

Return the cyber heist money

Make investigation report public

THE much-talked about Bangladesh Bank (BB) cyber heist of USD 81 million entered a new twist as Rizal Commercial Banking Corp (RCBC) of the Philippines has stated that there is no need for it to return USD 2.7 million as it was “negligence” on the part of BB that led to the heist in the first place. We find this rationale to be flawed because RCBC cannot evade responsibility of some of its staff of being involved in the crime. Indeed, the Philippine anti-laundering body has charged five RCBC staff in this connection. As the RCBC has admitted complicity by paying a fine, there is no reason for the money not to be returned to Bangladesh. In the immediate aftermath of the heist we were informed by the finance minister that the inquiry into the matter would be made public. That the findings never made public brings us to the question as to why this was so. We have left ourselves wide open to accusations from RCBC that it was our sloppiness that led to such a massive heist in the first place. We believe RCBC has no grounds to hold on to money that belongs to Bangladesh and the grounds for “negligence” there was on the Bangladesh side can only be unearthed when the probe committee findings are made public. Sweeping the whole proceedings under the carpet has not helped matters. It is high time the truth was revealed and the matter settled for the sake of financial transparency and bringing those responsible to justice.

Kofi Annan's visit to Myanmar

Let the truth come out

WE, along with the rest of the world, have been witnessing the resurgence of violence against Rohingya in Myanmar recently that has led to the displacement of some 30,000 of them. Such persecution of Rohingya, we believe, is totally unacceptable on human rights grounds and is harmful to the stability of this region. More than 120,000 Rohingya have been crammed up in displacement camps since sectarian violence in 2012 where they are denied citizenship, healthcare and education and have strict restrictions placed on their movement. Despite the government's continuing denial of carrying out ethnic cleansing of Rohingya, the UN's rights agency said on Tuesday that Rohingya in Myanmar may be victims of crimes against humanity. To investigate the ground reality, we presume, UN chief Kofi Annan is visiting Myanmar and will evaluate the plight of the Rohingya in northern Rakhine. A similar visit by the former Secretary General, previously, had kindled hope of peace. Disappointingly, however, in contrast to others who had visited Sittwe and Aung Myingalar ghettos and compared the sites with those of Nazi Germany's Jewish ghettos, Mr. Annan had reportedly said to have not personally seen anything he would define as 'oppression'. Yet, reports and pictures of Rohingya persecution continue to come out. Testimonies of Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh also suggest human rights violations of the worst kind, which is deeply disturbing. We hope Mr. Annan's latest visit will finally reveal the truth of the situation and that his final observation on the matter will not be swayed by pressure exerted on him by the state of Myanmar. The UN and the international community must ensure that the rights of the Rohingya are protected.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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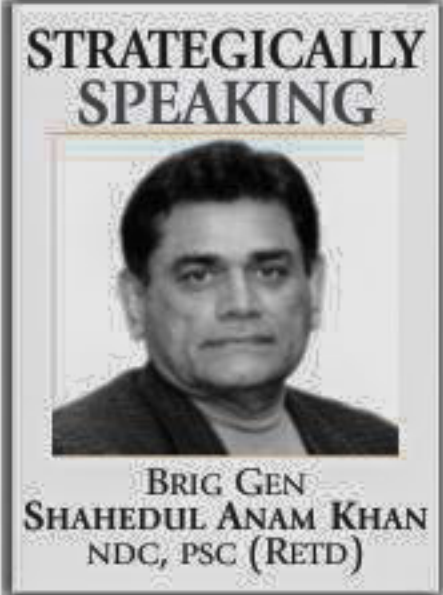


Long live Fidel Castro

Fidel Castro, the leader of the Cuban revolution and a symbol of resistance against imperialism, and of freedom for millions of people of the third world, has sadly passed away. He was a leading activist for human rights and of the socialist movement, who was widely loved in his own country and among countless of other people around the world. He showed many people the path they should follow in the struggle against exploitation, inequality and discrimination. Long live Fidel Castro, he will forever remain in our hearts. **Toufik Ahmed**
Department of International Relations, Rajshahi University

Rohingya persecution a threat to Myanmar

The alleged persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar is a danger to Myanmar itself. Troublemakers can easily exploit the plight of these persecuted people to give rise to insurgency in the country which will surely endanger Myanmar's national security. Thus, ensuring national security and stability in Myanmar means that the country immediately needs to resolve its communal disputes peacefully. **Ashkek Sarker**
Comilla



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN
NDC, PSC (RETD)

