

44 years of our Constitution

Time to recognise its importance

THIS day 44 years ago the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was adopted. It was one of the finest documents to be framed, which promised a secular and egalitarian society based on justice, equal rights and opportunities for all. Regrettably, the dreams of the founding fathers enshrined in the Constitution have remained largely unfulfilled. Regrettably too, sixteen amendments have been incorporated in it by the various regimes, yet, most of them were done without taking much, if any, public interest into account.

While some of these amendments were done by military dictatorships, others too were done under partisan considerations by the party in office. Hence, the aim behind the framing of the Constitution, which was to serve the people through better governance in the light of the four guiding principles, has in the main remained unmet.

A stark example of this is the Thirteenth Amendment that introduced the system of caretaker government and its revocation by the Fifteenth Amendment. The irony is that both the amendments were the result of the demand of the same party. It demonstrates the abject disregard for public interest when parliamentary majority is misused to strike out an act by the party that was instrumental in framing it in the first place. Meanwhile, conflicting aspects within the Constitution, because of the various amendments that had been hurriedly added to it, also remain an unresolved issue.

The people too have remained generally unaware of their rights and obligations accorded to them by the Constitution, particularly in the absence of any awareness campaign by the state and also because of the failure of the civil society in educating and informing the public.

It is unfortunate that we have failed to collectively understand the significance of our Constitution and give it its due importance. It is time for us all set that right.

ADB steps up loans

A sign of growing confidence in Bangladesh

ACCORDING to the new country strategy paper of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the lending institution has broadened its loan base to USD 8 billion over the next five years to Bangladesh to cover a wide range of areas for development. That ADB is now concentrating beyond infrastructure to include much needed assistance in developing human capital and other areas where help is sorely needed shows growing confidence in Bangladesh's ability to absorb and utilise these funds. Half the loans will be on concessional terms and the rest will be lent at market rates.

This is very much welcome news for the country. That we have high investment needs is not in question. The two primary issues we need to address from our side is our negotiating skills in getting the best possible rates of interests on the loans that will be treated as commercial, and, developing the capacity to implement projects on time. It is imperative that since USD 4 billion of the funds on offer will be lent at commercial rates, we prioritise the most urgent projects for the national economy to be financed with these monies. Lastly, policymakers must keep a tight lid on project completion dates because any delays inevitably lead to cost overruns, and that is something we can do without.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Lack of social integrity increases suicide rates

I agree with the article titled "School girls commit suicide" published on November 2, 2016. I would like to add that in the modern society, absence of social customs and values is enhancing depression and frustration. Sociologist Emile Durkheim has said that suicide rates can increase in a society due to the reduction of social integrity. In Bangladesh, young girls are victims of social inequality, physical oppression, sexual abuse and social ignorance, all of which often push them to lose hope in life.

The government should enforce proper rule of law against such harmful elements causing depression; and we as families and as a society must extend a helping hand to save our girls. Minhazur Rahman

On email

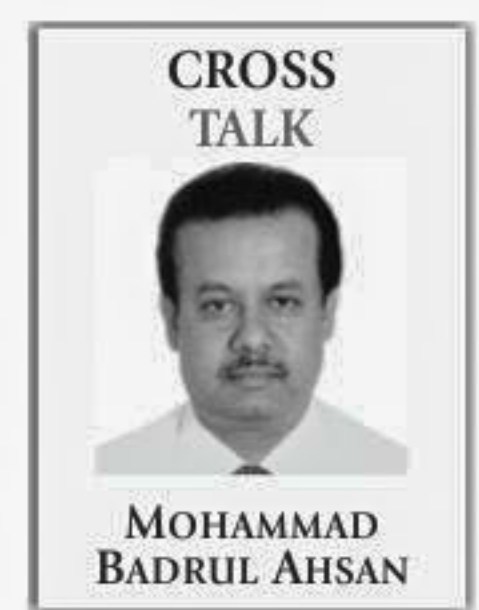
Thank you, Prime Minister!

We are very delighted to hear that our honourable PM has taken the initiative to build a house for our young cricket sensation Mehedi Hasan Miraj. We are proud to have such a sports-loving Prime Minister.

Initiatives like these will inspire the next rising stars of the country, especially those who frequently face obstacles, such as the disapproval of parents, for their passion in sports. We convey our heartfelt gratitude to the Prime Minister for her generous initiative and hope that it encourages the discovery of more latent talent like Miraj.

Md. Delwar Hossain
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University

Two mayors, Don Quixote and the windmills



CROSS TALK

MOHAMMAD BADRUL AHSAN

ONE of the insipid ironies of Dhaka City is that double mayors haven't solved a single problem. The obfuscated nation's bifurcated capital remains, to

borrow a phrase from T.S. Eliot, a patient "etherised upon a table." The dismal mathematics of two mayors in one city invokes the epiphany of persistent doubt if anything is ever going to change. Between its two city corporations, this city is like an invalid on two crutches.

