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World Cup Cricket

I would like to thank you and your reporters for the following articles "What's eating Ashraf?" and "Mashud full of hope" (February 9)

Excellent! The way our Tigers played last couple of weeks, they deserve the kudos. And this type of analysis definitely provides the fuel needed by our team-mates. Especially when our minnow's status doesn't attract much attention from world press.

No matter what happens in the World Cup, their capabilities and talent should not be questioned. As we all know that World Cup is the test of nerves at its best. Tigers, you promise us your best effort, we never gonna look down on you, that's our promise!

Go Tigers!
Nasim Haider
Dhahran, Saudi Aramco

The cricket World Cup has started and everyone has his or her favourites. Most people I know support either India or Pakistan, with a healthy mostly female minority supporting South Africa, for all the wrong reasons.

I for one am rooting for good old England.

They were the only team with the courage to boycott matches scheduled to be held in Zimbabwe. Mugabe is a despot at par with Saddam. If only it were not for the west's post-colonial guilty complex over anything to do with Africa, Mugabe would have long since come under sanctions and international pressure to free his benighted country.

Instead, we have the courageous English team, standing up for their principles. I only hope the Australians

follow the fine example of their home country and do the right thing.

MA, Dhaka

This is in regards to the letter by Mohibul ("World Cup Cricket and Bangladesh", January 30), lamenting the sorry state of our cricket yet wishing our team the best of luck.

I too wish our team good fortune. As far as I know, we don't have any fixtures for matches to be played in Zimbabwe. But I think we should follow our conscience

transfer all World Cup matches from Zimbabwe to other countries.

According to the Guardian newspaper of England, Zimbabwe's main opposition group has called on the international cricket community to boycott the country and refuse to play any World Cup matches there.

A senior member of the Movement for Democratic Change said that political violence, doubts over the security of players and spectators and the policies of Robert Mugabe's regime



World Cup fever sets in

and boycott any matches played against teams that persist in playing the Zimbabwe matches and support the call to transfer the matches from that country.

According to the Australian paper, The Age, Australia will mount a major diplomatic effort to convince countries involved in the cricket World Cup to boycott matches in Zimbabwe. New Zealand Foreign Affairs Minister Phil Goff said he would send a message, "not an instruction", to New Zealand Cricket to consider asking the ICC to

made Zimbabwe an inappropriate venue for a major sporting event.

Welshman Ncube, the MDC's secretary general, has: "A boycott of World Cup matches would send a clear message that the international community will not tolerate Mr Mugabe's illegitimate regime, and would serve to further isolate him."

We would do well to remember that cricket is more than just a game.

Kim Dhaka

showed photographs of the various infrastructures where the alleged manufacture of WMDs was taking place and also the mobile laboratories used for research and development of WMDs. These photographs were taken from the satellites and analysed by a group of specialists trained in the study of imagery and other material. Mr. Powell also showed the satellite pictures of 15 munitions bunkers stating that four of them had active chemical munitions inside.

After seeing the photographs, a question crops up one's mind that needs clarification.

The UN inspectors are there in Iraq for quite some time now and looking desperately for concrete evidence of the existence of WMDs in Iraq. They were allowed to go to any place of their choice and were provided with all the facilities for the purpose, so much so, that they were even provided access to the palaces of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein!

These inspectors must be carrying the latest, state of the art, gadgetry for communication through satellites with their sponsors. When a satellite could take photographs of the infrastructure of WMDs and the mobile trailers from such a long distance, couldn't it be used to track the movement of these huge trailers and provide second-by-second information about their movement and pinpoint their latest position to the UN inspectors?

Moreover, the evidence produced by Mr. Colin Powell needs to be verified by experts from other technologically advanced countries like Russia, China, France, etc under the supervision of UN experts, as till now, it is one way traffic only. Also, if Mr. Powell had advance information about the availability of 15 munitions bunkers out of which four had active chemical munitions inside, why was that information kept hidden from the UN inspectors till now? It would be prudent on the part of the UN to postpone its further course of action till the verification of all the information presented in the briefing from independent sources.

