

## Education budget lamentable

Turning a blind eye to a priority sector

IT is no wonder that Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid is lamenting the poor budgetary allocation for his ministry, with only Tk. 4000 crore allocated for educational development purposes, while other ministries have been given Tk. 16,000 crore to realise their development objectives. Terming the budgetary allocation for his ministry as insufficient, the minister has underlined that he cannot be expected to provide salaries of teachers, develop infrastructures, deliver high-quality education or build more educational institutions with the allocated amount.

A total of Tk. 31,618 crore has been allocated for the education sector, but the education ministry will get only Tk. 17, 116 crore, with the rest of the budget going to the primary and mass education ministry. The two ministries together have received 10.71 percent of the total budget and 1.8 percent of the GDP, while last year, they received 11.7 percent of the total budget and 2 percent of the GDP. The UNESCO stipulates that the budgetary allocation for education should constitute at least 6 percent of the GDP and 20 percent of the total budget. That we have not only consistently fallen short of that goal, but have actually reduced our allocations from previous years, is a cause for major concern for a developing country like Bangladesh with a huge illiterate or semi-literate population. Investment in education, after all, is a prerequisite for sustained growth and development, and as the minister himself has pointed out, Bangladesh's vision to become a middle-income country cannot be realised by 2021 if the government continues to show reluctance to prioritise the education sector.

If the Education Policy 2010 is to be implemented, and long term grievances of teachers and educationists addressed, the government has to re-evaluate its priorities, and redirect its limited resources.

## A surge in counterfeit currency

Dig deeper into the racket and bust it

WITH Eid in the offing, counterfeit note syndicates have become active again. Over the last few weeks, law enforcers have busted the dens of a number of racketeers who have been dealing in fake notes for a long time. The latest in this line, a Rab haul of Tk 10 million fake notes, is indeed disquieting as it manifests the extent to which this illicit trade has proliferated in the country. Also, some recent arrests made in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet show that fraudsters have spread their tentacles nationwide, making it even more challenging for the police to bring them to book.

It is true that digital recourse has made the job of the counterfeiters easy, as they can use a scanner and a computer to produce fake notes that can be passed off as legal tenders before the naked eye. To make matters even more grievous, most of the bank branches in the country are not adequately equipped with machines to detect fake notes. During the Eid rush, it is difficult for bank officials to count all the notes they receive by hand, which makes it easy for the forged notes to enter into the supply chain.

The law enforcers need to apprehend the manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of fake notes to stamp out the counterfeiting business. Instead of limiting their operations against the counterfeiters only on the eve of Eid, they should work all year round.

## FOR THE LOVE OF CRICKET

# Managing fan behaviour and exuberance

ZIAUDDIN CHOUDHURY

THE series victory in cricket against India has taken our people on a joy ride that the country does not witness very often. Some were hoping for a total wash that was Pakistan's lot, but a victory is a victory. For a country that is often pictured abroad as one whose people are leaving in droves for unknown destinations in perilous conditions, this image of a happy people, carrying flags of Bangladesh to honour their victorious team, is indeed a pleasant departure from those dire and morbid scenes.

I do not want to rain on this happy parade, nor do I want to undervalue this victorious moment. Our young men have proved that it is possible to ride the ladder of dizzying heights, if you have the will and determination. Defeating two of the most famous names in the world of international cricket is no mean achievement. We are all proud of this. I would like to, however, draw a line between displaying national pride in such victories and taking out victory parades, and disrespecting opponents either to vaunt the victory or ventilate other negative thoughts about them. This has happened before in the case of Pakistan and now again in the case of India.

According to some media reports, some of the more enthusiastic fans went overboard in not only mocking the players of the other side, but also by giving vent to feelings against the opponents in ways that would be considered offensive. To chase a fan of the Indian team, who was apparently dressed in his country's national emblem and flag, is not cricket. Chants of joy cheer us, taunts just do the opposite.

In sports, supporters of the two sides

invariably fight each other, mostly with words and chants. This is normal. In some cases, such fights may lead to riots. In England, fans of football clubs often fight so much that the riot police has to be deployed to stop them. Soccer violence was identified and politicised in other countries as well, with security initiatives at European stadiums that included separating standing fans from the pitch, or from each other, with walls or fences.

Fortunately for international cricket, we do not have to have such fences,

because the fans of the national team always dominate the scene, with no room for opponents' support. But what we do have is a raucous band of fans of the national team, who can get carried away by emotions. They react in a bipolar manner, carry the players on their shoulders when they win, but throw them down the gutters when they lose.

