

CJ's concern is also ours
Law enforcers must be in uniform when arresting suspects

WE are waiting with bated breath the Supreme Court judgment fixed for May 24th. The issues on which the SC will pronounce are those that touch upon our fundamental rights of freedom, safety from arbitrary arrest, torture in custody and protection of an individual before he or she is found guilty by the court. But while we wait for the judgment, we would like to echo the Chief Justice's concern about arrest by plain clothes law enforcers. We consider it to be a very bad practice that should be stopped forthwith just as much for the sake of the citizens as for the reputation and public confidence in the police and other law enforcement agencies.

In recent times there have been several instances of plain clothes persons, posing as officials, and picking up people in the wee hours of the night, either from some street or from the victim's home. Many such individuals later reappeared after a week or so of absence refusing to reveal, obviously under threat, as to where they were or who their captors were. These were the fortunate ones. There were others, who never came back creating panic among citizens as to their safety.

There may be some logic to using plain clothes law enforcers in case of individual or group surveillance or in case of crowd control. But there cannot be any justification in using them to arrest citizens. Such practice must by definition lead to abuse allowing law enforcers far more flexibility in using their power than is good either for the legal system or the rights of the citizens.

Harassment of the headmaster continues
The shame is ours

FIRST the headmaster, Shaymal Kanti Bhakta, was publicly humiliated by the local MP, and now he has been suspended by the school management committee! It is like giving him a bad name and hanging him. We are outraged by the sheer insensitivity of the committee. Who are they trying to save by heaping injury over insult on him?

The public humiliation of the teacher was clearly an act of highhandedness by the MP who had crossed his limits as a public representative. He administered his 'judgment' without verifying the matter. Clearly the issue on which the 'punishment' was administered was concocted to create the situation as evident from the statement of the concerned student. And he is now using his power and position to shield his act of haughtiness and the managing committee is pandering to him. We are also flabbergasted at the muted reaction of the many teachers' organisations on this issue. Isn't it a humiliation for the entire teacher community?

Both religion and nationalism was exploited in this case, which has neither glorified the flag nor religion. While we would not like dwell on the religious undertone of the matter we would like to urge the government not to miss the message the issue has sent out. It is a litmus test for the government in which it can only acquit itself well if it stands up to protect the vulnerable by immediately bringing the perpetrators to book. It should also review the suspension order. Any further harassment of the headmaster must be stopped immediately.

COMMENTS

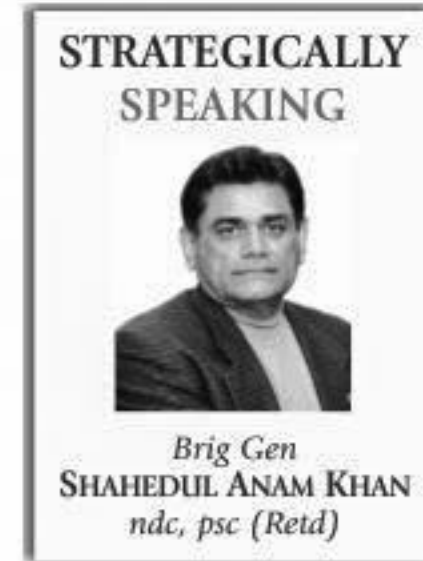
"One issue shouldn't cloud ties with Islamabad" (May 15, 2016)

Kaisar Hossain
 I know what Pakistan is doing is absolutely wrong. But it is a matter of sorrow that we are not so vocal about the frequent killings of Bangladeshis by BSF.

"Dohar bridge, world's 8th wonder!" (May 15, 2016)

Sayedur Rahman
 Indeed! A bridge standing on pillars that do not touch the ground! Why haven't the authorities repaired it?

Is it time to rethink our Pak-Turkey policy?



IT is said that foreign policies should not be dictated by the heart but by the head. And I believe that that precept must always predominate our foreign policy formulation. But there comes a time and a situation which compels a nation to renege on a concept, and one that is hallowed by the realists. Is this such a time for us to consider whether we continue to do business as usual and at the current level with countries that have slighted our most treasured national value – the Liberation War, and trampled on our sentiments, by taking the sides of people tried and convicted by a legally established court, under the legal provisions of the country and through a due process of law, on charges of crimes against humanity?

