

WAR CRIMES TRIALS

The lobbyists are at work again

MOZAMMEL H. KHAN

THE much-awaited verdict on the review petition against convicted war criminals Ali Ahsan Mohammed Mojaheed (incidentally, my classmate in my hometown college) and Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, was given by a bench of the Appellate division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court last Wednesday upholding their death penalty awarded by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) and subsequently upheld by the apex court itself. Neither of them is unknown to the people. However, either prior to or following any verdict, some lobbyists in the guise of Human Rights Organisations (HROs) come up with statements finding fault with the trial process and lecturing the Bangladesh government on what it has to do to carry out 'proper' justice to the condemned war criminals. In many cases, these so-called HROs have overstepped their limit by impinging upon the domain of a sovereign country whose laws are enacted by its own sovereign parliament.

This time around, too, there was no exception. A few weeks ago, it was Amnesty International (AI) which came out with a statement that triggered condemnation from Bengalis all around the globe. Following the uproar, the AI held a press conference that did nothing to dispel the aspersions on its integrity. The much-known Human Rights Watch (HRW) also came out with a statement, as it did following the prior convictions of other war criminals. HRW has called upon the government to halt the execution of death row war criminals Mojaheed and Salauddin. "Justice and accountability for the terrible crimes committed during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence are crucial, but trials need to meet international fair trial standards," said Brad Adams, Asia director at HRW.

"Unfair trials can't provide real justice, especially when the death penalty is imposed," lectured HRW.

The HRW has made it a routine exercise for it to issue statements that convey more or less identical messages. Following the conviction of war crimes mastermind Ghulam Azam, it issued a statement saying, "The trial of former Jamaat-e-Islami chief Ghulam Azam at the International Crimes Tribunal was deeply flawed and did not meet international fair trial standards." It even went further: "Judges improperly conducted an investigation on behalf of the prosecution and collusion and biasness among prosecutors and judges." At this point, the ICT took the HRW statement in serious cognizance

and observed, "The Human Rights Watch has committed the 'worst kind of contempt' by making comments without having adequate knowledge of facts," ruled ICT-1 issuing a warning against the HRW. The tribunal was lenient on the global rights watchdog as it was its first offence and asked it to be more 'circumspect' in making comments about Bangladesh's judiciary.

Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, the son of a former top ranking Muslim League leader, and a BNP lawmaker since 1991, was found guilty in 9 of the 23 charges brought against him. The International Crimes Tribunal-1 awarded him death penalty on four charges — foremost of which was his involvement in two acts of genocide. Pronouncing the verdict, ICT-1

Chairman Justice A.T.M. Fazle Kabir said: "We are of the unanimous view that the accused deserves the highest punishment as provided under law for committing such gravest crimes that tremble the collective conscience of mankind."

He was confident of getting released with the change of government and he threatened to bring the prosecutors to book." On January 1, 2013, he threatened the state counsels, saying if he got out of jail they would understand the consequences of their actions. "Let me get out of jail. You will see."

His last ditch attempt to prove through the review petition that he was not in Bangladesh during the nine months of genocide through some documents from Pakistan was equivalent to attempting to prove a hypothesis that the sun does not really

rise in the East. The apex court, however, disbelieved the documents submitted in support of Salauddin's claim. The court termed false the certificate issued reportedly by Punjab University of Pakistan, which says he was studying political science there in 1971. The bench said there were many anomalies in the document and concluded them to be fraudulent.

To prove his presence in Bangladesh during the liberation war, the prosecution, on the other hand, submitted a daily newspaper headline narrating how Salauddin Quader Chowdhury son of a former Speaker of Pakistan parliament got wounded through 'miscreant's' (read: freedom fighter) bullet and was admitted to a hospital. The prosecution even

submitted a certificate from the hospital providing detailed information about his admission, treatments and release from hospital. Even the freedom fighter through whose bullet he was wounded testified as a prosecution witness.