READERS would certainly be surprised at the heading of this article. It is difficult to draw any kind of analogy between a medicine producing company and one of the most dreaded terror organisations. But please bear with me for a while and things will become clear. At a time when the plight of the Rohingyas have been hogging the media headlines, the news of the Rid Pharmaceutical Company was the lead in every major newspaper of the country on Tuesday. And why not? It carried the story of the five accused in the long drawn out court case of a pharmaceutical company indicted for producing toxic paracetamol syrup, going free. Ingestion of the syrup had resulted in the death due to kidney failure of 28 children between June and August 2009. And 20 of those happened to have been admitted in the Shishu Hospital in June-July, which prompted Prof. Hanif of the same hospital to have the medicine tested at the lab. In the noteworthy observation of the learned judge the prosecution had utterly failed to prove the charge brought against the accused. A judge has to go by the evidence produced before him. Judgment is not the outcome of what the heart and the mind know may be true but depends solely on the production of incontrovertible evidence by the prosecution to prove the case. It was not the merit of the case that deprived the parents and relatives of the dead children of justice, but the merit of the prosecution that failed the legal process and the victims. The details of the case, the investigation in particular, will shame anyone claiming to be living in a civilised society ordered by a rule of law that seeks to deliver justice to the victims. But this is not the first case dealing with the production of toxic

Rid Pharmaceuticals and Al Qaeda

drugs. The first few cases of drug adulteration came to light in 1992 and the verdict was delivered in 2014. Apparently, those entrusted to deal with the matter then couldn't care less and did everything to drag the matter. And Rid Pharmaceutical's evil ways became public knowledge only when 20 children died in the same hospital in the space of two months in 2009. One had not seen a more persistent and dubious role of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) to ensure that the case failed in every respect. As in the case of the previous five companies which had resorted to the same immoral practice of mixing deadly chemicals in medicines, the role of the drug administration to ensure that the accused got let off is very clear except to the utter blind. But what do all these have to do with a terror group? Everything. Terrorists indulge in wanton killing of innocents, and in most cases children also become victims. And they do it with an aim, a political aim to be exact. In this case the management and the chemists of the said company knew fully well that suspensions are generally administered



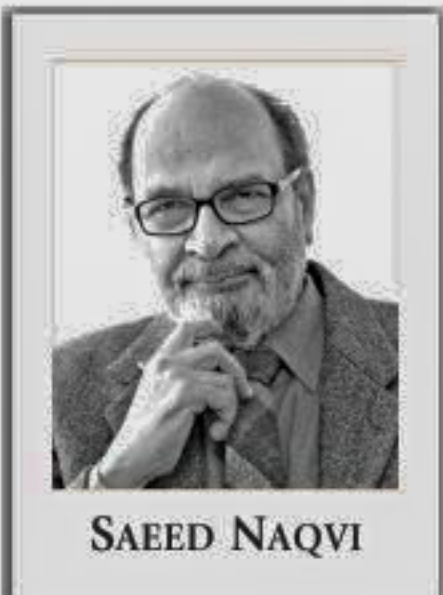
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to children and to the very old and infirm. And knowing that fully well they did not hesitate to mix deadly chemicals in the paracetamol syrup. Are the owners and management of Rid Pharmaceuticals any better than the terrorists? And such scum of the earth did it for money. To them children's lives did not matter and one can be sure that they will go about their wicked trade in future also unless they are put away permanently to rid the society of the dangers that these people pose. As for the so called Directorate General of Drug Administration theirs is the case of the gamekeeper turning poacher. They are supposed to keep the public safe, but what an effort to ensure our 'safety' health wise! The government cannot allow this state of affairs to continue to prevail in the drug administration. The DGDA is patently complicit in the commission of 28 murders of young children; not to take that into cognisance will send the signal to the likes of Rid Pharmaceuticals to

continue to indulge in the same practice. Rid is not the only of its kind in the country. There are a number of drug manufacturers in Bangladesh that produce substandard drugs. Effects of low quality drugs with poor efficacy may not be apparent or immediate, but the long term consequences can be disastrous. According to one newspaper, several thousand children have died after taking toxic paracetamol in the last 27 years. And don't tell me that the DGDA is not aware of that. The evil nexus between these drug manufacturers and DGDA must be snapped for good. But first of all examples must be made of those in the drug administration who were instrumental in seeing that the five accused go scot-free by deliberately inducing the lacunae during the investigation. Rid the country of Rid and the likes. The writer is Associate Editor, The Daily Star.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

A turning point or stopgap as the Centre crumbles everywhere?