Azfar A Khan, Pakistan

Deterring Iraq's use of WMD

The US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warned yesterday that if Iraq used chemical weapons against invading American troops "they would wish they never had" which everyone understands to be a threat to use nuclear weapons in retaliation.

Obviously Mr. Rumsfeld feels that this threat would be sufficient to deter Iraq from using weapons of mass destruction even when the country was in mortal peril, engaged in combat and facing certain defeat! So why not use the same threat, without engaging in a campaign of military conquest, to ensure that Iraq never ever uses its weapons of mass destruction? Surely the deterrent effect of a nuclear threat would be even more potent in peacetime, when Iraq was not actively engaged in defending itself from an onslaught by its enemies. In this way America would have achieved its supposed aim of preventing any Iraqi use of WMD without having to carry out a vast military deployment with all the attendant costs and risks of such a course of action.

The above assumes that Iraq does actually possess WMD and would need to be seriously deterred. Perhaps Mr. Rumsfeld is in fact largely unconcerned about the risks associated with attacking Iraq because he knows for sure that there are no chemical, biological or

nuclear weapons in Iraq's arsenal.

In either case the logic of carrying out a military operation against Iraq to deal with weapons of mass destruction stands negated. We are entitled to ask what then is the real purpose of this enormous military build-up which is being carried out under the cover of disarming Iraq?

Rafiqullah Bhuyian
Maghbar, Dhaka

Electricity needed

Garadia Kanda is a small village under Kendua Upazila of Netrakona district. There is a mosque, five shallow machines and three rice mills in this village. But no electricity.

Even though electricity is available in the nearby villages like Bidyabollo, Varapara and Rampur ours don't enjoy this facility for some unknown reason. During the dry season due to lack of electricity farmers cannot utilise deep tube-well facility and thus are unable to plant Boro paddy and other green crops.

Students also suffer much.

We request the government to take immediate steps and provide electricity facility in this village.

Kadir Talukder, Shammi Chowdry
Kendua, Netrakona

Spontaneous good deeds

The other day, I was waiting for bus in a queue near Banani and suddenly an impoverished old woman sitting on the roadside caught my attention. Not that I don't come across the scenes and sights of such human sufferings all around our milieu, but the scene of that old semi-clad woman shivering in the cold February evening was much more than I was used to. I noticed a black Infinity stop by her, a young woman in her twenties got out of the car and astonishingly sat by that old lady putting aside all vanities that I thought she should have had! She, I noticed handed over something to the old lady and chatted for a while and left - vanished in the crowd as she came. Curious, I went to that old lady and didn't know what wonders waited for me.

I discovered that the young woman left a sum of 1000 Tk and two sarees for her. For a moment, I was in a sense of awe and reverence for the young woman, who, without being asked, showered these invaluable gifts to an unknown human being. The smile and tears that I saw in that old woman's face was worth a million dollar.

Couldn't we, the fortunate lot of the society, do similar spontaneous acts of giving and supporting to make the society a far better place to live in?

AI Uttara, Dhaka

Crisis in Iraq

It is just a matter of time when the U.S. (with Great Britain's collaboration), is going to attack Iraq. What the Bush and Blair administration haven't realised yet is that, if this is done, that would be a major mistake. If Iraq does have weapons of mass destruction and if they want to hide their secretive information, these should not be America's headache.

