

Grim findings of education survey

Moral education should be a priority

EDUCATION as we know it today, especially at the primary and secondary levels, summons up images of all the wrong kinds: question paper leaks, cheating in exams, coaching business, emphasis on rote learning, etc. A new survey published on Wednesday provided a statistical explanation of the fault lines of our education by collating responses by students, teachers and parents on matters of ethics and values. The results, while startling, explain these unethical practices, with some 17.2 percent of boys and 21.6 percent of girls at the secondary level saying using “any means” necessary for a high score in exams is sometimes essential. Forty-nine percent of the respondents believe honesty is not a practical option.

It is deeply disturbing when large numbers of students, many of whom will go on to lead our country, think that moral values are dispensable in the pursuit of higher gains. Underlying this perception is a shift in our expectations from education. Education, sadly, is no longer considered a means to enlighten a student, but one the value of which lies in its capacity to ensure a smooth entry for the student into the job market. Such an attitude and the general degeneration of ethics and values in society that had led to this condition also explain why three quarters of the students surveyed do not look upon their teachers as role models for ethical and moral conduct. These findings are a grim reminder that we need to take a critical look at our existing education system. Unless we take that long, hard look and redesign this system to transform it into a balanced one, with a special focus on the attainment of moral values governing all our activities, we cannot expect to see a positive change anytime soon.

Bangladesh Bank flouts own rules

Why special consideration for a non-performing bank?

IT defies rationale that the central bank would relax its own rules of business to allow for four state-owned banks and one government financial institution to inject Tk 715 cores into the troubled Farmers Bank. BB's investigations into the bank found that its top brass is complicit in the financial meltdown that involved the former chairman and ex-chairman of the executive committee. Yet, we find that instead of ordering structural changes in the way the bank is managed, the central bank is more interested in replenishing the bank's fortunes.

The rules have been relaxed so that the bar on one director of a bank holding the same position in another is now not valid and four managing directors of state-owned banks will sit on Farmers Bank. These institutions will in effect have more than 10 percent share of the bank which is a violation of Article 14 of the Act, while the central bank has cited another article of the Act that allows it to relax any rule upon suggestions from the government. So, are we to surmise that since this bank is partly owned by a lawmaker, the rules do not apply? Again, precisely what sort of message is being given to other financial institutions which may be susceptible to scams? Unfortunately for us, it seems that far from bringing about changes that would re-establish discipline in the financial sector, the BB has chosen to pump in money to these bottomless baskets.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Launching Bangabandhu Satellite

Bangabandhu Satellite-1, the first geostationary communications satellite of Bangladesh, will be launched from Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, USA. Thales Alenia Space, a French company, designed and built the satellite, which already underwent several test runs.

Falcon-9, a brand new rocket, will carry the satellite into the orbit. For Bangladesh, this has potentials to bring a new chapter in terms of technological advancement. The satellite will bring uninterrupted telecommunication system in Bangladesh.

It's a matter of pride that Bangladesh is now a member of an elite club comprising of only 57 states that own at least a satellite.

Nazrul Islam, Chandpur

Marx is still relevant

From May 5, 1818 to May 5, 2018 - yes, Karl Marx, had he been alive, would have been 200 years old! He is still relevant, because Marxism is very much alive and kicking in welfare states in the Scandinavian region.

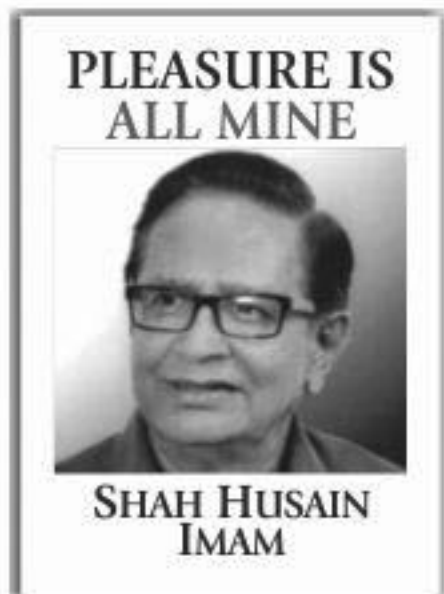
Even the United States, the bastion of free market capitalism, cannot deny the influence of Marxism in some of its most celebrated programmes such as subsidised or free health care, education and allowance for the unemployed.

A welfare state that ensures individual freedom and at the same time guarantees his or her social security is synthesis of the thesis of capitalism and antithesis of socialism.

It will indeed be a heaven on earth if we can translate the words of Karl Marx—"From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"—into action.