Not to question the intentions of the mayors, because they are doing the best they can. One mayor risked a siege in the hands of unruly transport workers last November when he tried to vacate a truck stand in Tejgaon. Another faced the wrath of hawkers in Gulistan last week when his men, despite having pistol-wielding Chhatra League activists amongst them, failed in their eviction attempt. The veins of vested interests run

Until now the mayors have been an uneasy wedge driven between Don Quixote and the windmills, appearing to be carpet knights who are cluelessly negotiating chivalry with chimera. Where does it leave this city?

so deep in this country that good intentions are as futile as digging a tunnel with bare hands.

Meanwhile, the mayors got promoted to the rank and status of Cabinet ministers last June. That month the government also empowered the city corporations to coordinate the utility services in the city. If a man's worth is no greater than his ambition, a man's

like a block in an artery of this city has been removed. Thousands of CCTV cameras have been installed to protect certain neighbourhoods. Some commercial structures have been demolished in some residential areas. A footpath here and a street there have been mended. Garbage bins are hoisted on sidewalks. One mayor even got his name inscribed on each bin as if people

strings to pull, so many buttons to push, so many minds to marry. We are grateful they are there to haul our burden for us.

Then again, how long should it take for them to get a grip on their jobs? We see them in meetings, workshops, seminars, and media interviews. I am told they also work late into the night. Yet, two mayors are less visible than one when splitting an atom should have released more energy. Many of us miss the mayors like those miserable children, who go to bed wishing their absentee fathers will show up in the morning.

Don Quixote in Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's masterpiece devises a way out of his hopeless condition. He realises that even though one may not always be able to control what happens to one, one can control how one perceives it. He called a windmill a giant and a tavern prostitute a chaste woman, because he believed that perception is everything. The way we choose to see the world is how it shall be.

We know our mayors aren't always in control, but what we don't know is how they perceive things and where they are going with this city. This city needs to cut down on pollution. Drinking water needs more than chemical treatment. The congested traffic must be loosened. People should feel at home in their homes again.

Until now the mayors have been an uneasy wedge driven between Don Quixote and the windmills, appearing to be carpet knights who are cluelessly negotiating chivalry with chimera. Where does it leave this city? The answer depends on which of the two stretches your imagination. Is it that you have two mayors? Or, is it that you have a modern city? It's another irony that we are losing sight of the forest (city) for the trees (mayors).

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Don Quixote, Gustave Dore.

power is no greater than his position. Our city fathers are now immensely more powerful than before. The city may not have seen much improvement, the stars of its mayors nonetheless soared.

That explains how high-rise buildings became possible with the invention of the elevator. And going up without climbing steps forever weakened the link between hard work and success. While the mayors have taken the elevator, this city is stumbling on the stairs. In all fairness, the mayors have been in office for roughly one year and a half. Sympathisers argue it's too early to judge them. Sceptics are convinced that morning shows the day.

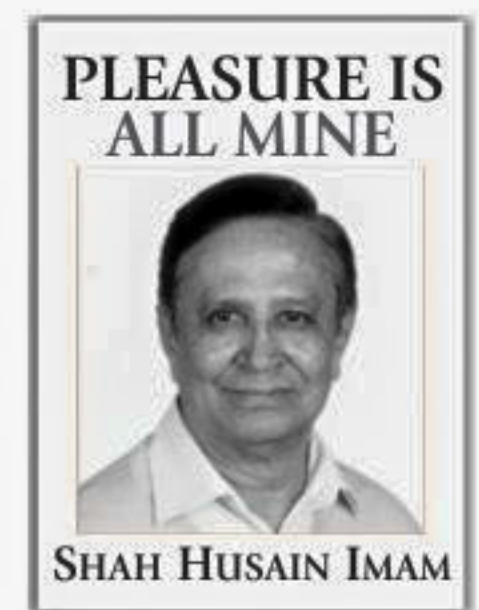
So far, a pernicious truck stand sitting

are supposed to thank him personally every time they throw their trash!

But this city needs more than a few cosmetic touchups. We still have the sidewalks infested with hawkers. Traffic jams sit tight in the roads. Water-logging and drainage problems are stagnant. Garbage disposal is a crisis. Crimes are still rampant. Roads are chaotic, neighbourhoods are pathetic, and our homes are still yearning for safety. What has happened to date is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

We don't expect our mayors to be magicians. They can't make all our problems disappear with a sleight of hand. It's understood their jobs are easier said than done. There are so many

Bangladesh stamps its rise on world cricket



PLEASURE IS ALL MINE

SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

ENGLAND is a known power in the cricketing world. Bangladesh, for the most part of its 16 years since attaining Test status, has struggled to keep

its nose above water, sometimes to the condescending stare of cricket gurus.