The victory against Pakistan earlier, and now India, definitely puts the Bangladesh Cricket Team in a more favourable position among cricketing countries, but it also places a greater

onus on the team to not only maintain the momentum but reach higher peaks. In the cricketing world, Bangladesh is a relatively new entrant, and it has miles to go before it acquires the level of respect that other mature teams have acquired over decades of experience in this game. I leave it to our coaches and organisers to train our team to take them forward. They can and will, with training and more matches in their laps, be among the top five teams in the world. This will take time.

My concern is managing the exuberance of fans and training them on how to react appropriately, without causing embarrassment, and perhaps shame, to the team itself and the country at large. Outrage at failures of the team is understandable, but slurs and taunts at a team representing another country reveal a more complex problem.

We are a small but sovereign nation, deserving equal treatment by others. The thought of being viewed as tiny and insignificant by others, riles our people to no end, and therefore, the nation goes berserk with joy on any occasion when the country achieves a win over a bigger and reputed competitor. It is beating the impossible; it is David against Goliath. Therefore, even a non-combative event such as sports gets politically charged when played with rivals who are bigger or stronger.

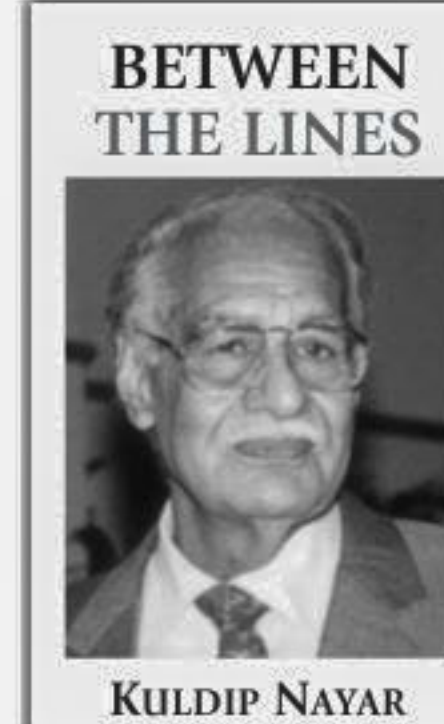
Training a sports team to succeed or perform better is manageable, but training a crowd to behave is not within the domain of sports experts. This has to come from organisers of sports, from guidelines on acceptable behaviour and zero tolerance for using politically charged rhetoric or slander in sports.

Is it actually doable?

The writer is a political analyst and commentator.



## Dynasty needs to explain



KULDIP NAYAR

**BETWEEN THE LINES**  
I am sorry to revert to the emergency yet again, over two successive weeks. R.K. Dhawan, Mrs. Indira Gandhi's confidante, has disclosed that Sonia Gandhi had no qualms about the emergency. This is

contrary to what I had heard when the emergency was imposed. It was reported that both her husband, Rajiv Gandhi, and she were thinking to return to Italy to bring up their children in a "free atmosphere."

Dhawan's observation about Sonia Gandhi makes all the more obligatory for her to explain her stand on the emergency. Even after 40 years, the dynasty is not clearly coming out on the switching off the lights of democracy. The dynasty alone is responsible for what had happened. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was indicted by the Allahabad High Court in a poll petition and unseated for misusing the official machinery.

The Supreme Court gave a reprieve. Dhawan's remarks show that there was no regret in the dynasty. However, Dr Manmohan Singh tried to make up for the dynasty's deliberate silence. It is but fair that the sooner it apologises to the nation, the better it would be for them and the country.

Dhawan has, however, come a long way from the deposition before the Shah Commission, appointed by the Janata government to go into the excesses of the emergency. He had deposed before the Commission that he was not willing to say anything against the dynasty and put the entire blame on Siddharth

Shankar Ray, then West Bengal chief minister.

In the light of Dhawan's revelations, the case should be reopened. More than that, there needs to be a probe on how the institutions were diluted and the power got concentrated on Indira Gandhi. BJP's senior leader L.K. Advani's warning that the emergency can return becomes significant. He has not named anybody but the obvious reference is to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has made all other institutions irrelevant, and reposes faith in the PMO. In other

Indira Gandhi a few decades ago, today it is that of Narendra Modi. Most newspapers and television channels have adapted themselves to his way of working, if not thinking, as they had done during Mrs. Gandhi's period.

