

What a travesty of justice

Who protects the helpless?

THIS is the ultimate nightmare for parents of a young woman in our society. Suchona comes from a family of four and has been hounded by a married man for two years. Refusal to cave in met with framing of trumped up charges against her whole family for an acid attack which never happened and the family ended up in jail. A subsequent investigation by the police found the culprit Chanchal and his mother to have made a false case against the family. It took a month for the family to get bail, but Suchona remains incarcerated. The victim's mother laments what is to happen to her daughter and rightly so.

Because the perpetrator happens to be in a better social standing, it has allowed him to do what he has done. We are surprised that the police, even after failing to find any evidence of the so-called acid attack, took nearly a month after the family was arrested to submit the report to the court. The case, apparently, has not been dismissed as yet and the girl remains in jail. Ironically, the perpetrator was arrested when a case was filed against him by the victim's family for beating up the children and he is out on bail. We find the whole episode reprehensible! Who knows how many Suchonas are out there rotting away because loopholes in the system allow for the powerful to prey upon the weak at will.

Garbage-littered road

No body to take notice!

THE photo published yesterday in the back page of this newspaper shows piles of garbage and construction materials left on the Bir Uttam Rafiqul Islam Avenue at Madhya Badda in the capital. The suffering faces of the pedestrians and long tail of vehicles reflected how this unmindful act caused inconvenience for the city people. We wonder what the city authority is doing as the heaps of wastes seem to have been left on the busy road for sometime.

Due to inadequate infrastructure and poor planning, the city lacks an efficient garbage management system. The problem exacerbates as the city authority has little monitoring of proper disposal of wastes. Specific dumping spots are either not present or are not properly used. The city residents often throw away household wastes on open spaces or streets, which shows their lack of awareness. As the garbage is being dumped indiscriminately and not removed, it's accumulating everywhere. The gas released from these wastes is further polluting the city air, and infectious diseases are gaining pace, affecting more and more people with time.

Amid this situation, we can't emphasise more on the necessity of developing an environment-friendly and cost efficient method of garbage disposal system for the capital. The city authority should strengthen the monitoring system and engage the local ward councilors and citizen bodies in this regard. Social awareness should be raised among people by forming outreach programmes that draw attention of people and give them the necessary information to keep their surroundings clean.

COMMENTS

"A little groundwork too much to ask?" (June 22, 2016)

Taufiq Tara

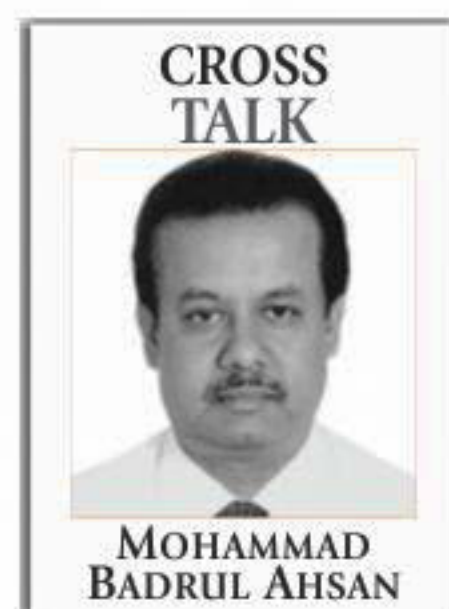
Our intelligence agencies do not know whether Mukul Rana's family filed a GD or not after his missing; they did not know his real name and they even did not bother to visit his village home, meet his parents, relatives and neighbours for a thorough investigation! What type of people are they?

"10 hours of sufferings" (June 22, 2016)

Monirul Islam Sheikh

Nowhere else in the world these kinds of incidents can happen. And every time, it is us, the general people, who have to become the ultimate sufferers.

Omar Mateen's ghost breathing inside Donald Trump?



CROSS TALK

MOHAMMAD BADRUL AHSAN

LET'S start with this absurd disclaimer that no identification with actual persons portrayed in this hypothesis is intended or should be inferred. Then let's ask what would have happened if Omar Mateen, the Orlando killer, and Donald Trump, the Republican Party candidate for the US presidential race, had decided to trade places? How would a young-faced property mogul with close-cropped hair have stacked up against an aging maniac whose hair looks like a bird's nest? The hatred, anger and extreme views of the world common between them would have still put us in this abiding dilemma: Which is better between new label on an old bottle and old label on a new bottle?

Of course, Mateen has already crossed the line. He masterminded the worst mass shooting in American history, throwing the families of these victims into a terrible void. It's one thing to hate people, but another thing to hurt them, although both are insanely wrong.

Donald Trump, whose harangue is fuelled by raw hatred, has so far restricted himself to the first half of that perilous journey. He hasn't picked up a gun but the public opinion, the most sophisticated weapon in a working democracy, to target everything he hates in this world. The Mexicans are bad, the Muslims are even worse, and he is asking the American people to give him the power to isolate their country from the rest of the world.

