to take advantage of the apparent ensuing chaos unless the recordings are started right away and put in order. The governments and administrations in both India and Bangladesh should take measures so that ordinary people do not suffer due to these anomalies and be dispossessed of their properties. For a start, possibly no land transfers may be allowed to people from outside the enclaves for a few, say, five years. On the other hand, those lands which may be identified to have belonged to the Maharajah of Coochbihar or held on



People of Puthkhali Indian enclave in Panchagarh district brought out a procession holding Bangladesh national flags while celebrating Victory Day

PHOTO:STAR

nally held by the kingdom of Coochbihar) and their proper recording is necessary for avoidance of almost certain and lengthy land ownership suits at a later stage. The Jurisdiction List (JL) numbers are not in all cases unique, some time it is the same for different enclaves as they may be under different police stations. Second, over time even in comparatively recent period of the last hundred years or so, cadastral and other land surveys have recorded them in different ways as some mergers or exchanges had taken place between districts the boundaries of which also changed. So clear land recording of ownership, operation or encroachment with immediate digitisation for fast data retrieval and fair and proper land administration is now a must.

Such proper recording may help in several ways. First, as there are confusions regarding exact numbers and area

his behalf may perhaps be declared khas to be managed by the government.

Finally, if people from Bangladesh enclaves in India migrate to the Bangladesh mainland, they need to be rehabilitated for which the government must immediately draw a programme with adequate resources and office protocols. If some lands are vacated by those departing from enclaves within Bangladesh for India, probably those along with any khas land that may be available may be used for rehabilitation. This is thus going to be a critical exercise. Let us at least hope that with the LBA now entering any day into force, people who had been suffering for so long will have their cup of misery at least less full than before.

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## MODI'S VISIT TO CHINA

# Will strategic differences be removed?

### BOTTOM LINE



BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

Chinese President Xi Jinping received him in Xian, capital of Xi's home province of Shaanxi. His welcome of Modi is similar to the gesture made by Modi to President Xi last September in Gujrat, his home state and not in New Delhi.

The visit is significant in many ways. First, he laid emphasis on economic relations with China because he believes that bilateral economic relations may promote in turn friendly political relations over time removing the distrust among the two economic giants in Asia. Second, India can be a global power if economic invigoration is injected through building infrastructure on roads, highways and railways and he is eager to follow the Chinese model of progress. Third, while he seeks Chinese investment and tourists in India, he cannot compromise India's increasing role in the Asia Pacific region because at a subterranean level both countries are considered as rivals. Moreover India's closer strategic partnership with the

US is not comfortable to China.

Modi reportedly was an admirer of China when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat and as Prime Minister he was pleased to visit China in the first year of his Government. He reportedly said that both countries have a historic responsibility to turn this relationship into a source of strength for each other.

Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping reportedly discussed all bilateral issues including the border issue, a major irritant. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on May 15 that he had constructive and friendly talks with the Chinese leadership and both sides agreed to explore a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable resolution on the boundary issue.

Modi reportedly raised India's concern over China's plans for infrastructure projects in Pakistan occupied Kashmir in a “free and candid exchange of views” and also voiced India's objections to China issuing stapled visas for residents of Arunachal Pradesh.

In discussions with his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang, Modi reportedly stressed the need for China “to reconsider its approach on some of the issues that hold us back from realising full potential of our partnership”. At the same time, he was pragmatic enough to conclude 24 agreements with China on trade and economic co-operation worth over \$22 billion dollars in Beijing.

During Xi's visit to India last year, China announced \$20 billion in invest-

ments over five years, including setting up two industrial parks. Since then progress has been slow, in part because of the difficulties Modi has had in getting political approval for easier land acquisition laws. Only a fifth of the necessary land has been acquired for a \$5 billion industrial park in the western city of Pune.

A notice on China's national railway bureau website last month said a delegation visited India from April 25-29 at the invitation of India to talk about accelerating the Sino-Indian railway cooperation document.

China, which is conducting a feasibility study into a \$36 billion bullet train project from the capital in the north to Chennai in the south, has asked for work to begin on a pilot project covering part of the route. It is reported that the two sides have also agreed to speed up implementation of a shorter high-speed rail corridor from Chennai to Bengaluru, as China seeks to cash in on Modi's vision of modernising the train system that 25 million people use daily. India is seeking investment of \$137 billion on railway sector over the next five years.

Modi has been keen to reduce the huge deficit with China. Last year the bilateral trade amounted to \$70.6 billion, and India had a deficit of \$37 billion. For China and India, with a combined population of 2.5 billion people, the bilateral is meager. Modi sought to reduce the deficit in exporting to China in such areas where India has been very successful such as

pharmaceuticals, information technology (software) and some agricultural products. Bilateral trade could rise easily to \$200 billion per year.

Indian foreign policy analyst C. Raja Mohan said that Modi is “abandoning the old approach to China.” Given the

**India can be a global power if economic invigoration is injected through building infrastructure on roads, highways and railways and he is eager to follow the Chinese model of progress.**

fact that the potential for competition and conflict is likely to persist, the challenge for Modi is how far he would be successful in bridging the strategic differences between the two countries.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Trafficking victims perilously drifting at sea

Thousands of people—mostly Rohingyas and Bangladeshis are sailing in boats and trying to reach the shores of Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. But they are not allowed to land in those countries as they are refusing let these people enter. These trafficking victims are going through inhuman sufferings with little water and food. The miseries of these ill-fated people can hardly be imagined. The mass graves found in Thailand have horrified the people of the whole world. Poor people of our country are being led by human traffickers who lure them with the prospect of good jobs in Malaysia and Thailand; but in most cases, the traffickers either kill them by torturing or let them die



PHOTO:AFP

by abandoning them into the sea. These human traffickers should be brought to justice and duly punished for leading so many people into inhuman ordeals that result in deaths.

Zabed Wali  
Chittagong

### Nakba

Israel has made it a policy to ignore UN resolutions. The most famous one, UN Security Council Resolution 242, passed just after the Six Day War, talked of the “inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every state in the area can live in security.” It demanded the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict.”

Protests marking the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes in 1948 entered their second day, to mark 67 years since the “Nakba” or “catastrophe” that befell them when Israel was established. More than 700,000 Palestinians, estimated today to number around 5.5 million, fled or were driven from their homes in 1948, with the Nakba observed every May 15. For the Palestinians, the right to return to homes they fled or were forced out of is a prerequisite for peace.

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