

## Prime accused in Rajon murder case brought back

*A diligent legal process is anticipated*

WE are comforted by the fact that our government has been successful in bringing back the prime accused in the Rajon murder case after he had escaped to Saudi Arabia. Thanks to the expatriate Bangladeshis who identified and caught him, the joint efforts of the Bangladesh foreign ministry, police headquarters, Bangladesh missions in Saudi Arabia and the Saudi authorities, for their sincere efforts in trying to catch the man who led the terrible torture and death of 13-year-old Rajon. For this nation, shocked by a crime so abhorrent and made public through a video posted on social media, there is a sense of satisfaction to see that there is a movement towards getting justice for this young boy and his bereaved family.

Now that the prime accused has been brought back we expect that the perverted criminals are tried and punished through an expeditious legal process. This will send out a strong statement that the State and our society as a whole, will not tolerate violence on children and any violators will be caught and given the harshest punishment by law.

All too often we witness how perpetrators of the vilest crimes go unpunished because they somehow find ways to dupe the system. Let Rajon's case prove to be different.

## Pesticide use surges six-fold

*Take steps to stop uncontrolled use*

A press conference titled "Pesticides and Health Risk: Find Alternatives and Save the Lives of Rural Women" held at the capital's Jatiya Press Club recently revealed some startling facts. The use of pesticides in agriculture in the country has increased a staggering six-fold in the last six decades. Only four percent of farmers are reportedly aware of methods of pesticide usage while 87 percent of farmers barely take any measures to prevent the harmful effects of pesticides.

Needless to say such practices have detrimental consequences for the overall health of the current and coming generations. Excessive use of pesticides can pose a wide range of health hazards, from short-term impacts such as nausea to chronic diseases such as cancer and endocrine disruption. Rural women in particular, who often come in direct contact with pesticides for agricultural purposes, are vulnerable to health risks such as miscarriage and giving birth to infants with birth defects. Adverse effects of pesticides, of course, extend to the environment as well.

The fact that as many as 377 types of pesticides -- most of them already banned in developed countries -- are currently in use nationwide points to the urgency of tackling the scourge of its unrestrained use. Government intervention to root out the primary source of contamination of water, food and soil is crucial. It is also imperative that farmers' level of awareness is raised to reduce pesticide risk, and indigenous methods and other sustainable alternatives are promoted to curb the burgeoning use of pesticide. Special heed needs to be given to the production of innovative agricultural techniques which can play an important role in eliminating the unintended consequences of chemical-based agriculture.

# UNITED WE COULD NOT STAND, *divided we are falling*



CHINTITO SINCE 1995  
NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

DESPIITE endless untiring songs about bringing equality for all humanity (for instance, *One World One Song*, Dionne Warwick), even with touching lyrics pleading to share and cherish our just this one planet (Lucas Miller), with philosophic imploring for the world not to be broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls (Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*), and our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam spreading his wings to belong to the whole world, and not just his country of birth and society (*Nazrul Rachonabali*), WE (yes, I am talking about you and me and the buddy with whom you/I are going to share the next glass of lassi with separate or even the same straw) are as divided as poet Jasimuddin's embroidered patterned quilt (*Nokshi Kanthar Math*, 1928), inclusive of the ephemeral stitches.

We talk big at political rallies. We write strongly. We even try to believe that we should believe. And yet we are fragmented in our families, in our society, in our own country, in the geographical region that we belong, and the less said about the world is not better.

It is not uncommon for just the one sibling to oppose the development proposal mooted by all others. Sometimes the reason is as illogical as his argument to have greater share than the other brothers because he gave time and lived on that property. If you can picture yourself in that frame then perhaps you are 75 percent Bangali, or if you know a family which fits the bill then you are a bona fide citizen of the country.

An association of apartment owners often cannot agree to a routine maintenance job or an appointment of a janitor simply because three out of thirty members with seven attending the meeting do not like the *chal-chalon* of the 'elected' general secretary. I have often queried of such people how difficult it must be for a prime minister to keep a country of crores together when we seemingly cannot manage peacefully the affairs of a local community. Almost simultaneously, I do indeed laud the acumen of Bangabandhu who united the nation, dare I say for the last time in 1971, even though there were cowardly anti-liberation elements lurking in the shadows.

