

EDITOR'S NOTE

A Year of Shocks and Expectations

Last year has been one of continuous shocks as well as pleasant surprises both on the international and home fronts. At home we have been plagued by horrible, chilling news – murders of children, kidnappings, disappearances and a wave of terrorist attacks with the killing of bloggers, publishers, foreigners, attacks on non-Muslim clergy and bomb blasts in religious gatherings. Politically, the year started with violent *hartal* and blockade and ended with municipal elections participated by both major parties, (the results of which we could not include in this supplement due to our printing schedule). The unraveling of the horror stories of Bangladeshi and Rohingya migrants has been making headlines, revealing the excruciating suffering of desperate people braving danger and death for a better future. Globally it has been petrifying terror attacks, the Syrian war and migrant crisis, the rise of ISIS and a

wave of anti-Muslim sentiment that has reached even the most progressive of countries of the West creating tensions between communities and making the world more intolerant and divisive.

But as humans our instinct is to find hope amidst all hopelessness and there lies the secret of our survival. At home we have been blessed by, among other gifts, a fairly stable economy and human development index, bumper harvests, stellar performances by our young cricketers and amazing feats of individuals. There have been, moreover, remarkable successes that have pulled us through. This includes the agreement of nations to combat poverty and injustice through the Sustainable Development Goals; the universal consensus at the Paris Summit on Climate Change and the cooperation of European nations led by Germany to open its doors to Syrian refugees.

Now, as we charge forward we have a multitude of challenges, many of them chalked out by international summits and national plans. We must bring peace where there is terror, sustenance where there is hunger, and sustainability where there is depletion. We must defy the shrinking space of free thinking, fight racism, gender discrimination, violence and poverty. We must bring balance to the world that has been left shaky and stumbling. As we step into a brand New Year, let all our energies unite to make this earth a livable place again for all.

Happy New Year to all our readers and patrons!

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