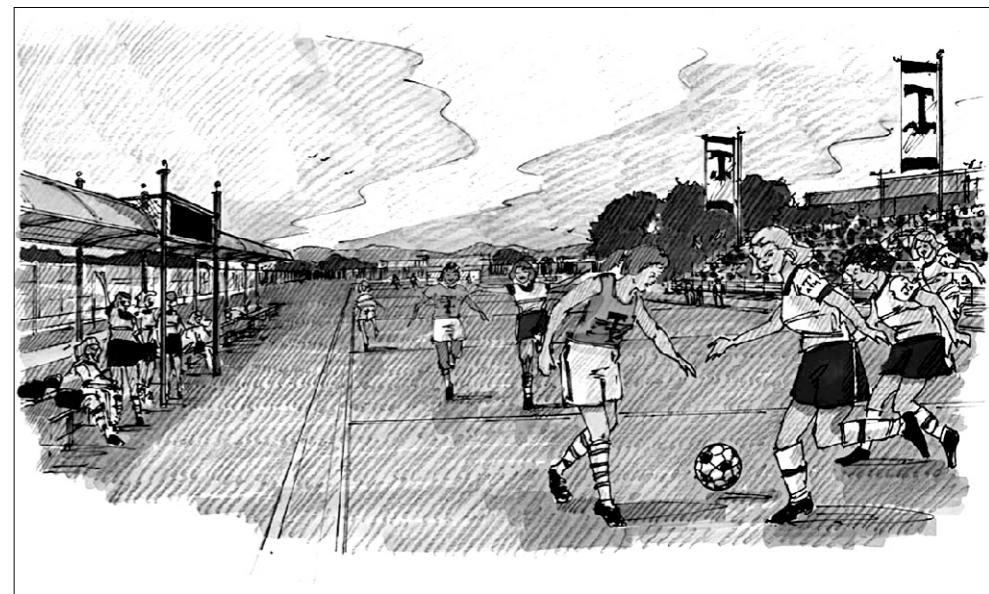
The reason why I am saying this is because, what would the U.S. do if they were in the same position as Iraq. Would they let out their secret information to the UN inspectors? I guess not.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

Thank you DU

Department of Finance and Banking

Women's football



It's all about football

In reply to Mr. Yahya's question (February 07) I quote Sociologist Robinson's definition "Deviance is a behaviour or characteristics that violate significant social norms and expectations and are negatively valued by large numbers of people in consequence."

The term deviance is not reserved for women alone, it applies to anyone who does not conform to practised social standards. An act of deviance varies from society to society and changes with time. There is nothing wrong with deviance, it does not go against the laws of the land. Sociology strictly distinguishes between deviance and crime. Expression of individual rights is a form of deviance if the behaviour of the individual does not adhere to the behaviour of the larger group he or she belongs to. Deviance is not necessarily positive or negative. In the case of the female footballers, I think their behaviour is both positive and progressive.

Previously I described myself as non-deviant because living in this society for several years has compelled me to comply with its regulations. I am a student of Dhaka University. I do not have the guts to set foot on the university campus wearing anything but the traditional *salwar kameez*. Though I consider skirts and T-shirts to be more comfortable, such dress would rouse very nasty comments from my surroundings. But I have every respect for girls who ignore those comments and venture what I do not dare.

In response to Mr. Sakib Jamal's letter (February 07) who asked a woman to walk on the streets of Metrokona in shorts to prove his point; our women footballers were very much aware of the 'evil stare' factor. I salute them for having the courage to exercise their rights regarding the unscrupulous men. The religious fundamentalists claimed that they were protecting the women from unwanted male attention. The solution to this problem lies not in confining the activities of women, but rectifying the inappropriate behaviour of men.

I was appalled that Mr. Jamal went as far as to compare our women to porn actresses! Isn't there an obvious difference? The attire of our female footballers was not very revealing, and their objective was not to turn on men. Porn degrades moral values and has hazardous effects on society, especially if viewed by those too young. On the other hand, women participating in sports can only have positive results - it promotes fitness of women and is a step to changing the way society regards them.

Ms. Zohra Khatun enquired of the women footballers (February 06) "There are plenty of other indoor games.... Why do they have to choose an outdoor game like football and become a subject of controversy?" This is

easy for Ms. Zohra to say if she is not interested in football. Football is a fascinating sport. And the important thing here is that women have the right to participate in outdoor games. Why should one not exercise one's rights? The question here isn't whether women should be allowed to play football, but why an individual's legal rights take a back-seat to conservative social practices.