I understand when some of you will raise your

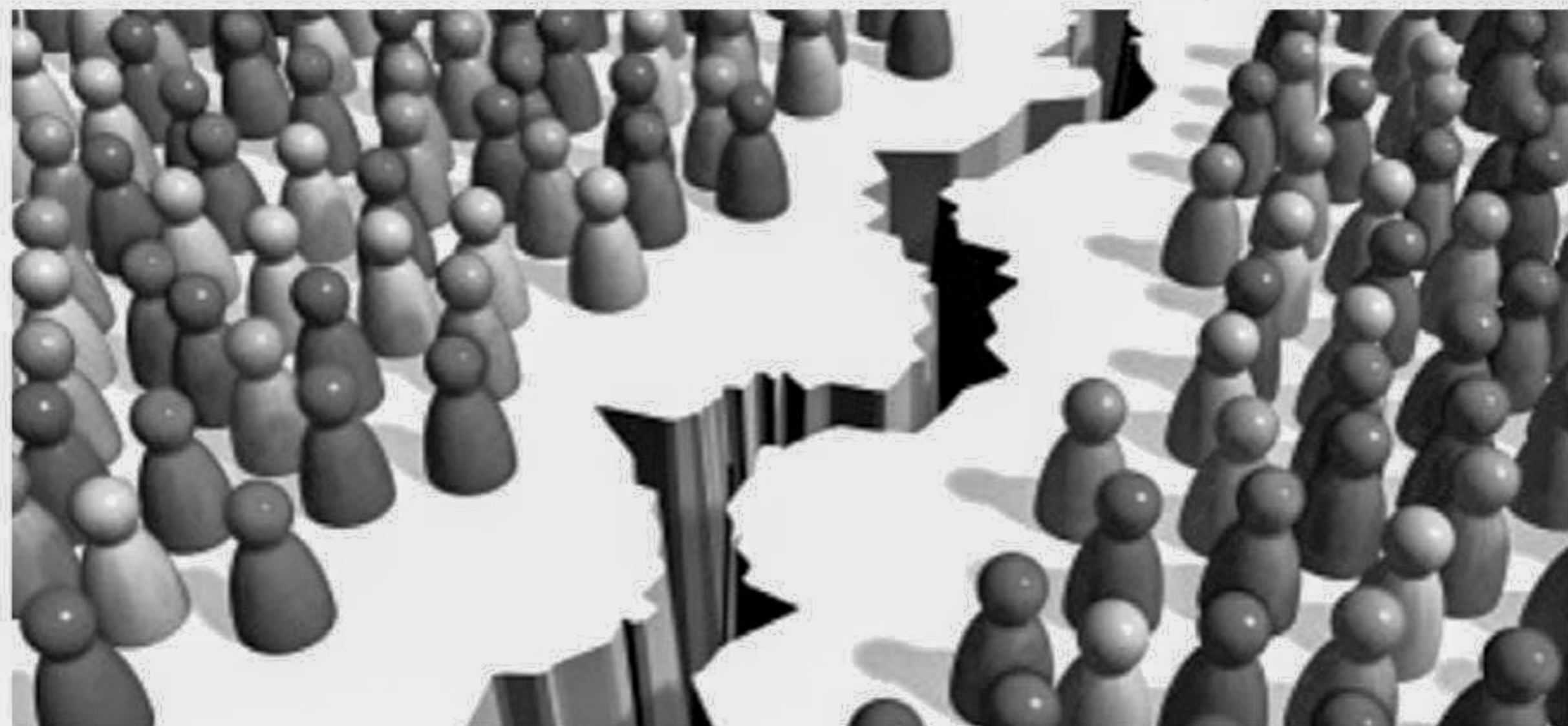
hands and mention the resounding victory in an international cricket match as a centre stage for national unity. But keep your ears open and even before the din of the celebrations die down, you will hear cynical comments that the opposition did not field its full strength. *Le halua!*

As far as regional harmony is concerned, across the world there is militarised (or in the least political) tension in endless number of borders that divide two neighbouring countries. This is an extension of such friction that exists between two landowners in any part of the country. We go to the extent of claiming a coconut tree (and not getting it) even at the cost of losing fraternity that would otherwise have given us both families endless hours of happiness. Who knows,

border trespassing, remains a stinker in the historical and continual best of neighbourly relations existing between our two countries. The killing of 15-year old Felani Khatun by BSF 2011 epitomises both the helplessness of the victims and the brutality at the border.