And it is not an 'Islamist scholar' who was hanged on May 10 but a war criminal that had helped a marauding and rapacious military to perpetrate the worst genocide since the Second World War. It is a pity that the world has not recognised the killings as genocide, as yet, and like many other definitions that world bodies propound from time to time, the definition of genocide as it is narrated today beats our imagination. The killings were carried out following the butcher Tikka Khan's directive that in 'East Pakistan' it was not people but the land that Pakistan was interested in. And if that was not the motivation for the killers to launch a decimation programme then what was? And those who are being called to answer for their deeds then had helped perpetuate the military occupation, and plan and

perpetrate the killings. Pakistan's position is predictable and we should not be surprised by it. In fact the government of Pakistan by taking the position it has on the trial and the punishments have only confirmed the fact that those convicted were their associates in their crime against humanity that its army had perpetrated in Bangladesh. By extolling the role of the war criminals in 1971 the Pakistan

Pakistan nor its laws was applicable to Bangladesh after 26 of March and even more so after the 17th of April 1971. And what law of any civilised country allows killing of innocent people? The Pakistan government's means of addressing a political issue and political dissension has been always violent. The Bangladesh issue is a glaring case in point. But unbeknownst to most of the world the Pakistan government is

Thus, Turkey's stand on the issue of trial and punishment of war criminals echoing Pakistan's is baffling. Or is this a very natural position of a very friendly country of Pakistan but of course with a common history of genocidal acts, one very recent and the other a century ago.

We find it difficult to fathom Erdogan's rationale for the position he has taken on the trial of the war criminals from the very beginning. Although he had displayed the same attitude as prime minister, and his predecessor president's action at that time did not go beyond a formal letter to the Bangladesh government requesting not to carry out the punishments, Erdogan has gone many steps ahead. The Turkish ambassador has been summoned home 'for consultation' and reportedly, its embassy in Dhaka has stopped issuing visa to intending visitors to that country. And what is seen as many as a diplomatic slur, our ambassador to Ankara was left out of the list of invitees to Erdogan's daughter's marriage. And to cap it all, he has lashed out at Europe for what he says its silence over the hanging.

Erdogan may vent his spleen as much as he likes on Europe but his position on the trial displays a callous disregard for history, not a lack of knowledge of it. It is an insult to the martyrs of our liberation war and our mothers and sisters who were subjected to repression in 1971, to term Nizami as a 'martyr.' Sanctifying a crime reduces those who are doing so to the rank of those criminals, even more so when that crime pervades the collective psyche of a nation. It is, therefore, time for our government to take a hard look as to how it would conduct its business with these countries in future.

The writer is Associate Editor, The Daily Star.

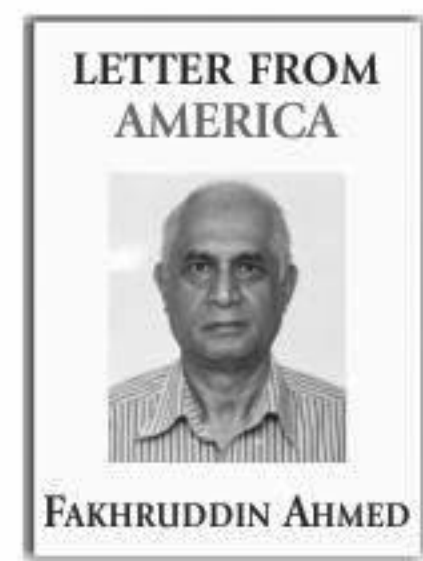


Erdogan's tirade - a callous disregard for history PHOTO: WWW.TELESURTV.NET

government has helped prove once again their complicity in turning Bangladesh into a killing field. Their position on the Liberation War was not merely ideological. They went as far as to ensure that their ideological conviction was established through force. And when Pakistan says of Nizami, "His only sin was upholding the constitution and laws of Pakistan" it forgets the fact that neither the writ of the constitution of

replicating at this very moment another Bangladesh in Baluchistan, an act that was described almost a decade ago by Selig Harrison as "slow-motion genocide." By rooting for killers and painting the trial process as flawed the Pakistan government cannot hide its misdeeds and should apologise for that. Our relations with the people of Turkey predate by many years the birth of Pakistan. It is historical and fraternal.

