

Rise in the number of female migrant workers

We have to ensure their safety

IT is promising that the number of female migrant workers from Bangladesh has increased from 37,304 in 2012 to 76,007 in 2014, even though overall migration of Bangladeshi workers has declined by 30 percent over the same period. The country received as much as \$15.31 billion in remittance – the highest in the country's history – thanks to the hard work of female workers in FY 2015.

Though certainly this is a welcome trend, we ought to be cautious about the precarious conditions under which many of our female migrant workers are working in some foreign countries, especially in countries with tainted records of human rights and workers' rights violations. As many as 65 percent of female migrant workers face different forms of violence – including physical and sexual abuse – in their host countries, according to a study published by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), but receive little to no systemic support either in their host or home countries. In a comprehensive study published last year, the Human Rights Watch documented the abuse and exploitation faced by female domestic workers in a particular Middle Eastern country due to a lack of labour protection laws. With 27 percent of the total female migrant workers of Bangladesh residing currently in that country and an overwhelming majority of them working as domestic workers, the government must take adequate steps to provide systemic protection to the vulnerable workers.

As we send more female workers abroad, we must prioritise the issue of migrant women's safety in negotiations with the receiving country, ensure that our embassies are equipped to address their concerns and take legal action when necessary, and set up shelter homes where female migrants can seek immediate assistance.

Fear in Raozan minorities

The state must ensure their security

IT is indeed disconcerting to see that the minorities living in Raozan area in Chittagong, once terrorised by Salahuddin Quader Choudhury, continue to still live in a state of fear of retribution. Given that there was violence in these areas following the original verdict in 2013, the fears may not be entirely unfounded, and this is what begs the question.

Not only during the tumultuous period of 1971 did Salahuddin and his cohorts perpetrate the worst kind of brutality on the local people in collaboration with the Pak army, even well after independence, and particularly after he was rehabilitated in politics, he had continued with his old ways. The problem that the prosecution faced in presenting the eye witnesses in the ICTs, fear of retribution being the main impeding factor, is well recorded.

We would like to see the state take an immediate and proactive measure to ensure that not only are the witnesses provided with adequate protection, the people of the area in general must also be provided with all the safety and security protection from the retributory reactions of the supporters of the convicted war criminals. This is also necessary for proper conduct of future trials of the war criminals. After all, the trials and punishments of the war criminals would become meaningless if the victims continue to suffer from a fear psychosis even after these criminals have met their fate in the hands of law. That would be a defeat of sorts for the people, particularly the direct victims of the brutality.

COMMENTS

"Welcome to the cruel world"
(July 28, 2015)

Lal Shobuz Potaka

It's the most barbaric act a man can do.

Jakaria Mondol

Honourable Prime Minister, please take action against all these hellish crimes committed by BCL.

Kishore Chowdhury

Please take rapid action against the culprits.

Kazi Zehad

Brutality is increasing in our society so rapidly.

"Abdul Kalam no more"
(July 28, 2015)

Mir Ahmed Siddique

The death of APJ Abdul Kalam is not only a loss for India but also for the world.

Uzzal Hossain

The world has lost a great leader and a dynamic man who used to believe in work. He was a man without greed.

Moaz Uddin Ahmed

He was a great scientist and a great man.

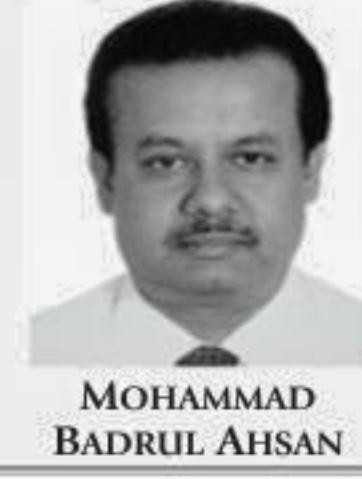
Laxman Sen

A great loss for the whole world. We lost a wonderful person.

EDITORIAL

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

CROSS TALK



MOHAMMAD BADRUL AHSEN

C RIME likens to math in the sense that some problems take longer time to solve, while many also remain hopelessly unresolved.

The speed at which the killers of Rajon in Sylhet have been apprehended gives us hope, but it also reminds us of the disappointing foot-dragging in investigations on the murders of journalist couple Sagar and Runi, and the abductions of BNP leaders Ilyas Ali and Salahuddin Ahmed. These high profile examples only accentuate a critical concern that deserves our attention. When people vanish like camphor or murders are swept under the rug, it speaks of how a country treats its citizens.

In a way, crimes, like tourist sites, also speak volumes about how a nation views itself. That's why the fear of crimes and perceptions of social disorder are widespread in developing countries, while rule of law and justice are the hallmarks of life in developed ones. That doesn't mean crime doesn't happen in more advanced countries. But

punishment is administered to criminals in the manner medicine is administered to patients. Illness may not be prevented or cured, but medical attention is guaranteed.