In my limited research I have not come across any war crimes tribunal whose proceedings are so transparent and where the defendants are given VIP treatment. Does the HRW know how a 17-year old by the name of Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen, has been tried in Guantanamo Bay for his alleged killing of a US soldier in the battlefield (war crime!) in Afghanistan? The US military used bone-chilling torture techniques. He was not even allowed to hire a Canadian lawyer while he was at Guantanamo Bay. Which judicial

tribunal killed Bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki (a US citizen), both of them unarmed civilians?

It seems that the HRW is selective, for reasons known only to itself, in expressing their concerns about death penalty and fairness of the trials. A few days ago, a Dhaka court awarded death penalty to an 18-year-old girl Oishee for killing her parents. No, she did not commit a 'crime against humanity.' However, the HRW did not have time to express any concerns for Oishee, a minor at the time, who killed 'only' two people while their concerns were categorical and vociferous for convicts who, in addition to other offenses, participated in cold-blooded mass killings.

In the US, the seat of HRW, 32 states

still uphold the death penalty and 26 executions have already been carried in 2015 alone. In fact, the US ranks fourth in the world in terms of executing the death penalty. The critics will be doing themselves a favour if they go through the recently published, much-acclaimed book, 'Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger and A Forgotten Genocide,' by the Harvard-educated Prof. Gary Bass of Princeton University. They could thus know a bit more about the genocide in Bangladesh which included the participation of these convicts or alleged convicts, who unhesitatingly committed cold-blooded murder of an unarmed and innocent populace.

The writer is the Convenor of the Canadian Committee for Human Rights and Democracy in Bangladesh.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The "Age of Shame"



MILIA ALI

THE past weeks have been especially difficult with terrorist attacks in Beirut and Paris, followed by the raging controversy over Islam and its "fanatic elements". Most people are ostensibly affected by the news of the violent acts, but I seem to be mentally wired in a way that I shut out the outside world when things get too turbulent and chaotic. This does not mean that I am insensitive to the tragedy unfolding around me. I, too, share the painful burden, but by taking a different route... by searching for answers through a process of introspective dialogue.

Despite my decision to turn off the TV and stop reading the news, it is difficult to maintain a neutral silence on the issue of terrorism and ISIS. Most social gatherings are fixated on the ongoing tragedy and more importantly, the looming threat. The question that dominates the debates seems to be: Does Islamic scripture legitimise the violent actions of ISIS? The discussion then branches out to related topics: who is responsible for the creation of ISIS; why young people are particularly attracted to the twisted ISIS ideology; and why the majority of mainstream Muslims has not resisted/condemned the rise of fanaticism in unequivocal terms.

While these debates continue to create ripples in the world outside, I engage in a dialogue with myself trying to understand the psyche of people who slaughter innocent men and women in cold-blood. I also cannot help but wonder why successful students, or even young doctors, would want to join what many see as a death cult. The attempt to find a rationale for the actions of the ISIS is futile, because its followers seem immune to the criticisms of the world. No reasons are given for the irrational slaughter of innocent individuals except for the most crude and obvious: the "Other" does not believe in what I believe and therefore does not deserve to live.

Despite the fact that this introspection does not lead to definitive answers, it has jolted my consciousness to a higher plain. I feel an overriding sense of guilt that, as a columnist and a sensitive human being, I have not condemned acts of terror in the strongest terms. When I see activists across the world putting their lives on the line and taking grave risks to protest against injustices on all sides, I feel guilty that I have been lamentably inactive in voicing my protests. Apart from inane conversations with friends and acquaintances where we collectively denounce the terrorists, I have not made any serious efforts to publicly condemn terror acts. Perhaps, like many other Muslims I justify my inaction with the rationale that ISIS has killed more Muslims than members of any other religion or that ISIS is the creation of the flawed US foreign policy. However, my reflections have made me realise that what really matters is the pain and humiliation inflicted upon the victims and their families. For at the core, the issue is not about politics or religion but about humanity. And the final outcome is not only the loss of lives, but also the loss of trust and empathy among human beings!