Coming back to the original point of this letter my reply to Mr. Yahya's question, I negate my previous words and denote myself anew as a very deviant woman. Speaking in favour of individual freedom and gender equality makes me deviant in this male-dominated society.

Munzir Kamal
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

By letting women play football in public is not going to suddenly transform Bangladesh into a world-class modern country. We can't possibly stand head to head with countries like U.K, USA, France etc. even if we allowed women's football. If we could provide world-class education, then our people will be mature enough to understand that a simple and fun game like football is not the problem. If we could provide enough food and shelter for our people, we wouldn't have to work so hard to protect our "image" by using all sorts of cosmetics! This is a major problem with our people. Before we know how to solve some basic problems e.g. education, food, medicine, law and order; we suddenly start shooting each other over matters that are quite irrelevant. Some readers' stomach might get upset with this comment, but I am not implying that football is irrelevant. My point is, how many women would prefer to play football when they have no food to feed themselves and their family?

I am fully aware of the sad cases of men abusing women and that is why we need good police, law and order and good government to protect these women. By letting women play football is not going to hide the fact that "we" starve millions of our women and children to death!

Azad Miah, Oldham, UK

I am a Bengali born American citizen with close ties to friends and family in Bangladesh. I have lived in the U.S. since 1978.

After reading all the letters and the background of this incident, I would like to welcome you to the 20th Century. With your entry into this new and exciting era, you can look forward to such wonders as wristwatches, Velcro, and Reeboks.

Congratulations.

Abbas, USA

Indemnity and us

An important reminder to all the readers. The Indemnity Ordinance still stands as we debate the INS list and women's football. Losing sight of the problem will not solve it. The issue still stands: it is unconstitutional to put some members of the military above the law. Their conduct is also questionable. Let us not bypass this question of immense national importance.

Yahya, USA

PM's question hour

If our Prime Minister doesn't like to answer the questions from the opposition parliament members then it is better to stop this. I can't understand why the PM has been shying away to face the opposition in the parliament for such a long time.

In British Parliament, QUESTION HOUR is framed primarily to answer the opposition members' query on national and international issues. And here it seems the very opposite.

Sonia Mirza, Banani, Dhaka

Fuel price hike

The Energy Minister has mentioned the reasons for which he had to increase the local oil price firstly on the plea of rising price for oil in the international market and secondly to prevent smuggling of oil to our neighbouring country. But we people the usual victims of this price hike can't trust upon these because if it is true then he should promise to the nation that the price will be reduced back to the previous level once the international price for oil comes down.

The international oil price rate is always fluctuating but once the price is being increased in Bangladesh it is irreversible, the nation had never been witnessed the reduction of price of oil including our daily commodities to its original level. This is really a tragedy in the history of Bangladesh.

Secondly if smuggling is the cause then why his government is not taking any preventive measure for that? Just talking like this without taking any action will encourage the smuggling, isn't it?

Ahmed Habib Manzur
Buraydah, Saudi Arabia

Positive foreign policy

I fully share the views expressed by Mr. Prodipto Ghosh from Singapore. What is wrong with "Looking East"? If Bangladesh can explore new horizons and use it for mutual benefit it is worth the try, and will not be a futile exercise.

Too much and for too long our foreign and economic policies have been tied to India's whims. And what do we get in return? India refuses to open up its market to Bangladeshi products making one excuse after another. How long will this one way traffic continue?

I congratulate the present government for taking the initiative. Pragmatism and farsightedness should be the basis of the above two

policies. I honestly hope that it will bring some benefit to our country.

As regards the suggestion by Mr. Ghosh that Bangladesh should employ Buddhist ambassadors to Thailand and Myanmar (Burma) to strengthen further our relationship with those two countries, is an excellent idea. Indeed, it is a welcome thought.