To use the FBI terminology, the national "clearance rate" for homicide in the United States today is 64.1 percent, which fifty-some years ago was more than 90 percent. Criminologists estimate that at least 200,000 murders have gone unsolved in the most powerful country of the world since the 1960s. That is enough to convince us that it's impossible to get to the bottom of every single murder mystery for the same reason one can never finish counting the stars in the sky.

But nations should be able to resolve some of their mysteries, especially those which attract collective attention. The Americans identified Lee Harvey Oswald as the killer of John F Kennedy, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan as the killer of Robert Kennedy and James Earl Ray as the killer of Martin Luther King, although conspiracy theories suggest they were merely the hands that pulled the triggers while real culprits eluded justice. Yet, all said and done, most Americans are pretty much satisfied that at least one person was found guilty for each of those crimes. It brought a closure in their minds.

In our country, two heads of governments were assassinated in the

last 44 years, and the killers of one have been identified, some punished already. The assassination of the other political figure during an aborted coup attempt still remains a mystery as much as the killing of the army general, who allegedly masterminded it. A number of officials were convicted and hanged, but the cry for justice persists in our minds in the manner of an unhappy spirit trapped inside a haunted house. More than punishing the guilty, it allegedly has made a travesty of justice as invisible hands victimised scapegoats.

Particularly so, when all fingers point at one individual like the needle of a compass always points north. And that exception also exists on the global scene when an American president is known to have lied to the world, creating ground for his intention to invade another country. George Bush is the living example of how the whole world was taken for a ride by a mischievous man to execute his nefarious scheme.

Curiously, punishment is often like curd because it has its coagulation time. Almost 44 years later, the war criminals in this country are getting their comeuppance. It's said that every crime leaves a trace and it's up to those who investigate to arrive at their conclusions. In case of the atrocious killings of Sagar and Runi, the disappearances of Ilyas Ali

and reappearance of Salahuddin Ahmed, it isn't even clear if the investigators have made an effort to draw their conclusions.

Sherlock Holmes says in *The Bascombe Valley Mystery* that there is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact. The most obvious of the obvious facts is that a crime can happen only if someone has committed it. In case of Rajon, the killers couldn't have made it more obvious than committing their crime in broad daylight. The murders of the journalist couple or abductions of the BNP leaders were diametrically different. These crimes took place in the middle of the night, when most people were sleeping.

What wasn't sleeping during those nights, however, is truth, which is being manipulated to create smokescreens. Crimes are hard to crack when truth is trivialised with an agenda, and we have seen many examples in our short history. The killers of the father of this nation have faced trial and the war criminals are currently paying for their sins.

Those who are hiding the truth mustn't forget its irony. Crime proved many times that it can be like a lost cat that eventually returns home. A nation that forgets its past is doomed to repeat it.

The writer is the editor of the weekly *First News* and an opinion writer for *The Daily Star*. Email: badrul151@yahoo.com

Which India is claiming to have been colonised?

HISSAM KHANDKER

T HIS week a video upload of a debate at the Oxford Union Debating Society has been trending on the internet. I am led to believe it may be the most watched Oxford Union debate to date, with close to 2 million views.

The star of this debate is the very eloquent MP Dr. Shashi Tharoor; even the Honourable Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has showered praise on the orator (an opposition Congress politician) for carrying the house in the debate. The subject of this debate – 'Why Britain owes reparations for colonising India'. Colonisers need to acknowledge the great harm done, enslavement, exploitations, racism and the hypocrisies used to support colonisation; reparations are, thus, owed. In this world of ever converging economic interests and pragmatic politics, it is also a matter of time till reparations will be given, most probably with due heartfelt respect and symbolic pageantry being extended by previous colonisers.

However, there is an issue with the continued use of the India as the reference for "The Colony" in question that is owed reparations from Great Britain. The only "India" or "British India" that can claim to have been colonised by The Kingdom of Great Britain ended at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947.

The India of today merely shares a common English name with the "India" that was colonised by Great Britain. The debate on colonisation, in reference to India, therefore, must respect that it was the subcontinent, not India alone, which was colonised. Any debate needs to recognise India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and the regional states, all having shared this colonial exploitation.

Dr. Tharoor most eloquently speaks of the horrors of colonisation on "India", with facts that have been voiced in the same vain by many other equally patriotic and eloquent writers and historians as following:

- The terrible Bengal Famine that cost 10 million lives
- The state sponsored destruction of the textile industry
- The smashing of weavers' looms and thumbs to prevent production
- The de-industrialisation of the

subcontinent

- The forced agricultural production of tea, indigo, cotton, opium All true, and all, for the greater part, inflicted not on the modern geographical India of today but on the current state known as Bangladesh and its capital city Dhaka.

Bangladesh can in fact claim the tragic distinction to have suffered the most during the colonisation of Moghul India by Great Britain. Referencing below some documented quotes from representatives of Great Britain in the late 1700s and 1800s.

In 1793, Francis Baring, awarded a Baronet by Parliament, famed for laying the foundations of the once powerful Barings Bank and a Director of the East

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