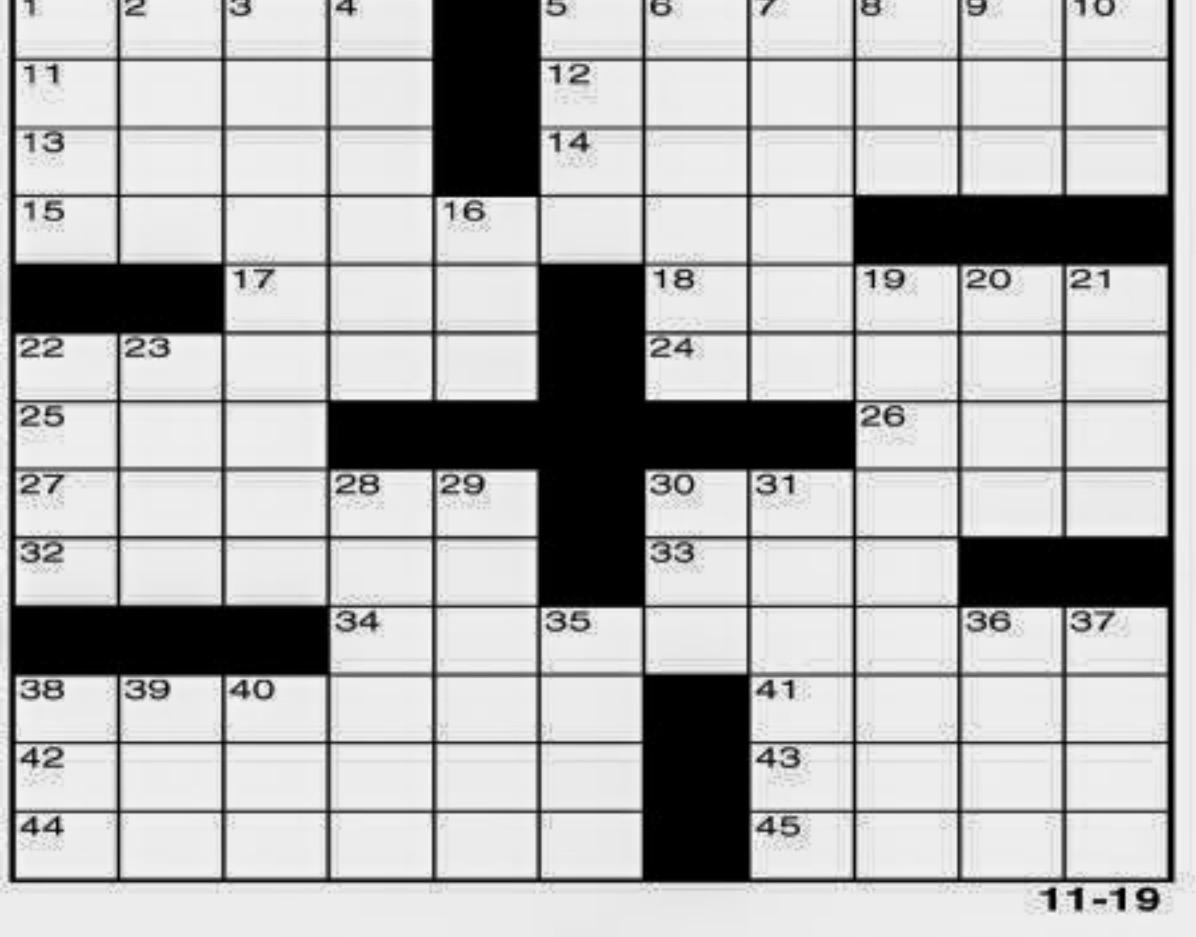
The truth is that the fanatics have taken advantage of the inaction of the rest of us and by default, have come to represent Islam in the minds of its critics. In this sense, we are all culpable through our silence. Most of us do not want to step out of our comfort zones to articulate our dissent because the path of least resistance seems to be the easiest to take. But we cannot shirk our moral responsibility. Which is why I am overwrought with guilt when I see the image of a wounded three-year-old terror victim lying in a hospital bed in Beirut or the video clip of a pregnant woman hanging from a windowsill trying to escape the bomb attack in the Bataclan theatre in Paris. And when I listen to an adolescent girl speaking of her humiliating experience of ISIS "soldiers" violating her, her shame becomes mine. I am ashamed that we, the human community, have allowed this to happen.