There can be no comparison between a cold-blooded murderer of Afghan descent and a crackpot demagogue of German ancestry, except for the calibre of their weapons, gun in the first instance and mouth in the second. But, both somehow appear to be unassimilated elements in the great American melting pot, which has for centuries welcomed millions of terrified souls fleeing from tyranny, war, poverty and pestilence. How could these two men reject anybody in a country that gave shelter to their ancestors, who, in the words of Emma Lazarus, were "yearning to breathe free"?

In a perverse way, Mateen and Trump are two extreme examples of an extreme world that leaves no room for middle ground. Both of them failed to understand that it takes all kinds to make a world. Mateen proved that ineptitude in the bang of guns and whistle of bullets that killed unarmed people, before

he was gunned down in shootout with the police. Trump, on his campaign trail, is proving it again and again by insulting people, as if politics is carpentry, where shaving off thin slices of wood can make doors swing smoothly.

If you think of it, Donald Trump's election promise hinges on his eclectic premise. He wants to shave off the immigrants, trade accords, and military alliances, as if that's the only way to stop America's door jamming. And his madness is uncannily reminiscent of a yesteryear lunatic. Adolph Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's defeat in World War I and the

the Muslims as if that's the silver bullet to kill the beast. It's amusing that he doesn't prescribe similarly strong measures when most of the mass shooters are white Christian males, none of whom ever had anything to do with the Muslim mind or the Mexican motive.

If we consider the calculus of cruelty, the biggest mass shooting in the American history is a daily occurrence in some Muslim countries. Dozens get blown up every time car bombs explode, militants open fire in crowded places, and the American drones pound innocent targets. Not to speak of the millions of refugees who are fleeing their countries, reeling under the oppressive burden of



SOURCE: TWITTER

economic crisis that followed. Historians believe these were nothing but Hitler's pretext to create an enemy.

Although Omar Mateen was born in New York, it's possible that the genetic memory of his parents' disturbing experience of the war in their old country also disturbed him. He had perhaps found his enemy in the LGBT people, made more interesting by the speculations that he might have been in the closet himself. It's possible that he resolved his contradictions in the burst of gunfire that at once rid the world of him and him of the world.

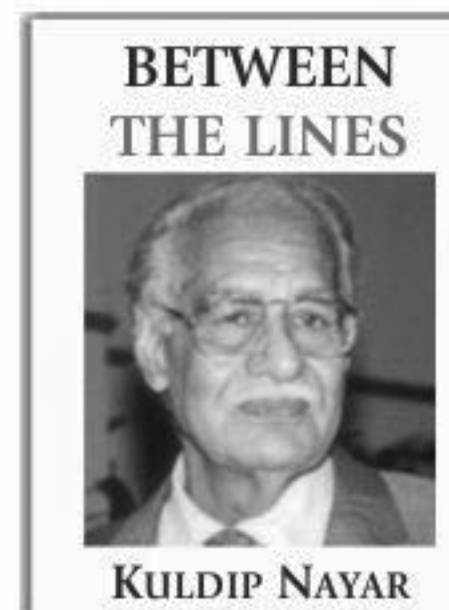
Meanwhile, Donald Trump continues to cultivate his contradictions. Last week, he repeated his plan to ban

half-baked US policies!

An aspiring leader of the free world should have told us how he planned to put out the fire instead of fanning it. Donald Trump is trying hard to divide and rule, pathetically ruled by his passion for senseless divisions. On June 12, the Donald Trump breathing inside Omar Mateen was silenced in Orlando. Next month, the Republican Party will decide if the Omar Mateen breathing inside Donald Trump is nominated. It will be a long wait until November 6 to know if he is also elected.

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Ehsan Jafri and the eroding of India's secular origins



BETWEEN THE LINES

KULDEEP NAYAR

WITH all due respect to the Gujarat High Court, I beg to differ with its judgment that the firing by Ehsan Jafri (Indian politician and former member of the 6th Lok Sabha for the Congress Party, who was killed in the Gulbarg Society massacre, which was one of the episodes of mob violence against Muslims during the 2002 Gujarat riots) provoked the mob to kill him. I knew him and he was a staunch Congressman. The Gulbarg Society massacre was the doing of local Gujarati leaders, hoping to parochialise the people.

When Jafri was surrounded by the Hindu mob, he rang me up, seeking my help to rescue him from the frenzied crowd he had around him. I rang up the Home Ministry in Delhi and told them about the telephone call. They said they were in touch with the state government and were "watching" the situation. As I put down the telephone, the bell rang again, and Jafri was at the other end, beseeching me to do something because the mob was threatening to lynch him. His cry for help still resounds in my ears.

I admit I could not do anything beyond ringing up the ministry once again. Therefore, the court's verdict that Jafri provoked the crowd is misplaced. It is a travesty of justice. But then the Bench is not to blame, because it has to go by the evidence placed before it. The prejudiced police had neither done their job, nor homework thoroughly, and so the court had come to the conclusion that the provocation came from Jafri.