Masroor A. Chowdhury
Dhaka, Bangladesh

US, WMD and nuclear power

The presentation of the case against Mr. Saddam Hussein at the UN Security Council on the 5th of February by the US Secretary of State was very impressive in presentation but had very little on content. It may have encouraged Britain among the key players further in projecting the war hysteria but left others unconvinced that the case of war against Iraq has indeed been made.

Here in South Asia, the Indian Defence Minister Mr. Fernandez has gone on record in stressing Indian resolve to obliterate Pakistan out of existence. Does the US need any more clear proof of a nuclear power using the nuclear threat

against a neighbour? The case against Iraq is a presumption that it has nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. There is no declared threat by Iraq that it has any intention against any of its neighbours. So why is the US silent on what the Indians are saying or doing? Then again, why is the US silent about Pakistan and its nuclear weapons?

The US administration has failed miserably in arguing a case against Iraq by its inability to prove that Iraq indeed has the WMD that it claims it has. The US has also disappointed the world by accepting a double standard. It is now so clear that the US is applying one standard against Iraq and another against North Korea, India or Pakistan where the threat of use of WMD is much more pronounced.

Shahjahan Ahmed
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Verification of reports

Reference is made to the address by US Secretary of State Mr. Colin Powell to the UN on 5th February, 2003, during which he produced evidence of the existence of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) in Iraq.

To reinforce his disclosure, he

"Indo-Bangladesh relation, a heart breaking reality"

Mr. Mahfuz Anam and *The Daily Star* deserve appreciation for the timely interview with the Indian External Affairs Minister Mr. Yashwant Sinha. It helped to portray the inertia of the Indian government towards the feelings of Bangladesh.

Mr. Sinha seems to be oblivious to the fact that insurgencies in north-eastern India and terrorist activities linked to Al-Qaeda are too different issues. While expressing his concerns regarding the security of India, he refers to the "list of terrorists" given to Bangladesh. In today's world, the term "terrorist" refers to people linked with Al-Qaeda. It is the Indian Deputy Prime Minister's allegation about Bangladesh harbouring "terrorism" which has sparked off the latest tension between the two countries. Bangladesh cannot take lightly such an allegation that is not backed by any facts or figures. Yet, Mr. Sinha seems to downplay Bangladesh's reaction to such an allegation as being "very harsh".

Instead of giving zero-tariff access to Bangladeshi goods that was agreed long before, Mr. Sinha refers to this "innovative" approach of "negative list". One can easily under-

stand the reason behind the suggestion of following the Sri Lankan model. It is only to delay the whole process of duty-free access of Bangladeshi goods to Indian market.

We would welcome Mr. Sinha's call for a "paradigm shift" in Bangladesh-India relations given India respects Bangladesh's sensitivities towards unfounded allegations about Al-Qaeda presence in Bangladesh. It should also grant duty-free access of Bangladeshi goods to Indian market, which was agreed long before.

Mr. Sinha's call for a dialogue to reach agreement on some "basic facts" is appreciated. While discussing with the Indian side, our foreign office should be vigilant so that the "basic facts" are the "real truth", not the truth that India would like it to be.

Zubair Sadeque, USA

Having read the report of Mr. Mahfuz Anam, the editor, about his interview with the Indian Foreign Minister, I am feeling a bit relieved.

For Bangladesh, India is not only a great neighbour but a friend with whom we have bondage of blood. I am a freedom fighter and I don't



Looking forward a friendly solution

want to see in my life time Indian soldiers killing innocent Bangladeshi farmers for the very independence of whom thousands of Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives. And India, being a big regional power and one of the economic power-house of Asia should also have some compassion and respect for their small but proud neighbour.

Friendship means equality in respect, equality in honour. By receiving help from a powerful neighbour a nation cannot bind itself to perpetual submission. As a bigger nation

India has bigger responsibility to maintain its benevolent image to its smaller neighbours. If the smaller neighbours feels insecure, they would look for a more powerful neighbour to counter the geopolitical imbalance. We don't want to see this happen between India and Bangladesh due to shortsightedness of a few politicians. I am proud of my country Bangladesh and our friend India! Peace be up on them and on every body in this world!

