

Eid-ul-Azha

Living up to its inner message

SET against the spiritually laden backdrop of the Hajj, the biggest congregation of Muslims, we observe Eid-ul-Azha, the second greatest festival in the Islamic calendar on Wednesday. The occasion is solemn in its origin and content. We commemorate the act of supreme sacrifice that Hazrat Ibrahim Alaihesallam had prepared himself to perform on his son Hazrat Ismail (RA) as the ultimate test of his loyalty to Allah Rabbul Alamin. A ram lay slaughtered with a symbolic significance that one must not miss out on. The emphasis certainly is not on slaughter but on the intent and will to sacrifice.

The message that comes through it all is the very high standard set for parting with something of the greatest value to oneself in the name of Allah and for the common good of fellow beings. Service to humanity is the best prayer to the Almighty. If anything is festive and celebrative about the occasion it's the spirit of sacrifice; gluttony ought to be the farthest from anyone's thought on the day.

Sacrifice can come in so many different ways, ranging from small acts of consideration for others through charities to commitment of funds to various philanthropic ideas. People with some surplus money can finance any number of good causes such as literacy, education and research projects. We know the non-resident Bangladeshis to be keen on it; not that there is any particular dearth of people inside the country who are willing to come forward either. The point is, they would like to put in money where it is safe -- by virtue of transparency and accountability ensured in the management of funds to be made available.

A reference to such mundane (or is it so mundane?) things, is made in the belief that there is unrealised potential for trusts and endowments to be created in the country.

That said, we turn to the rapidly gathering storm of an impending war in the horizon. Even though Saddam or the Gulf is the reference-point, the whole world is destined to be caught up in the ensuing vortex with consequences, especially economic, one shudders to envision. The new Franco-German initiative to disarm Saddam without recourse to a war, has been dubbed as 'diversionary' by the US as if their way is the only pathway to solution. France and Germany have also stressed the need for prioritising Middle East over the Iraqi obsession. If a war breaks out it is likely to put whatever remains of the Islamic solidarity to a litmus test.

The profiling of Islam with a terrorist stigma after nine/eleven may have been somewhat diluted through the controversy raging in the western world over war in Iraq but if it comes to war it could rub on the wrong side. That Islam has no room for terrorism and it is wedded to peaceful coexistence of communities needs to be harped on.

Eid Mubarak to our readers and patrons!

Intimidating witnesses and lawyers

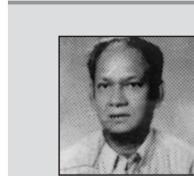
Time to think seriously about protection

THE threat by anonymous callers to the public prosecutor in Gopal Krishna Muhuri murder case, just a day after four accused were given death sentences and four others life imprisonment, brought into focus the risk lawyers face in the discharge of their professional duties. Furthermore, the widow of late Principal Muhuri, who welcomed the verdict and thought justice has been done, said that she wanted protection for herself as well as for her children. While appreciating the disposal of one of the most sensational murder cases within a relatively short period with most culprits brought to justice we urge the authorities concerned to provide security for those who have remained vulnerable.

We would like to know -- did the investigative officers try to find out the reasons why some of the witnesses turned 'volte face', as it appears from newspaper reports on the case? Did the thought of providing the witnesses with enough security ever cross their minds?

In general terms, we all know that potential witnesses in criminal cases, not to mention the sensational ones, are put under pressure and intimidation by culpable parties or interested quarters to withhold information or retract statements given earlier. We have seen in the past how perpetrators of serious crime went scot-free -- thanks to lack of evidence or flawed prosecution. In some cases, intimidating the witnesses would do the trick. Sometimes the police either simply failed to convince them to give witness or provide them with enough protection to come forward. In the present case, we would like to see the family members of the murder victim and their lawyers feel protected.

Iraq crisis: Turkish perspective and beyond



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

WITH the State of the Union Message of President George W Bush the crisis surrounding Iraq, which is nearly a year old, has taken a new turn. It is not yet certain if we can see the end of the tunnel.

The crisis can be traced back to the US Presidential elections a little over two years ago. An unusual Presidential election took place which pitted Republican George W Bush against Democrat Al Gore. Al Gore obtained a majority of votes but lost in the count of delegate votes. Eyes of the entire US population and indeed of the whole were fixed on the elections in Florida, where the Governor was Jeb Bush, brother of the Presidential candidate. The Presidential election left a bad taste in the mouth. For once US President elections was flawed the exporter of transparent elections worldwide was in deep trouble.

President George W Bush made an inauspicious start and the US public did not show any particular warmth to their new President. Then the earth shaking event took place on 11 September 2001. As the whole world watched in awe the Twin Towers of Manhattan collapse literally like a house of cards. A large

part of Pentagon in Washington lay in ruins. The world entered a new ball game. For the first time in her history the US was hit from within and the blow was so massive that the whole world shook. The US and with it the world is trying to come to terms with this cataclysmic event.

The US fell from its mighty pedestal of the lone superpower of the planet. The US needed quickly a target to vent her rage. Mercifully the target was Afghanistan, where a Taliban regime, which was the most despised by the entire world was propped up by the dictatorship in

wide crisis, the end of which is not in sight. Saddam has proved himself pretty durable having lasted more than three decades in the slippery politics of the Middle East. Iraq is the second largest holder of oil reserve after Saudi Arabia. Interesting point to note is that all the advisers surrounding President Bush are oilmen like Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. We in Bangladesh recall frequent visits of Cheney in the late nineties in connection with the oil and gas company Haliburton, which he represented.