SAEED NAQVI

AFTER a convivial evening at King's College on the Strand, when he boarded the Victoria Line to Earl's Court, Professor Ron Geaves experienced the first public reaction to a Donald Trump victory. At one of the stations, two Polish jazz singers entered the compartment. They were busking [play music in the street or other public place for voluntary donations], an established tradition on the London underground. "Let me travel in peace", a woman at the far end shouted. It was clear from her accent that she was American. The authority in her tone invited a riposte from an English woman. "We are used to buskers in this country." "You tolerate too much from outsiders" the American persisted. "We now have a President who will straighten things up in our country." "Not here, though" said the English woman. Two attitudes in conflict. When Professor Geaves told me the story, I found it refreshingly down to earth. How far removed from real life had I been in the groves of academe on the East Coast of the US. Conversations with US diplomats, bankers, media led to the same conclusion: the US electorate was being asked to choose between candidates they did not like. But all were inclined towards Clinton. Trump was inelegant, even boorish; Hillary Clinton was untrustworthy, in fact some would call her a liar. And yet all these fine minds gave the balance of advantage to Clinton. This relatively higher comfort level with a candidate surrounded by all manner of scandal was for a simple reason: she was the known devil, to whom direct or indirect links could be found by all the interests listed above. The Trump victory was explained most succinctly by placards carried by protesters in Philadelphia: "If you make Bernie Sanders impossible, you make

Trump inevitable." Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump both challenged the establishment from two diametrically opposite ideological ends. Socialism is anathema to the establishment; it stokes McCarthyism. So, Bernie, even though on a roll during the primaries, had to be set aside. Once Bernie was stopped in his tracks, Hillary would look like a natural commander-in-chief with her vast experience in diplomacy and the

of bed at 5.00 am on Election Day because a Wall needs to be built. Muslims are killing us! Women are taking over! USA! USA! (. . .) Hillary is the devil! America first! First in line with the polls." Moore emphasised that those who felt obliged to vote for Hillary to keep Trump out had no "positive" urge to vote for her. Therefore, personal persuasion on a wide scale was required. Those depressed at Bernie having been

continuity of exactly the state of affairs, Moore laments. Some maintain that Bernie Sanders would have carried the day in a hypothetical Bernie-Trump fight. They speculate that a Trump victory is therefore only the semi-final in the country's political evolution. Place him against a global backdrop, and Trump begins to look more like a "stop gap" than a "turning point". In the UK, the "New Labour" Blairites and the Conservatives would join hands to thwart the left ward surge represented by Jeremy Corbyn. The rise of the Leftist Podemos in Spain has been temporarily checkmated after last June's election created space for a possible Podemos participation in a coalition. But in the end, corporate interests have prevailed – socialists have enabled the conservative People's Party (PP) to remain in power by abstaining in a vote of confidence. PP with links to a Franco past was considered a better prospect for the socialists than a real Left. In Madrid, observers saw this thwarting of a new Leftist party as its long term gain. If people are pitted against the establishment surely people will carry the tide eventually. On December 4, Italy holds a referendum on a new Constitution. The Anti Establishment Five Star Movement, which has already captured the key mayorships of Rome and Turin, is expected to win. There are shifts galore everywhere. President Barack Obama during a recent visit to Europe attributed some of the turmoil to a mismanagement of globalisation. The consequent hardships have produced a young, progressive elite, trying to break out of conservative shackles. Trump, Spain's Mariano Rajoy and Blairite Labour do not respond to the aspirations of this lot. Bernie Sanders, Jeremy Corbyn and Pablo Iglesias of Podemos do. Corresponding shifts to left and the right are afoot in other democracies as well. Establishments are universally in bad odour. It will be interesting to watch how the Trump administration copes with political shifts down the road. The writer is a senior Indian journalist, television commentator and interviewer.



IMAGE: PIXABAY

Congress. This assessment overlooked the essential detail: the electorate was fiercely averse to the Washington-centred establishment. And this, alas, was all that Clinton represented – the establishment. For prescience on these elections, the trophy must go to film maker, Michael Moore. Three months before polling day he wrote: "This election is only about who gets who out to vote, who gets the most rabid supporters, the kind of candidate who inspires people to get out

grounded would need extraordinary persuasion to walk to polling booths to vote for Hillary. "So many people have given up on our system and that's because the system has given up on them. They know it's all bull****: politics, politicians, elections. The middle class is in tatters, the American Dream a nightmare for the 47 million living in poverty." People wanted to tear down establishments. A Clinton victory would have endorsed the