Mohammed Ayub Khan
Ottawa, Ont. Canada

held its first ever convocation ceremony for the graduates of 1st and 2nd batch of BBA and 1st batch of MBA on the 6th February, 2003.

I'm a part of this department as I was a student of the BBA 2nd batch. I'm taking the chance for thanking all the persons involved in making this grand event a success. My thanks goes to all the respected teachers starting from the Chairman Mr. M A Baqui Khalily, and to the staffs of the department who extended their supports all these years. Certainly we are going to miss the days in this department. Wish we all had the blessings of them always. Friends, we will miss each other too. My best wishes to the Department.

MA Tareq
2nd Batch BBA, Department of Finance & Banking, DU

A peaceful world -- we could work for

As many of us who watch TV news, talk shows, and read the newspapers from home and abroad since September 11, 2001 - it is clearer that the world is losing firmly and destroying gradually all kinds of social, ethical, cultural, and religious values that the human kinds developed and promoted through struggles, resistance, and movements for centuries - not in a month or a year.

We got those values; we spread them from west to east, from north to south. We liberated people from dark and ignited lights in human beings. People started to talk and realise the blessings of those values as peace, harmony, tolerance, coexistence, human rights, justice, democracy, and so on. We initiated to set world bodies such as United Nations, we promoted worldwide organisations such as Amnesty International to look after and pro-

mote those values.

I think we are now talking more then ever about war compare to peace; we are talking more than ever about the religion or racial differences compare to coexistence; we are talking about market share or national economy compare to global economy; we are talking about terrorism compare to human rights; we are spending our time and money to dominate each other, not to promote each other; we are showing in TV more war planes or naval war ships compare to pigeon or olive branches.

I would like to take the current issue of world context i.e. war on Iraq as an example. Is there anything that we have so far heard from the US Government shows or proofs that it is interested for peace rather than war? Is there any good reason for Britain or Australia to go along with US rather than their own economic or security interest? Is there any good reason for France or Russia or China to resist in Security Council of UN rather than to achieve economic and political share of world resources? Is there any good reason for Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and other states around Iraq to oppose a war rather than their own economic or political well being? The answer is overwhelmingly 'NO'. All they are working for is to gain as much as they can out of this upcoming devastating human catastrophe in Iraq. No government expressed a stance voice that the issue needs to be judged on the ground of merits and values those that the West promoted for.

I think if Mr. Bush has that much hatred towards Saddam and thinks he has a right cause to eliminate Saddam and believes on peace and Jesus in his heart, then he can fight with Saddam by himself instead of killing all those innocent and igno-

rant civilians using his own soldiers. And let the world bodies and organisations work and promote the issues that our ancestors fought for - peace, justice, and human rights.

Abdullah M. Yusuf, Australia

"Well done Sheikh Hasina"

This is in reference to Mr Khalid Rahman's response (Feb 3rd). The "Amra Hobo Taliban" behaviour definitely puts fire to the cracker. I don't remember saying that I blame Sheikh Hasina, and her only. I specifically mentioned ANY individual. At the same time, my point is, being a very important politician of Bangladesh, her behaviour was totally uncalled for.

I quote, "I am not meaning that Jamaat has no right to be a part of the government but not as an Islamic party as Bangladesh consists of many religions and traditions." Number 1, the people (having many religions and traditions) chose them knowing fully well what their political philosophy is. Whether it was a "wrong decision" or not is a relative discussion. Number 2, there are many secular countries in the world who have religiously biased parties in the government (e.g. Shiv Shena's Modi government voted to power in Gujarat, Germany's erstwhile government of the Christian Democrats etc).

About the secularistic outlook in Bangladesh as we all know, during elections, the slogan "*Noukar malik tui Allah*" is famous. BNP's declared philosophy is Nationalism-cum-Islamism. Jamaat's one is needless to say. Who would you term secular then? There is no secular political group, as such, in Bangladesh.

Sad, but true.
Nabila Idris, Dhaka