

## Brutal killing of another boy!

### End impunity for crimes against children

WE are appalled and outraged at the barbaric killing of a thirteen-year-old boy named Rakib in Khulna. The perpetrators inserted a high-pressure air pump nozzle into the boy's rectum and pumped air into his body that tore apart his intestine and burst his lungs. Soon after, the boy succumbed to the internal injuries. The way the boy was killed shows utmost sadistic disorder of the perpetrators as well as alarmingly growing cruelty to children in society.

This ghastly killing occurred barely a month into the gruesome murder of Samiul Alam Rajon, another thirteen-year-old boy from Sylhet. Incidents of child abuse and torture are heightened by the day. The pervasive culture of impunity is one of the major reasons behind growing occurrence of such events where perpetrators often manage to escape through legal loopholes. The government and society are equally responsible for failing to create a child-friendly environment in the face of a rapid degeneration of social values and compassion for children.

The government should take immediate action against the culprits and give them exemplary punishment without fail. At the same time, it should show zero-tolerance to any form of infringement of child rights because that creates grounds for further violation. Unless we put a brake on the menacing trend we wonder how many more children would have to lose their lives to such severely jolting savagery.

## Unplanned security gates

### A source of extortion?

A city councillor has reportedly put up iron gates in the capital's Arambagh, Fakirapool and adjoining areas for over a month purportedly as a security measure against petty theft and restricting entry of unwanted personnel. Some residents, however, paint a darker picture. People living in these areas and business establishments operating there claim that the public representative is 'extorting' money on a monthly basis in the name of ensuring 'security'. The councillor has admitted to have acted on his own which means he did not have the consent of members of the locality.

This is hardly expected from a city official who is a public servant and elected to office to assist in delivering civic services to ward members, which may include security too. We understand that the people of a locality may look for security from a ward councillor but that does not mean he should have a personal stake in the matter. On the contrary, he should move with the police to ensure proper patrol and vigil within his ward. For this he may also mobilise local guarding arrangements in consultation with the people of the locality, but not impose something with financial gain in mind.

What we are witnessing is the blurring of lines between governance and a city official's designated role. It is observed that people in many residential areas put up iron gates for security, but not without causing impediment to regular flow of people and vehicles. Some standards need to be set there.

## COMMENTS

**"Yet another savagery" (August 5, 2015)**

Maria Jaman

I just couldn't read the full description. The title, 'Pumped to death', was enough to stop my heart. What a world we live in now!

Tanzana Noor

Just can't go through this... sends chills down my spine.

Romzanul Islam

Let justice be done to this family!

**"Government to take medical care of shot mother, newborn: Nasim" (August 4, 2015)**

MBH Sakib

First of all, take measures to stop the murders and other crimes of Chitra League. I know this won't be done. The time has now come to stand against such violence.

Mohd. Jahirul Islam

This is only an eye wash. First you shoot and then you try to show mercy.

Seraj Ahmed

Medical care only? No legal action? What a commitment!

### STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING



Brig Gen SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN  
ndc, psc (Retd)

SEVENTY years after the greatest carnage of the 20th century was wreaked on a country by the dropping of the very strangely named atom bombs *Little Boy* on Hiroshima, and three days later of the *Fat Man* on Nagasaki, killing somewhere between 80,000 and 250,000 people, the saner voices in the world are still questioning the justification of the act.

Was the bomb at all necessary to subjugate a country whose army had all but capitulated, although the call for 'unconditional' surrender delayed the actual laying down of arms? The paradox is that the eventual Japanese surrender on Sep 2, 1945 was not unconditional since the emperor continued to remain in the exalted position that the Japanese had wanted to see him continue in. It was not Hiroshima and Nagasaki but, as admitted by former Japanese Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoye, "Fundamentally, the thing that brought about the determination to make peace was the prolonged bombing by the B-29s." And there was also the fact that the Soviets had informed the Japanese in April 1945 that they were not going to renew the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact of 1941.

And this inquiry will go on, perhaps for many more seventy years. But, regrettably, there will be no inquisition of the perpetrators of the worst kind of misery on a people; the after effects are still palpable in more ways than one. And the US government, which seems to believe that wars can be won by killing innocent women and children, has not taken the

moral consequence for its action. This, unfortunately, is the psyche that has instigated the thoughts of American leadership in general, right from the time the country was settled and the country's West and South conquered, till recent times, manifested in the illegal occupation of Iraq and war in Afghanistan.