It is just over the last two to three years that they had trounced on the home ground powerful Indian, Pakistani and South African sides. Now another feather has been added to Bangladesh's cap. After 11 months of not having played any international cricket and 15 months of absence from Test cricket, in September-October of the current year they have fought on an equal footing with a serious English side headed to India for a challenging series.

With India in the foreground, you get another measure to evaluate on a tripartite scale the cricketing prowess of two sub-continental countries versus England. This is the beauty of successive cricketing clashes, Test matches in particular, that we should be having by way value addition to world cricket.

Moeen Ali's 50-50 theory on relative strength between the English and Bangladesh sides resonates with you in view of the matching collapses and gritty rebuilding phases accounted for by the two sides. But Captain Alistair Cooke must have the final word; he rued the lack of 'world class spin' in England team. "The baby tiger of a spin genius Mehedi destroyed England", wrote *The Telegraph* in its Sport/Cricket section.

The Dhaka match marks among the 11 worst English Test batting collapses, and they (Bangladeshis) felt "They should have won the series 2-0."

Even though *The Telegraph* headlined "Cook's side collapse to humiliating defeat", the text made a very valid, and for us, an inspiring point: "Mehedi's emergence and his team's new-found self-belief means that losing a Test in Bangladesh is no longer a humiliation it used to be."

So it was recommended in the report - "With talented young cricketers such as Mehedi and Sabbir it would be such a shame if other countries did not follow England's lead and tour Bangladesh. . ."

The media went so far as to emphatically remark, "Forget the security and terrorist threat. The England tour has been a triumph for cricket."

The Guardian was equally gracious in its comments: "After two stunning games in Bangladesh, England has no idea what constitutes the best XI in this part of the world."

And this reads so poignant a portrayal of the English mood as far it could get: "Steve Finn, the dismissed batsman stood there wondering why his request to review was being ignored — there was no review left. This somehow epitomised a session in which England went from helplessness to helplessness in record time."

Indeed, Bangladesh proclaimed that it "was open for business and ready to take on the world after the England win."

But there is a reality check we need to

spinners. And, that made the difference, a point which was not lost on the English skipper Alistair Cooke as he regretted having been outplayed by Bangladesh spinners.

Cook made a point about the condition of the wicket more diplomatically than did Michael Atherton. Since the condition applied to both sides, Cook said something about the Bangladesh team making bold to win, asking why wouldn't they - on a turning wicket? But the fact remains that we would have to play on bouncy or placid wicket overseas, which the English captain reminded us of quite relevantly, one would have thought. Yet our bowling side is potentially powerful with

reviewed!

England is just not the historic home of cricket; she is also a champion of the Gentleman's Game, some specimens of which we have witnessed during the matches. On October 24, Sabbir Rahman sat down, hunched back in frustration over his unbeaten 64 going down the drain. Joe Root was seen coming forward and squatting in front him to console him. During the second Test match on October 28, three very moving pictures turned out to be perfect metaphors of the spirit of sportsmanship, unblemished by isolated incidents of verbal exchanges, not uncommon in a competitive game.

Two news pictures showed English fielders attending to Bangladesh captain



Members of Bangladesh cricket team celebrate after defeating England for the first time in Test cricket.

be mindful about so that our progress can be well-rounded and sustained beyond the home ground — on overseas wickets. English commentator and veteran cricketer Michael Atherton, reacting to the batting collapse in England's second innings — 10 wickets falling in 23.3 overs to score a paltry 64 runs — complained of what he termed "a tailor-made wicket."

Of course, as the English chase progressed, it became more of a turning wicket from which the spinners could extract some purchase. But it is worthwhile to note that English pacer Ben Stokes took 11 wickets as compared with a lacklustre showing by English

prodigies like Mehedi and Mustafiz. The wide-ranging choices to play with are a valuable add-on to our cricketing strength.

Exceptionally, there was a surfeit of reviews of umpiring decisions under DRS — Decision Review System. For instance, Sri Lankan umpire Dharmasena, who is being assigned to umpire the forthcoming India-England series, faced 27 requests for reviews of his decisions, of which 13 were overturned. A concern has been voiced over whether the liberal use of DRS is not going to compromise the authority of umpires. If it really comes to undermining human judgement, why not use robots then? Reviews perhaps should themselves be

Mushfiquelie lying down after being hit by the pacer Ben Stokes's bouncer. Both Bangladesh and England's physios had rushed to treat the Bangladesh captain to his feet.

The last picture of warmth shows the English captain crouching to tie up the loose shoe lace of batsman Mehedi Hassan Miraj, in an amazing display of courtesy coming straight out of the heart! Bravo, English skipper!

It is now for us to live up to and extend on the new-found and well-deserved cricketing glory as an undimmed badge of national honour.

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