Pakistan incriminates itself for war crimes in Bangladesh



AFTER Bangladesh recently executed Motiur Rahman Nizami, the head of Jamaat-e-Islami party, for genocide, rape and massacre committed during Bangladesh's War of Liberation in 1971, Pakistan's foreign ministry immediately and vociferously expressed its protest. Pakistan's National Assembly unanimously condemned Nizami's execution, as if to remind the world that the real perpetrators of the 1971 genocide of Bangladeshis were not lackeys like Nizami, but their Pakistani masters.

This was not the only instance of Pakistan's breach of diplomatic protocol. Every time Bangladeshi citizens convicted of war criminals of 1971 were executed, Pakistan has been one of the only nations to protest. This time, Turkey also recalled its ambassador to Bangladesh in protest. This is unfortunate, because Bangladesh did not interfere with Turkey's narrative regarding the Armenian Genocide during WWI.

Pakistanis accepted Pakistan Supreme Court-ordered execution of its former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1979 for ordering the murder of a political opponent. Why should Pakistan now object to the execution, after due legal process, of Bangladeshi war criminals of 1971, for aiding abetting, and participating in the murder of lakhs of Bangladeshis, and the rape of thousands of Bangladeshi women, unless Pakistanis themselves felt solely responsible for those crimes?

When it comes to Bangladesh, Pakistan practices its own version of Holocaust denial and continues to behave like unrepentant Nazis. Pakistan never admitted to the crimes its soldiers committed against Bangladeshis in 1971. In textbooks Pakistan lies to its children about what really happened in 1971. Pakistani children are taught that it was all India's fault, and that the

rather 'naïve' Bangladeshis were completely hoodwinked by India's machinations!

My request to the young Pakistanis of the current and future generations is not to believe a word of what a Bangladeshi like me, or a Pakistani, or an Indian says. Instead, I urge them to research what western newspapers were reporting between March 1971 and December 1971 about Bangladesh's Liberation War. Read The Times of London, The Guardian, The New York Times, The Washington Post, TIME magazine, Newsweek and The National Geographic. They had sent several reporters to Bangladesh to investigate

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and cover the country's Liberation War. You will find an unbiased reporting of the atrocities committed by the Pakistani army against Bangladeshi civilians.

For the record, President Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger vehemently opposed Bangladesh's independence, as did Pakistan's ally China. However, many in Nixon's State Department, and the majority of Americans, as well as Canadians led by then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, and the British and the Australians, supported Bangladesh's independence.

A brief history of the events leading up to Bangladesh's War of Liberation in

1971 is in order here. After the ouster of Field Marshall Ayub Khan in 1969, Pakistan's new dictator General Yahya Khan scheduled universal franchise-based elections for December 1970. A cyclone devastated East Pakistan in November. The central government's foot-dragging on relief efforts convinced Bangalis once and for all that West Pakistanis did not care about them. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League won an absolute majority (160 seats out of 300) in Pakistan's National Assembly. Astonishingly (and deviously), Sheikh Mujib was never invited to form a government!

Although Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan's People's Party won only 81 seats, he still declared: "There are two majorities; one in West Pakistan (81), one in East Pakistan (160)." Bhutto should have been imprisoned for treason for that utterance. Instead, West Pakistanis rallied around him. At the pretext of negotiating with Mujib in Dhaka, Yahya and Bhutto flew in military reinforcements and unleashed them on unarmed Bangladeshi civilians on the night of March 25, 1971. (For an authentic, firsthand account of the so-called "negotiations," read Dr. Kamal Hossain's excellent book, Bangladesh: Quest for Freedom and Justice. The University Press Limited, 2013.) Pakistanis preferred to settle political differences with bullets, rather than through dialogue.