Sujit De, By e-mail

What is Trump up to?



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE

THE US President Donald Trump in a dramatic move has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal ahead of the deadline set for May 12. True to his hell-bent attitude to abandon the deal spearheaded by his predecessor Obama, he has given another proof of an impulsive action distancing himself from a multilateral approach to romp on to an isolationist trajectory.

Never mind his lack of distinction between major and minor events or his warped sense of proportion or the light in which he may be presented over a certain media house, you can be sure about one thing: He is a head-turner with a genius to glare in the limelight. For instance, in an NBC comedy show his dummy was shown lamenting to a mock porn star Stormy Daniels, "I have solved the North-South Korean problem, why aren't we being able to solve ours?" Pat came the reply, "Not until you resign.

The US risks being isolated if it pushes the deal issue too far, because it must not be lost on Trump that UK, China, France, Germany and Russia are co-signatories to the nuclear deal under the UN's supportive wings.

I know you don't believe in climate change but a storm is coming, baby!"

After seeing all the good work done to bring North Korean strongman Kim Jong-Un and South Korean leader Moon Jae-in together on a likely peace deal as precursor to a summit between president



US President Donald Trump announcing his decision about the nuclear deal with Iran.

PHOTO: SAUL LOEB/AFP

Trump and the North Korean leader, Washington is accused of "ruining the mood for reconciliation."

Then you come by a deflection of focus of a most rabid kind: Trump who not so long ago dusted dandruff off the jacket of French President Macron in a rare cosying up gesture triggered angry reactions in France and Britain by bragging that were the French citizens allowed to buy weapons, the Paris attack could have been stonewalled!

It used to be said in the Cold War era that America considered itself as the "Sun around which all planets must move." The sun complex may have gone along with "pivoting" to a region—the paraphernalia though remains intact in various theatres—the US has transformed from predominance to "primacy" in terms of raw self-interest. It demands its pound of flesh in every deal, cut even in the past supposed to be respected by successor governments. This is euphemistically called America first policy—so much for the US increasingly appearing in a tough customer's role in world affairs today.

Kofi Annan in a recent BBC interview

while responding to a question about who might fill in the vacuum the US might leave, named China and Russia as possible candidates.

The US thinks the deal doesn't address Iran's ballistic missiles programme or its role in wars in Syria and Yemen. The EU may move to respond to "Trump's concerns" over the terms under which international inspectors are to visit suspicious Iranian sites and "sunset" clauses under which some terms of the deal are to expire. Moreover, as an aside, Trump rues the fact that it does not prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Under the deal known as The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) the US is committed to ease a series of sanctions on Iran and it has done so under a string of "waivers" that effectively suspended them. The withdrawal of US sanctions that promised to unlock Iran's economy should it come to pass would make Rouhani feel hard done by. And unsurprisingly, he has spoken of retaliation against such a move.

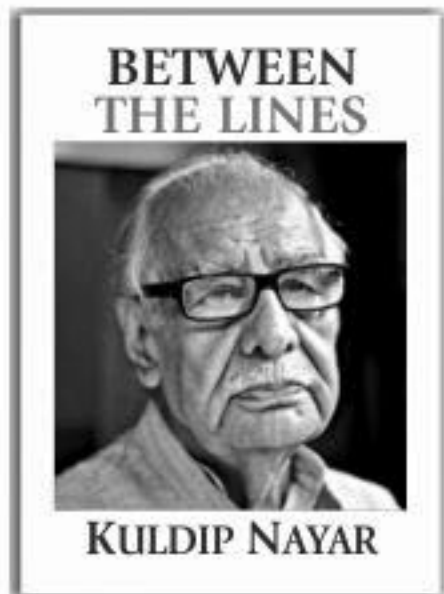
The Zionist threat to Middle East

might get traction from a re-imposition of sanctions. Jack Straw, a foreign secretary involved in earlier efforts to restrict Iranian weapons was quoted as referring to "appalling allegations" against some officials of the Obama administration. A private Israeli investigating agency has been hired to organise "dirty ops" campaign against key people in the previous administration who had helped negotiate the deal. This reflected a "high level desperation" by Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu—"not so much to discredit the deal but to undermine those around it."

Actually, the US risks being isolated if it pushes the deal issue too far, because it must not be lost on Trump that UK, China, France, Germany and Russia are co-signatories to the nuclear deal under the UN's supportive wings. In all possibility, they would not pull out of the accord, so why must Washington throw the baby with the bath water?