The reprehensible unconcern for human lives on the part of a government compelled by its desire to find and cap-

Hiroshima to the American people was the happiest announcement he had ever made – is the most insensate statement from the president of a country that claimed moral leadership of the world.

The satisfaction, expressed at the death of four hundred natives in the Pequot settlement in Connecticut in 1637, when they were put to the fire to satisfy the colonists' migratory urges, that, "the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice" reminds one of a similar disregard

come from a government hell bent on meeting at any cost the ends of its parochial and self-serving view of national interest. While there were sane and rational politicians in the US that had the gall to tell off the US president, suggesting that, "No US president could be jubilant over any device that could kill innocent human beings," Albright's remarks went un-protested.

In 1945, there was opposition too to the bomb and the use of it. If the Americans were erroneously led into believing that the bomb was a military necessity one has only to read the views of the two most senior officers of the US military, Admiral William Leahy, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff and General Douglas MacArthur, Commander of US Forces in the Pacific at that time, to notice the fallacy of the official post-Hiroshima-Nagasaki narratives. They were of the view that the bombings were militarily unnecessary and morally reprehensible.

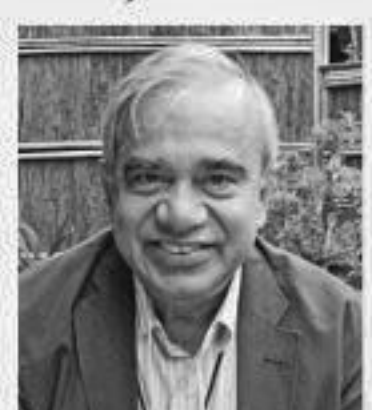
Events have proved the underlying motive of the US government to go ahead with the bombings. Nagasaki – Hiroshima was the message meant for the erstwhile Soviet Union, which the West and America considered their main enemy, and not so much the compulsion to save the lives of American soldiers were an invasion of Japan to happen. Look at the consequences of that – a nuclear proliferation of unprecedented scale.

If, according to some scholars, the US, by dropping the bombs, had forfeited the moral authority to provide the kind of leadership the world needed following the Second World War, its moral standing in recent times has further eroded after it resorted to falsehood, deceit, fabrication and exploitation of the fear of the enemy, in the systematic destruction of Iraq as a country and society.

The writer is Editor, Op-ed and Strategic Issues, The Daily Star.

# REMEMBERING HIROSHIMA now and beyond

### LETTER FROM JAPAN



MONZURUL HUQ

HIROSHIMA has always been in the hearts and minds of the Japanese ever since the city was flattened by an atomic bomb seventy years ago. It has become a well-established practice for prime ministers of Japan and most of their cabinet members to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and August 9 respectively, and pray for the salvation of the souls of

fallen victims and pledge for the abolition of nuclear weapons. One can feel the irony surrounding the official parts of these ceremonial events even more strongly, when in less than ten days, a majority of the same governmental team is seen visiting the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in the heart of Tokyo to pray for the salvation of souls for those who sacrificed their lives for the motherland. There is nothing wrong in praying for those who did not hesitate to die in battlefields fighting for the country. Almost every country has this ritual of hero-worshiping and remembering the gallant fighters who sacrificed their lives for the greater interest of the nation. But when we take into account the fact that at the Yasukuni Shrine Japan's convicted war criminals are also enshrined, we get a different picture. This has always been a paradox of the official observance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversaries. This year's seventieth anniversary observance will also more or less follow the same trend.

But beyond official controversies, Hiroshima and Nagasaki is remembered by many around the world as a stark reminder of what lies ahead of mankind if the ever growing nuclear arsenals keep flourishing. For seventy years, the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been telling the same story with the hope that their message will not hit a dead-end. And the stories they tell are full of sorrow and misery, reminiscent of doomsday scenarios of fictional works that many of us

are well aware of. Yet, the message seems to be hitting nowhere. The never-ending arms race is showing no sign of a respite and wars and conflicts with more deadly consequences are being fought on a regular basis while the risk of more devastating consequences loom large. The situation definitely calls for the need of listening more carefully the messages coming out of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And here lies the importance of the two observances that at least can give concrete evidences of the destructive capabilities of nuclear weapons.

