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The Daily Star

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Opinion

Youth aspirations and future of Bangladesh

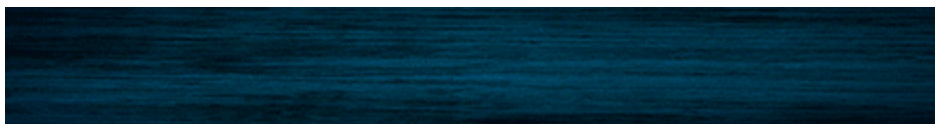
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Bidhan Chandra Pal



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It is obvious and very normal that many people inside and outside the country are worried about Bangladesh. I sincerely thank everyone — the people of the country, the people who are staying abroad, the people of other nations — as you all are thinking about the country. There is a saying that goes "A friend in need is a friend indeed." In this case, I



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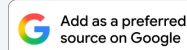
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would like to say that those who think about the country in this situation, keep track of the proceedings in the country regularly, write, analyse the situation in different ways, and even contribute to the solution — they are the real patriots.



It would be absurd to develop a sincere friendship and compassion for the people of Bangladesh if there was no sense of love for the country.

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The new generation (although many others like me may not have had the opportunity to know and understand all of them very well, who they really are) are the ones who sacrificed their lives like heroes and pulled the people of Bangladesh out of this pit that they were in with enormous courage. As the scenes unfolded, most of the people saw a new country, the smell of freedom separated itself from the atmosphere of corruption. Many of us finally felt the presence of fresh air, urging us to open up our souls, and the young in our society began to dream of building this country anew with new promise.

Many people are now questioning and feeling apprehensive about whether this is true freedom. Because it has become clear that for a long time, instead of becoming socialised, we have become only individualistic and isolated. As a result, the important administrative, social and cultural institutions of our country gradually have become weak and fragile.



On one hand, we saw that right after the victory was achieved with the participation of young and old, indiscriminate attacks, torture, massacres, robberies, and arson were carried out, including on places of worship, on law enforcement agencies, on individuals and institutions. All were affected by this political outrage, ordinary people and especially specific communal groups. Many other unexpected incidents, including demolition of sculptures, land grabbing and looting, are continuing to happen one after another — which is a matter of great shame and must be condemned. There is no doubt that these are the characteristics of a disgusting, vile and ugly mentality. The people of this country had never imagined that such a big change could happen in the history of our nation and in the political field. It seems to have happened suddenly but it had become inevitable for Bangladesh, for the people of Bangladesh today and tomorrow due to various reasons.

However, naturally, many still have mud and grime on their bodies after being picked up and harassed and many may have to carry scars or wounds for the rest of their lives.

I will vouch that people are fed up, they want peace, they want a healthy and beautiful living environment, they want the future of the coming generations to be secured. So everyone, including the common people, have welcomed most of the recent decisions made by the interim government with respect and trust in the victory of this new generation. Right now, the new government is raising hope in everyone's mind, even though there are many questions and criticisms in the public mind and media about the appointment of some members of the interim government. Maybe this is normal in a democratic system. One thing in particular is giving everyone hope — the chief advisor to the interim government is a world-renowned Nobel laureate. As a result, the young in our society, the countrymen, and the whole world are looking forward to him with hope and dreams of ensuring peace and prosperity, for which he will continue to work with commitment.



Hopefully, the law-and-order situation will improve as soon as possible throughout the country, and everyone will be able to move and talk freely outside their homes. A suitable environment will be created for the survival of people of all religions and castes, the economy will return to normalcy, and trade and commerce will gain momentum. The price of goods will come down to a bearable level, road traffic will return to order, there will be positive changes in the education system, and there will be no more discrimination anywhere. Besides, the process of all desired reforms in all fields, including the electoral system and procedures will start soon — this is everyone's wish.

The entire system of administration and management had collapsed a week back. Efforts to revive them have already begun, though it is not an easy task.



Questions and criticism are being levelled at the system all around. It needs to be understood that now, without making the situation more heated through criticism, the option to conduct the work for reformation and stabilisation of the country in a healthy way by following the constitutional rules and following the Doctrine of Necessity needs to be taken. In this backdrop, I will make a humble request to everyone to respond to this calling.

We have to give time to the new interim government, cooperate with individuals, institutions and outside countries in various ways, and I sincerely hope that peace will return to the country soon and a suitable environment can be created to move towards it.

It must be remembered that this generation has never seen the Language Movement, the Liberation War, or even the mass uprising of the 90s. They are called Gen-Z — those born between 1997 and 2012. Naturally, they can express and comment on good and bad, anger, demands and even create chaos like they did against the ruler whom they have seen ruling the country during their period of growin up.

Therefore, if we want to move forward, we must understand the mentality of the young in this society, listen to them more seriously, use them in all areas, so that they are not influenced by negative preachings **of religion and black money** and that no one ever gets the opportunity to use them for ulterior motives. It should be consciously taken care of, so that they do not get involved in activities that destroy the environment, they should be taught to raise environmental awareness and thinking. They need to be challenged, given

opportunities to make important contributions by developing them as value-minded and eco-friendly people — for this, it will be very important to guide them in the right direction. But it should not be one-sided, because others have a lot to learn from them. If it is not possible to create a healthy practice environment soon this process will somehow be interrupted again — the consequences for the whole nation are bound to be more dire.

Finally, I will say that the change that the youth has brought into this nation will have to be used and taken towards a positive outcome. Amidst the unending flow of bad news, I see a new enthusiasm waking up in the minds of the youth, in this enthusiasm of people of different ages who are also getting energised with the energy of youth. They worked day and night to ensure the safety of people in the absence of law-and-order forces, conducting cleanliness drives, playing a role in restoring order of traffic on the streets, recovering stolen goods and returning them. Many such incidents undoubtedly give us hope. At the same time, it also proves that in the midst of much chaos, only the power of youth can restore order in the country.

However, in conclusion, we do not want any more inconsistencies, discrimination, religious or political hatred. We no longer want to immerse ourselves in the vicious circle and pit of corruption. Let this journey of standing up continue now that we have started it, let it gradually develop — because countless people like me are sure that in that standing up lies the realisation of real freedom, peace and prosperity of all in the country. With the healthy and strong participation of all, let the country move forward and get momentum — that is my wish for all of you!

Bidhan Chandra Paul is a recitation artist, writer, researcher. Views expressed are the author's own.



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