I hope the matter will come up before the Supreme Court and the real facts may emerge for the knowledge of the wider public. This is important because the general impression is that Jafri was to

blame. The tragedy is that even the judges have now been taken in by the sordid job done by the police. India is a pluralistic state and it is ruled by the Constitution which Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians in the Constituent Assembly together had adopted.

It goes to the credit of leaders of the national struggle that they adopted a secular Constitution, although the population of Hindus was an overwhelming 80 percent. The Hindu Mahasabha, which gave birth to the Jan Sangh, could not even return 10

members of the society will be vulnerable. The 'enemy phobia' will sustain. Today, the Muslims are blamed; tomorrow it will be the turn of some other members of society. Where will it end? There is no option from the rule of law.

Fortunately, some activists are still trying to bring democracy back on the tracks, but the atmosphere has become so polluted that their job looks tremendous and almost impossible. Ultimately, Parliament is the arbiter. The nation will have to ensure that it elects people who

a requirement for voters. Nehru replied that the uneducated and the ignorant constituted the main force which fought during the independence struggle. Now when the country was free, should he tell them that they were not entitled to vote?

Another principle which goaded the movement was secularism. This was embodied in the Constitution which gives one person one vote, whatever their community's strength in the country. It may be unthinkable today in certain circles of society, but the representatives of the majority community accepted this principle.

So much so that the Muslim community's leaders in the Constituent Assembly refused to have reservations or quotas in legislatures, educational institutions and even in government jobs which they had enjoyed under the British. This is the practice even today. Yet, the prejudice is evident in jobs in the private sector. Very few Hindu establishments have Muslims as their employees. In fact, the Sachar Committee, appointed by Dr Manmohan Singh, then the prime minister, has said that the condition of the Muslims in India was worse than that of the Dalits. Very little improvement has been noticeable since then.

Regrettably, judgments, like the one in the Jafri case, could only provide the Hindutva crowd with the justification that aggressiveness of Muslims force Hindus to adopt a communal line. I might be overly optimistic, but I still hope that the society would realise on the whole that a country with so many complexities can survive in a pluralistic and democratic alignment.

People will themselves see the incongruity between the values of the Constitution and what is being practised otherwise. Pluralism is not only an ideology to prize, but also something to cherish, something that is needed to sustain the country's integrity.

The writer is an eminent Indian columnist.

Fortunately, some activists are still trying to bring democracy back on the tracks, but the atmosphere has become so polluted that their job looks tremendous and almost impossible. Ultimately, Parliament is the arbiter. The nation will have to ensure that it elects people who have faith in the rule of law and the Constitution.

members of the Lok Sabha. The party has, in fact, improved its position and today commands a majority in the House on its own. It has 262 seats in the Lok Sabha, guaranteeing it a clear majority. Close allies like the Shiv Sena have added to its strength.

What plagues India is that the government apparatus reflects the ideology of the party in power. This applies as much to Congress as to BJP. Even the communists are not innocent. How we reconcile these shortcomings with the rule of law is the biggest problem that the nation faces. Since all political parties are culpable, there doesn't seem to be any light at the end of the tunnel.

Unfortunately, the main onslaught today is against the minorities and the marginalised. If the rule of law is not

have faith in the rule of law and the Constitution which came into being from 1950.

In fact, there were many options before the Constituent Assembly. Adviser B.N. Rao, who had gone around the world to see various systems in operation, placed before the advisory committee of the Constituent Assembly the presidential form of government pursued by the US and the one followed by France. Jawaharlal Nehru, whose ideas prevailed at that time, preferred the parliamentary system. It is alleged that his education at Harrow and Cambridge had moulded his thoughts. That may well be true, but he wanted a system where every adult would participate.

In the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who was in the chair, wanted some educational qualification as

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Realise before it's too late

It's actually very disappointing to see that Pakistan's image has worsened over the years. The level of corruption has increased profoundly. Here, only those people have a say in the society who are either rich or powerful. The ones who work hard day and night to meet their ends are not getting their rights at all. This situation needs to end for the country's own benefit.

Maha Shahab
University of Karachi

Misuse of antibiotics

Nowadays, doctors prescribe antibiotics randomly to the patients even for petty diseases. This misuse of antibiotics increases the number of drug-resistant germs in our bodies and makes us more vulnerable to diseases. So this harmful practice must be stopped. Our government and the health ministry should impose strict guidelines on the use of antibiotics and make the doctors and pharmacies comply with that.

Jannat
On e-mail

Fatwa against targeted killings

This is in reference to the news item "Fatwa against secret killings in Bangladesh," published in *The Daily Star* on June 15, 2016. The news stated that 1,00,000 Bangladeshi clerics had signed a fatwa against the killings of minorities and secular campaigners in the country.

I believe this is a very important step towards preventing innocent youths from

entering into the clutches of extremist militant organisations. I congratulate everyone associated with this programme. There is a lot that Muslims from other parts of the world can learn from it.

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