



Release Mahmudur Rahman



On 13th of February, we were really delighted right after reading the online newspaper. We learnt Mahmudur Rahman had obtained bail in all his cases. So his release was only a matter of time. But we were shocked when we read the newspaper the next day. What did we read! The Government filed another case against him. The Police also asked for his remand in this new case. Hence he is not going to be released soon.

Mr Mahmudur Rahman, the valiant editor of the “Daily Amar Desh” was arrested for publishing a secret tele-talk of a Judge relating to the matters

of War Crimes Trial. Eventually more cases were filed against him. As a result, he has been in the jail for about past three years.

We do not know to what extent his crime is serious, nor do we know whether such crimes are punishable under Bangladesh's law. We rather relied on the Judiciary. We feel it is not our responsibility rather the responsibility of the Judiciary to determine whether Mahmudur Rahman was guilty or innocent. So we preferred to stay silent on this matter; this was our stance so far.

However, since another case has been filed recently against him on the eve of his release, like many other people we also decided not to stay silent any longer.

Although Mr Mahmudur Rahman is an editor of a daily, he is not a neutral person. He assumed top posts during the past BNP-led Government. When he was arrested for publishing materials relating to the Skype scandal, we also thought that no matter whether Mahmudur Rahman was involved in any crime or not, he was actually arrested for political reasons.

It is also not very unlikely that the Honourable Judges also had the same perception.

We are now saying and also said in the past that many general citizens are getting justice from Bangladesh's courts on a regular basis. The greatest proof of this is the fact that although Bangladesh is a highly populous country, the people here are not taking laws in their hands frequently to resolve disputes between themselves. If it was the case, then we would have seen chaos everywhere all the time. The reason why this is not happening is due to general people's lasting confidence over the Judiciary.

However, the problem starts when the cases are politically motivated. These political motivated cases are covered by the media and if anybody looks at such verdicts, he would be compelled to presume that there is no justice in Bangladesh.

We have observed that for some reason, the State always wins in all these politically motivated cases. The persons whom the State wants to arrest are truly arrested later on and thereafter they remain imprisoned for short or longer term.

We do not really know why the State always wins in such politically motivated cases, however, after a lot of thinking, we have determined a cause.

It seems to us that the Honourable Judges always want to stay on the safe side while dealing with politically motivated cases. They do not want to irritate the State machinery. The mentality of our Honourable Judges is such that, since the matter is political, it is better to deliver something that the State Prosecution wants.

Our perception might be wrong. If it is wrong, then we apologize to the Honourable Judges in advance.

But if our perception is true, then we would like to say few words to the Honourable Judges.

Most probably the Honourable Judges do not even know how much power they have to establish democracy in the country.

Since most of the time they deliver verdict in favour of the State while dealing with the politically motivated cases, the Government therefore always looks for opportunities on how to punish the opposition by filing multiple cases against them. As a result of such arrest drives, the political environment of the country becomes hostile and the political instability and the likelihood of hartals and blockades increase.

Those who belong to the Government know this weakness of the Judges very well. So they always look for opportunities on how to oppress the opposition by taking advantage of this weakness.

Now if the Honourable Judges change their mentality a little bit and if they give quick bails to the victims of politically motivated cases, then the

State would lose all its incentives to oppress the opposition. They will lose all the powers to subdue the opposition as well. As a result, they will be compelled to hold dialogues with the opposition and run the country peacefully after gaining their confidence.

If the country's politics truly sees such a qualitative change, the journalists in the media would be compelled to print true news rather than printing pages of political news. We will see development oriented talk-shows instead of hours of political talk-shows in the electronic media as well.

Recently many news reports were published in the media relating to the matters of the Honourable Judges. Nobody can say for sure whether such news is not bringing down the people's confidence over the Judiciary. We believe if the confidence over the Judiciary is truly going down, then the Honourable Judges should be the first to find the ways to overcome the situation.

We do not know whether the Honourable Judges will listen to our advice. But we believe if they take our advice and as a result, if the country truly sees a qualitative change in the political culture, then the people's confidence over the Judiciary would be rebuilt overnight and the greatest beneficiaries of such change would be none other than the Honourable Judges themselves.

And the Honourable Judges can trigger this revolutionary change with the quick release of the valiant editor Mahmudur Rahman through bail.

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