The world is now recognised and addressed as patches of Muslims and Hindus, Christians and Jews, Sunnis and Shias, Catholics and Protestants, upper caste and lower, blacks and whites, rich and poor, natives and refugees, literate and unlearned. . . But the songs of solidarity, fellowship, and *Ummah* are becoming louder by the day; we reek of hypocrisy.

We most often talk of religious tolerance, which is



maybe over a glass of coconut water?

While SAARC appears pleausurably a working cooperation when we receive on-arrival visa at say, Kathmandu, Colombo and Thimpu, and vice versa for visitors from those countries, the length that one has to go to obtain a tourist visa to visit India or Pakistan belies the very purpose of the eight South Asian countries building an association. For the sake of sustained regional relationship, the process of acquiring a visa should be made easier and people in the region should be made to feel welcome.

The continued, although I will admit abated (going by press reports), killing of Bangladeshi civilians by India's Border Security Force (BSF) for alleged

understandable. But, the real need is for human forbearance, that is, compassion for fellow beings.

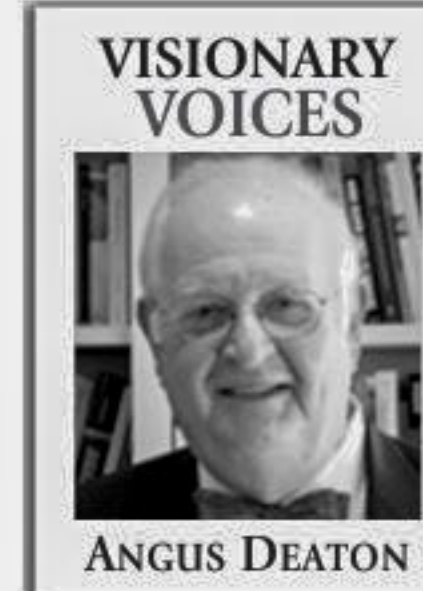
Some of us behave better with animals because they are not deceitful, and will not take undue advantage, or stab you in the back, or dump you when you become poor, or tell tales about you to win over your enemies, or betray you one fine morning. . . okay, okay, we all have reasons to love Pluto and Kitty, but let us give human beings around us some care and consideration. Hey, how about we all start behaving more like animals? Woof!

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### PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

## EXCLUSIVE FROM THE NOBEL LAUREATE IN ECONOMICS 2015

# Weak States, Poor Countries



ANGUS DEATON

IN Scotland, I was brought up to think of policemen as allies and to ask one for help when I needed it. Imagine my surprise when, as a 19-year-old on my first visit to

the United States, I was met by a stream of obscenities from a New York City cop who was directing traffic in Times Square after I asked him for directions to the nearest post office. In my subsequent confusion, I inserted my employer's urgent documents into a trash bin that, to me, looked a lot like a mailbox.

Europeans tend to feel more positively about their governments than do Americans, for whom the failures and unpopularity of their federal, state, and local politicians are a commonplace. Yet Americans' various governments collect taxes and, in return, provide services without which they could not easily live their lives.

Americans, like many citizens of rich countries, take for granted the legal and regulatory system, the public schools, health care and social security for the elderly, roads, defense and diplomacy, and heavy investments by the state in research, particularly in medicine. Certainly, not all of these services are as good as they might be, nor held in equal regard by everyone; but people mostly pay their taxes, and if the way that money is spent offends some, a lively public debate ensues, and regular elections allow people to change priorities.

All of this is so obvious that it hardly needs saying -- at least for those who live in rich countries with effective governments. But most of the world's population does not.

In much of Africa and Asia, states lack the capacity to raise taxes or deliver services. The contract between government and governed -- imperfect in rich countries -- is often altogether absent in poor countries. The New York cop was little more than impolite (and busy providing a service); in much of the world, police prey on the people they are supposed to protect, shaking them down for money or persecuting them on behalf of powerful patrons.

Even in a middle-income country like India, public schools and public clinics face mass (unpunished) absenteeism. Private doctors give people what (they think) they want -- injections, intrave-

nous drips, and antibiotics -- but the state does not regulate them, and many practitioners are entirely unqualified.

Throughout the developing world, children die because they are born in the wrong place -- not of exotic, incurable diseases, but of the commonplace childhood illnesses that we have known how to treat for almost a century. Without a state that is capable of delivering routine maternal and child health care, these children will continue to die.