The two Japanese cities were flattened by ironically named bombs. The "Little Boy" hit Hiroshima on the morning of August 6, 1945, claiming more than 100,000 lives in immediate consequence and bringing extreme suffering and misery to many more in the long run. Japan at the time was already on the retreat. US troops by then had got hold of Okinawa and were about to launch concerted assaults on Japan's main islands. Visibly, there was no sign of any possible Japanese counter attack with devastating consequences. An unconditional surrender was imminent and secret negotiations to that end were also carried on by different parties. Hence, the use of the atomic bomb in such a situation was aimed with a purpose, other than the declared one of a quick Japanese surrender, and the subsequent unfolding of events immediately after the war give enough evidence to that end. The Manhattan Project had already brought the desired result of producing the atomic bomb and the US administration was eager to show the world, and any future adversary, its military capability with the hope of opening a new chapter in history heralding American dominance. The use of the second bomb was to reassure the world that the arsenal was well-stocked and that eventually sealed the fate of Nagasaki where the "Fat Man" was dropped late in the morning of August 9, claiming more than 70,000 victims in the immediate aftermath. The combined death toll linked to the attacks in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their radiation effects has since risen to 460,000.

It's not only the number of deaths that counts. The

way they died and the suffering of those who survived the anguish tell the story of the extent of pain and misery the bombs brought them. There hardly is any comparison in the history of human misery of that extent, and it is this part of the whole story that needs to be told and retold until the conscience of humanity awakens. This is the task that had been performed all these years by the group of survivors known as Hibakusha.

However, with the passage of time, their number is shrinking rapidly and those concerned are now feeling an urgent need to find new ways to keep the memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki alive with firsthand

***The way they died and the suffering of those who survived the anguish tell the story of the extent of pain and misery the bombs brought them.***

accounts of the devastation. According to official statistics, there are around 180,000 survivors – many of whom are ageing – who live in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Both the cities have recently taken initiatives to train young people in the art of telling the stories in the same way as some of the victims have been doing all these years. The goal is to keep the memories of the people alive, so that the messages of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can be conveyed to Japan and the world in a much more meaningful way. So, there is hope that the flames of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will keep on burning long after the Hibakushas take leave from the world, after enduring unspeakable sufferings throughout the post-World War II years.

The writer is a Tokyo based Bangladeshi journalist. He also teaches at Japanese universities.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Since when has child labour in Bangladesh been eliminated?

This is in response to Rubana Huq's article "Choice: Indispensably branded or ethically slaughtered?" published on TDS, August 5, 2015. I was extremely perplexed by some of her statements made in the article and in fact, I even took issue with some things that were pretty insensitive. Although I agree on her point that Bangladesh suffers from a lack of proper branding, her analogy between underage Western models

and child labour in our country was broad and inappropriate. The two cannot be compared and the example was a poor choice on her part.

The other thing that I thought was inconsiderate of her to say was, "Bangladesh eliminated child labour years ago and the concept of forced or bonded labour doesn't apply here..." Really? Since when? If she meant it in another context, her choice of word is to blame, because from what it sounds like, that is simply not true; child and forced labour in Bangladesh is very much a reality. The way the article dealt with the issue of branding seems to render child labour in Bangladesh invisible and that's problematic. Shayan, On e-mail

### Plying of vehicles on pavements!

The apex court's high court division issued ban on riding motor bikes and other vehicles on the pavement a few months ago. It also gave instructions to concerned authorities to take necessary actions in this regard. However, if you notice the busy pavements of Dhaka, you will see that many vehicles like motorbikes, rickshaws & bicycles are still flouting rules. It is happening right in front of the traffic police administration. The other day, I was going to work from Rampura to Gulshan 1. As I was walking on the pavement, I was caught off guard when a

motorbike honked suddenly from behind me. A big accident could have taken place that day but I escaped, thankfully. Drivers drive their vehicles on pavements to evade traffic congestions, thereby ignoring traffic rules. In this way, they also ignore the safety of pedestrians walking on the pavements. Many accidents occur due to this illegal plying of vehicles on pavements. I would like to draw the attention of concerned authorities in this regard, so that the residents of the city get enough space to walk freely and securely on the pavements meant for walking. Md Zonae Emran Banasree, Rampura Dhaka.