At this point, I am even ashamed to be a part of a world where some men attribute their evil actions to the "Will of God." Thousand of years ago, Homer in his Odyssey, ascribed man's suffering to human choice rather than divine intervention. In the epic, Zeus voiced his frustration at man's follies in the following prophetic words: "Oh for shame, how the mortals put the blame on us gods, for they say evils come from us, but it is they, rather, who by their own recklessness win sorrow beyond what is given ..." It's ironic that we still continue to blame God for our misdeeds!

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CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
- 1 Carnival attraction
 - 5 React to a monster
 - 11 Wrinkle remover
 - 12 Threat words
 - 13 Lacking slack
 - 14 Slugger Stan
 - 15 Most furious
 - 17 Rooster's mate
 - 18 Lesson leader
 - 22 Road work markers
 - 24 Future fungus
 - 25 Buckeyes' sch.
 - 26 SEALS org.
 - 27 Extreme
 - 30 Near-sighted Mr.
 - 32 Sat for portrait
 - 33 "That's gross!"
 - 34 D-Day site
 - 38 Lively dance
 - 41 Confident
 - 42 Wise sayings
 - 43 Leave speechless
 - 44 Cure
 - 45 Beliefs
- DOWN
- 1 Comic Rudner
 - 2 Turkey neighbor
 - 3 Tasty rings
 - 4 Menu choice
 - 5 One or more
 - 6 Bread edges
 - 7 Prepare for a big day
 - 8 Bulldog backer
 - 9 Simile center
 - 10 Jazz drummer Lewis
 - 16 Powerful bunch
 - 19 Challenging puzzles
 - 20 Approximating phrase
 - 21 Nevada resort
 - 22 Brilliant act
 - 23 Ibsen's home
 - 28 Fail to follow suit
 - 29 Found darling
 - 30 Silent
 - 31 1992 Wimbledon champ
 - 35 Optimistic
 - 36 Oil container
 - 37 Urges
 - 38 Watering hole
 - 39 Shelley work
 - 40 Flight



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

B L O B A C R O S S
A I D E T A C I N U P
M A D E C H O M A
A R M H U N K
A D O P T E G G
C A N I T S A V O R
O B O E R E N O
G L U T S R E N E W
S E T C R E A M
H O A X O A T
S A F A R I O N C E
A B A T E D D E R N E
D E T E R S E Y E D

QUOTE

CARL GUSTAV JUNG

The word "happiness" would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness.

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়

শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট, মৈত্রী শিল্প স্টেশন রোড, ঢাকা, গাজীপুর, www.maitrishilpa.com

স্মারক নং-সকম/শাঃকল্যাণ/ঢ-৭৭(গ)/২০১৫/৩০ তারিখঃ ০৪ অক্টোবর ১৪২২ বাং ১৮ নভেম্বর ২০১৫খ্রিঃ