Likewise, without government capacity, regulation and enforcement do not work properly, so businesses find it

difficult to operate. Without properly functioning civil courts, there is no guarantee that innovative entrepreneurs can claim the rewards of their ideas. The absence of state capacity -- that is, of the services and protections that people in rich countries take for granted -- is one of the major causes of poverty and deprivation around the world. Without effective states working with active and involved citizens, there is little chance for the growth that is needed to abolish global poverty.

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*Unfortunately, the world's rich countries currently are making things worse. Foreign aid -- transfers from rich countries to poor countries -- has much to its credit, particularly in terms of health care, with many people alive today who would otherwise be dead. But foreign aid also undermines the development of local state capacity.*

credit, particularly in terms of health care, with many people alive today who would otherwise be dead. But foreign aid also undermines the development of local state capacity.

This is most obvious in countries -- mostly in Africa -- where the government receives aid directly and aid flows are large relative to fiscal expenditure (often more than half the total). Such governments need no contract with their citizens, no parliament, and no tax-collection system. If they are accountable to anyone, it is to the donors; but even this fails in practice, because the

donors, under pressure from their own citizens (who rightly want to help the poor), need to disburse money just as much as poor-country governments need to receive it, if not more so.

What about bypassing governments and giving aid directly to the poor? Certainly, the immediate effects are likely to be better, especially in countries where little government-to-government aid actually reaches the poor. And it would take an astonishingly small sum of money -- about 15 US cents a day from each adult in the rich world -- to bring everyone up to at least the destitution line of a dollar a day.

Yet this is no solution. Poor people need government to lead better lives; taking government out of the loop might improve things in the short run, but it would leave unsolved the underlying problem. Poor countries cannot forever have their health services run from abroad. Aid undermines what poor people need most: an effective government that works with them for today and tomorrow.

One thing that we can do is to agitate for our own governments to stop doing those things that make it harder for poor countries to stop being poor. Reducing aid is one, but so is limiting the arms trade, improving rich-country trade and subsidy policies, providing technical advice that is not tied to aid, and developing better drugs for diseases that do not affect rich people. We cannot help the poor by making their already-weak governments even weaker.

The writer is Professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He is the 2015 Nobel laureate in economics. He is author of *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2015. www.project-syndicate.org (Exclusive to The Daily Star)

## COMMENTS

**"Politics now in pockets of businessmen: Says president"**

(October 13, 2015)

Jabed Hossain

At least he had the guts to say the truth.

Mohammad Gyasuddin

Who is to blame for that Mr. President, people or politicians?

Shahal Abraham

Businessmen make up the most powerful lobbyist group in Bangladesh.

**"Red means go, Green means stop"**

(October 13, 2015)

Mah Abdullah

You have to remember that you are in Bangladesh. Here everything is possible.

Shah Mohaymin Ahmed

It has finally been noticed by someone!

**"Teenage boy drives SUV, hits rickshaws"**

(October 13, 2015)

Safayet Hossain

The accused may get special privileges due to his age. But he deserves

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Medicine is not a trade

The other day, I was reading an article online where I found a quote from Padmashri Prof. Dr. P. V. A. Mohandas, founder of the Madras Institute of Orthopaedics and Traumatology (M.I.O.T), Chennai, India. I would like to reproduce it here with the hope that the learned physicians of our country would take a note of it: "Medicine is not a trade; it is a calling where the physician thinks not only with his head, but also with his heart."

I strongly feel that a physician should listen to the problems of a patient and

treat him/her with reassuring words, affection and sympathy. In our country, one would find some physicians saying to elderly patients -- "As you're old there is no effective treatment for you" or "Your immune system has become weak or this is your psychological problem" etc. The physicians should realise that they have a sacred responsibility upon their shoulder to treat patients to the best of their abilities and with total dedication and sincerity.

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### A traffic constable's kindness

A few days ago, I came across the news of traffic constable Md. Monir Hossain who rescued an eight-year-old boy from drowning in the Nimtala canal of Chittagong. As per the news report, a large number of people stood by as the boy was about to drown. Monir Hossain jumped into the stinky, filthy water and rescued the boy while risking his own life. We appreciate Monir Hossain for his great, altruistic effort to save the child's life.

We also urge the relevant government departments to arrange cautionary measures around canals, rivers, lakes and water bodies that are within their jurisdiction so that untoward incidents like this can be avoided.

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