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Relevance of Jinnah



KULDIP NAYAR

BETWEEN THE LINES

THE Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) is not just a place of learning. It was in the forefront of a movement for the demand of Pakistan and still leans towards what is considered beneficial to the millat. A photo of Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the wall of Kenney Hall, the most prestigious place in AMU campus, is no surprise. It was there even before partition and it continues to be there all

remarks like there should be electricity at cremation grounds as is the case at burial grounds. But this is to assure the Hindu audience that the BJP has not strayed from the party's philosophy of Hindu Rashtra.

No doubt, the majority of Hindus—they are 80 percent in India—tilt towards what is known as Hindutva. But I do not think that this is something long lasting. Hindus and Muslims have lived together for centuries. They would continue to do so despite the hot winds of Hindutva blowing at present. By temperament, India is a pluralistic society. It would stay that way although at times it would look

I recall that after celebrating Bhagat Singh's birthday in March some years ago, a delegation of Pakistanis participated in a gathering at Amritsar in April to recall the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy which had Hindus and Muslims as martyrs. So much enthusiasm was created that preparations were afoot to hail the sacrifices of those who were part of the Indian National Army and the naval uprising in 1946. The two challenges to the British, even when the Hindus and Muslims were divided, indicated that when it came to a third party, both sides were willing to join hands to thwart it.

This is, more or less, what Jinnah,

and freeing India from bondage. I was surprised to know that there were as many as 14 applications against renaming the Shadman Chowk. This was the same roundabout where a scaffold was erected to hang Bhagat Singh and his two colleagues, Rajguru and Sukhdev.

Jinnah's name is associated with partition. Was he alone to blame? When I talked to Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, at his place in London in the early 90s, he said that then Prime Minister Clement Richard Atlee was keen that India and Pakistan should have something in common. Mountbatten tried for that but Jinnah said that he did not trust the Indian leaders. He had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan which envisaged a weak centre. But India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said that all would depend on the decision of the Constituent Assembly which was already meeting in New Delhi.

Differences between the two sides only accentuated with the passage of time. In the 1940s when the Muslim League had adopted a resolution for the establishment of Pakistan, partition looked inevitable. Both sides were not facing the fact when they rejected the idea of transfer of population. People themselves did it, Hindus and Sikhs coming to this side and Muslims going to the other side. The rest is history.

Jinnah is as much respected in Pakistan as Mahatma Gandhi is in India. It's time for the Hindus to recognise that partition was deliverance for Muslims. That was in 1947. Today, the Muslims in India, approximately 17 crore, do not matter in the affairs of India. True, they have the voting rights and the country is ruled by the constitution which gives one vote to one person.

They have lost their say in decision making. What Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had said before partition has come true. He warned the Muslims that they may feel insecure in the country because their number was small but they can proudly say that India belonged as much to them as it did to the Hindus. Once Pakistan was established, the Hindus would tell the Muslims that they had their share and should go to Pakistan.

Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were able to keep India pluralistic after partition. But the line drawn on the basis of religion is what haunts everybody today. The growing importance of BJP is because pluralism has weakened. Secularism needs to be strengthened so that every community and every part of the country feels that it is equal in the affairs of the country.

Kuldip Nayar is an eminent Indian columnist.



Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with the students of Aligarh Muslim University on March 12, 1941.

PHOTO: DAWN/WHITE STAR ARCHIVES

these years. But what amazes me is its disappearance on May 1 and reappearance on May 3!

True, it was the handiwork of a fanatic BJP member. But he should retract his steps within two days and put back the photo where it had hung since the time before partition looks extraordinary. Perhaps the person concerned was admonished by the BJP high command which is trying its best to woo Muslim voters at the Karnataka state election.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also kept the polls in mind when he addresses different rallies in the country. Once in a while he tends to make

like going the Hindu way. However, there is always a spoil-play group which opposes everything worthwhile for the sake of opposition.

Take the case of India-Pakistan relations. There are elements which are bent on negating every effort towards conciliation and rebuff steps that help promote good relations between the two countries. Some years ago, the Pakistanis themselves took the initiative to rename the Shadman Chowk in Lahore and the gesture was very much appreciated in India. In fact, the renaming of the chowk gave birth to the idea of honouring heroes of the pre-partition days.

founder of Pakistan, had said when he came to the Law College at Lahore in 1945 when I was a student. To my question, what would be the stand of Pakistan if a third power attacked India, he said straightaway that the Pakistani soldiers would fight by the side of Indian soldiers to defeat the enemy. It is another matter that military dictator General Mohammad Ayub Khan did not send any help to India when it was attacked by China in 1962.

Bhagat Singh was only 23 when he went to the gallows fighting against the British rulers. He had no politics other than the politics of sacrificing one's life