পরিবেশক/ডিলার নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার, সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক পরিচালিত শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী সুরক্ষা ট্রাস্ট, মৈত্রী শিল্প স্টেশন রোডের প্রতিবন্ধীদের দ্বারা প্রাস্টিক কারখানায় উন্নতমানের নিত্য ব্যবহার্য জল, মল, বাতাস, গামলাসহ প্রায় ৫০ ধরনের প্রাস্টিক সামগ্রী এবং আমেরিকান বিশ্ববিখ্যাত ওয়াটার পিটরিফিকেশন এন্ড বটলিং প্রাস্ট মেশিনারীজ প্রস্তুতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান ইউনিভার্সেল এ্যাক্সেস টেকনোলজিজ ইনকর্পোরেটেড, ক্যালিফোর্নিয়া থেকে ওয়াটার পিটরিফিকেশন এন্ড বটলিং প্রাস্ট আমদানিকৃত মুক্তা জিওলিট ওয়াটার প্রাস্টে ০৭ (সাত) সাইজের (৩০০ মিলিগ্রাম, ৫০০ মিলিগ্রাম, ৬০০ মিলিগ্রাম, ১০০০ মিলিগ্রাম, ১৫০০ মিলিগ্রাম, ২০০০ মিলিগ্রাম এবং ২০ লিটার জার) মুক্তা জিওলিট ওয়াটার উৎপাদন ও বিপণন করা হচ্ছে। মুক্তা জিওলিট ওয়াটার মানদণ্ড প্রাথমিকভাবে কার্গো, জাতীয় সংসদ সচিবালয়সহ সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/খ্যাতনামা প্রতিষ্ঠানে অফিসিয়াল পানি হিসেবে ব্যবহার হচ্ছে। দেশব্যাপী বাজারজাতকরণের উদ্দেশ্যে রাজধানী ঢাকা এবং বিভাগীয় সদরসহ প্রতিটি জেলা/উপজেলায় পরিবেশক/ডিলার নিয়োগের জন্য প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ীদের কাছে থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

আবেদনকারী প্রার্থী/ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে মৈত্রী শিল্প স্টেশন রোডের প্রাস্টিক পণ্য সামগ্রী এবং বোতলজাত মুক্তা জিওলিট ওয়াটার বাজারজাতকরণে পরিবেশক বা ডিলারশীপ নিয়োগ প্রাপ্তিতে জামানতের অর্থ (ফেরতযোগ্য) প্রদানে সক্ষম এবং পণ্য সংরক্ষণ গুদামসহ মার্কেটিং কাজে অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রয়োজনীয় জনবল থাকতে হবে। পরিবেশক/ডিলার নিয়োগের নিয়মাবলী/নীতিমালা অত্র দপ্তরের প্রশাসনিক শাখায় অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পাওয়া যাবে।

আগ্রহী প্রার্থী বাবাসায়ীর নিম্ন লিখিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের ছাপানো প্যাচে প্রতিষ্ঠানের অবস্থান ও ব্যবসার ধরণ উল্লেখকরতঃ আবেদনকারীর সন্ধ্যা তোলা ২ (দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি এবং হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্সের কপি (সত্যায়িত) সংযুক্তপূর্বক আগামী ১০-১২-২০১৫খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে নির্ধারিত পরিবেশক, শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী সুরক্ষা ট্রাস্ট, মৈত্রী শিল্প, সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, স্টেশন রোড, টঙ্গী, গাজীপুরে বরাবর আবেদনপত্র প্রেরণ করতে হবে।

পরিবেশক নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী, প্রতিবন্ধী বিশ্বকর্ম প্রতিষ্ঠান এবং প্রতিবন্ধী পরিবারের সদস্যদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। এক্ষেত্রে সরকারি বিদ্যমান নীতিমালা অনুসরণ করা হবে।

কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে পরিবেশক/ডিলার নিয়োগ বাতিল/প্রত্যাহার করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

নির্ধারিত পরিচালক
শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট, মৈত্রী শিল্প
ফোনঃ ৯৮১৩২৭৯ (অফিস)
ফ্যাক্সঃ ৯৮১১৬৭৭
Email: maitrishilpa@yahoo.com

জিডি-৩৬৩৪

Office of the Sub-Project Manager

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Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description	Online tender notice publication date	Online tender closing date
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