Against this background, the murder of a journalist in Madhya Pradesh, which is a better administered state in the country, does not surprise me. The reason was once again the same. The journalist, Sandeep Kothari, dared to cross the line which those, who represent the establishment, have drawn.

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words, the PMO has become the real power centre.

I do not think that the emergency will be re-imposed because the amendments affected in the Constitution by the Janata government makes it impossible. Yet, conditions can be created which will suggest the emergency without any legal sanction.

The rule of Modi becomes ominous in the sense that no cabinet minister counts in the BJP government and the joint consultation by the cabinet is only on paper. All political parties should put their heads together to stall any emergency-like rule before it actually comes to exist.

If there was a one-person rule of

Beyond that, the freedom of expression is not tolerated because it challenges the interest of entrenched elements.

The 44-year-old Kothari disclosed how the sand mafia was operating with the assistance of the police. That is the reason why they said that Kothari's death was not connected with journalism. The reading is, however, more harrowing than what has come to light. It is apparent that the police was in league with the sand mafia's illegal doings.

Some activists raised their voice many months ago. But the authorities took no action. The sand mafia went on increasing the area from where they filled trucks with sand throughout the day. They once operated at night. But as they

were able to 'buy' more and more functionaries, over the years they shed fear or hesitation.

Kothari had gone missing from his home in Katangi town of Balaghat district in Madhya Pradesh on a Friday, a couple of weeks ago. His family members had lodged a missing person's complaint the next day, Saturday. However, reports said that three youths, who were closely linked to the sand mafia, had kidnapped and killed Kothari over his refusal to withdraw a court case. The report added that Kothari was out on bail for the last two months in a rape case.

During investigation, the police rounded up the three young men from Katangi on Sunday and they confessed that they had killed Kothari, set him on fire and buried him in the forests in Nagpur district. The police are yet to establish whether Kothari was murdered and then burned or if he was burned alive and buried.

Since all the facts about the case have not come to light, it is difficult to apportion the blame. But there is no denying of Kothari's killing and his journalistic credentials. That the corporate sector has become more influential and more demanding than before is not something which can be denied. It is intelligent enough not to vitiate fundamental rights like the freedom of expression. They have now roughnecks at their command to fix journalists.

Kothari was a victim. Burning him alive shows how the establishment, on one hand, and the mafia, on the other, are indulging in more heinous cruelty to instill fear. This is what the political parties are accepting. Because of petty rivalries, they are allowing the democratic polity to be mutilated.

The writer is an eminent Indian columnist.

## COMMENTS

**"Wrong Side? Lawbreaking by influentials on; people suffer on streets" (June 27, 2015)**

Hasibul Islam

VIPs do not care about the sufferings of the common people.

Fervid Forhad

If the lawmakers violate the law, then nothing to say!

Sk Zahid

This is absolutely unacceptable.

Mejbah U Shimul

They make the law, they enforce the law and they make you pay for breaking the law. But at the end of the day, they themselves break the law.

G K Md Nasarullah

Rules and laws are not for the powerful and influential; these are applicable only to the ordinary citizens.

Chayan Chowdury

Breaking rules is the rule of the powerful people! I think they are completely shameless.

Rupak Rpk

Driving on the wrong side is now a regular occurrence.

Maung Maung

Is their time more valuable than ours?

M Abdul Jabbar

The world's most popular and famous lie: "Everybody is equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of law."

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Save our heritage sites

I was shocked to see the photo on the front page of The Daily Star of June 26, 2015 showing part of the boundary wall of the Lalbagh Fort being knocked down to make way for a car parking lot. We do not understand how this could happen to one of our most well-known heritage sites. The government must immediately stop it and re-construct the boundary wall as it was.

It is a matter of great shame that heritage sites of our country are not getting the due importance. If left without proper care, one day these sites will become a heap of ruins and our historical past will be buried with it. We hope the authorities will take proper actions without delay.

Nur Jahon  
Chittagong



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

### Bring down the wall around Sompura Mahavihara

The Sompura Mahavihara at Paharpur is an UNESCO designated world heritage site. A few days back, I went to visit it. I was appalled to see that a very high brick wall boundary was being built around the monastery complex. I learned that the wall was being built under the South Asia Tourism Infrastructure Development Project. The Department of Archaeology is implementing this project. We don't know whose brainchild this unusually high wall is, but certainly when completed it will destroy the attraction of this world heritage site. We demand that this extremely high wall is brought to normal height. For a monument like Paharpur Mahavihara, the wrought iron fence is the best option, not the brick-wall.

Mojaharul Islam  
Uttara, Dhaka