While Pakistani soldiers were the rapists and the murderers, the local Jamaat-e-Islami party and Razakars collaborated with the Pakistan army in their genocide and rape of Bangladeshis. Some non-Bangalis suffered retaliation, which was inexcusable. Not a single demonstration was staged in West Pakistan protesting the genocide of East Pakistanis! To the Pakistanis, Bangali Muslims were "more Hindu than Muslim".

Bangladeshi Muslims are devout, but do not flaunt their Islam. They are far less communal than people in other sub-continental countries, and are happy to live among Hindu, Buddhist and Christian compatriots.

Fearing for their lives, millions of

Bangladeshis crossed into India in 1971 as refugees. Millions more, including the writer's family, were internally displaced, abandoning their homes to escape the wrath of the marauding Pakistani soldiers. Many Bangladeshis who lived through the horrors of 1971 were friends or acquaintances of those who were massacred by the Pakistani army and their local collaborators. The writer personally knew university professors, intellectuals, physicians and journalists – too many to list here – who were massacred by the Pakistani army. My father topped the list of the educationists to be executed in Feni. (Fortunately, the Pakistani army ran out of time.) My future father-in-law, Dr. M. N. Huda, then a Dhaka University professor, was about to be executed at his university residence before Providence intervened.

With the help of Bangladesh Mukti Bahini and India, Bangladesh was liberated in December 1971. Before releasing Pakistani prisoners of war in 1973, India requested Sheikh Mujib's consent. Always generous, Mujib agreed on the condition that Pakistan try the 200 war criminals in Pakistan. Bangladesh gave Pakistan the list of the war criminals, complete with their name, PA number, rank and unit. Bhutto agreed to the condition but then renege on his promise! No Pakistani soldier was ever tried for genocide against Bangladeshis!

Dr. Nuran Nabi's authentic and well-documented book, Bullets of '71: A Freedom Fighter's Story, (Author House, 2010) depicts an excellent picture of Bangladesh's War of Liberation from a freedom fighter's perspective. It also lists the names, ranks, PA numbers and units of all 200 war criminals that Bhutto promised to try but never did. Forty-five years have elapsed since Bhutto's deceitful "promise," and now it is clear that Pakistan will never try its war criminals. Bangladesh should hand over the names of those 200 Pakistani war criminals of 1971 to the Hague International Criminal Court, so that they can finally be tried for crimes against humanity.

The writer is a Rhodes Scholar.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Are we here to study or do politics?

The residential students of Dhaka University are going through untold sufferings. In addition to all other problems such as the quality of food and living space, student politics has become a major problem especially for the first-year students with the student wing of the ruling party often forcing students to attend political programmes and showdowns. As a

result, residential students often miss important classes. If someone is ill, he has to take 'permission' from at least three 'boro bhais' with party affiliations to exempt him from political programmes! It is no way an ideal environment to study. If this condition continues, DU students will fail to live up to the standards set before.
MS Islam
 Student, University of Dhaka

Stop oil spillage

It is very disturbing to note that the incidents of oil spillage in oceans and rivers have become very frequent nowadays. Oil slick cannot be brought under control easily since it spreads quickly through wind and currents. Hence, great technology and enormous human efforts are necessary to handle the incidents of oil spill.
 Oils spills have harmful effects on marine animals, eventually passing on to humans in many cases. To safeguard the marine ecology from the threats of oil spill, countries should come together to chart out strict rules in matters of moving dangerous cargo

ships and laying oil pipelines through sea routes.
P. Senthil Saravana Durai



PHOTO: PINAKI ROY

Foot bridge needed

Golap Shah Mazar at Gulistan is one of the busiest places in Dhaka. Every day many people come to this area and have to cross the road risking their lives. If the authority builds a foot bridge there, people visiting this area would be highly benefited.
Mst. Ashia Islam Ove
 Eden Mohila College