That Israel had a hand in the

President Bush has organized a coalition against Iraq, who foolishly had invaded tiny Kuwait. President Bush fully utilised the world outrage and Saudi Arabia and Turkey, two key neighbours of Iraq became willing partners. After the defeat of Iraq draconian sanctions were imposed through the Security Council of the UN and those sanctions are still in place. Iraq has undergone the trauma of the sanctions regime as best as she could.

During the current crisis things have not gone the way they did a decade ago. I have just had a long

blow to Iraq by cutting oil supplies through their pipelines.

In her search for allies and friends, never the mighty superpower has appeared on the world stage so friendless. She is left with Britain and her protégé Israel. Within the Security Council barring the British vote she is unable to count on any other permanent member, namely France, Russia and China. Among the non-permanent members Germany is a vocal opponent to US plans to invade Iraq. Indeed a pattern is discernible and that is the desire for

Shia, who have affinity with Iran.

The British interest is of course her traditional role in the region, where she has been a major player. It is not clear, however, why Britain has been willing to face international derision by sticking it out with their American allies. At this moment of grave crisis the presence of Britain by her side must be a matter of profound satisfaction for the US. Through her media Britain is offering the US vocal support. She has joined forces on land, in the sea and the air in a bid to cow Saddam. As the war preparation continue unabated, the "inspectors" led by Hans Blix and El Baradei scour Iraq. Their reports if anything have added to the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the entire drama. And now comes the tragic news of the fiery death of seven astronauts 16 minutes before their fiery entry into earth's orbit. This terrible news could not have come at a worse moment for President Bush burdened with all the cares tormenting him.

The question that is repeatedly asked is: will there be a war in Iraq? And more importantly, after the war what? Speculation is rife that Saddam should just decide to vanish. And the big players should just take the booty and live happily ever after. Yet by threatening Saddam and bringing death and destruction on the hapless Iraqis, the lingering question will continue to haunt the world -- is the world a safer place than before 11 September 2001? On that day our planet entered a new era and discovered to its horror that there was no more a controlling hand.

Arshad-uz-Zaman is a former Ambassador.

THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

The question that is repeatedly asked is: will there be a war in Iraq? And more importantly, after the war what? Speculation is rife that Saddam should just decide to vanish. And the big players should just take the booty and live happily ever after. Yet by threatening Saddam and bringing death and destruction on the hapless Iraqis, the lingering question will continue to haunt the world -- is the world a safer place than before 11 September 2001? On that day our planet entered a new era and discovered to its horror that there was no more a controlling hand.

Pakistan.

Afghanistan proved to be a soft target. Pakistan, which had launched the Taliban found US old alliance too comfortable to miss. The US rained death and destruction on Afghanistan and Taliban which had come to be the synonym of all that is retrograde disappeared 'for ever.'

The US needed a new target. That one became Iraq. It is not very clear why of all places Iraq was selected as the next target. It is true that President Saddam Hussein is not everybody's cup of tea. Yet by picking Saddam as the target President Bush has unleashed a world-

selection of Iraq is not too far fetched. In 1979 when I was Bangladesh Ambassador in Cairo, Camp David Peace Treaty was signed between Egypt and Israel and Egypt opted to bury the hatchet with her longtime foe Israel. Israel has longtime ambition to dominate the Middle East and after Egypt Iraq appeared to be the likely adversary. Iraq had been thoroughly mauled by the father of President Bush, ten years ago and Iraq was trisected. Although Iraq was virtually brought to her knees Saddam remained defiant. US President Bush planned a repeat of what his father did.

We may recall that a decade ago

stay in Turkey and witnessed the crisis unfold. The US administration has been sending top leaders to cajole Turkey into accepting the use of their bases to bomb Iraq. In other words the US had done every kind of arm twisting to drag Turkey into war against a longtime friend. The US has played the Kurdish card in Northern Iraq, which for a Turk is dragging a red herring. Turkey has countered by declaring that she would not countenance such development with equanimity. The US relations with Saudi Arabia has reached all time low, whereas a decade ago Saudi Arabia along with Turkey had administered a severe

supremacy of the US on the one side and Western Europe's growing power led by France and Germany on the other. In this battle of will events surrounding Iraq appear more like a show.

The threat to the physical existence of Iraq within its present borders is real enough. As it is, Iraq stands trisected with a tenuous control over her vast oil reserves. Most of the oil is located in Kerkuk, in northern Iraq, inhabited by Turkmen's, belonging to the same ethnic variety as the Turks. Turkmen also are laying claim to this oil wealth. Southern part of Iraq, little talked about, is inhabited by

Push-in and pushback: Who is playing the game?

SYED NOOR HOSSAIN

THE old game in cross border politics between Bangladesh and India has started again. Believing, rightly or wrongly that they are illegal Bangladesh immigrants, India is resorting to the old tactic of pushing them into Bangladesh. In response, Bangladesh seems to tell India, if you try to push in hundreds of innocent people across the border, we can push them back. Forgetting the time old values of compassion towards the poor, the two neighbours are just treating them like animals, many of who often remain sandwiched in the no man's land. And the game goes on between supposedly the two friendliest neighbours in the SAARC family.

Good news hardly comes out of our region. As a Bangladesh diplomat for long thirty-three years before my recent retirement, I considered this the most frustrating experience. Excepting for some occasional good things emanating from our region, the SAARC countries largely owe their notoriety through negative news -- natural calamities, riots, border clashes, possibility of catastrophic nuclear war, terrorism, and so on and so forth. Cannot we do better?

Compared to its neighbours, India is a vast and powerful country. No question about that. But it needs to change its mentality and bullying tactics. If the Americans today (I mean the US administration) are considered the bully of the world, India is perceived by its neighbours as the regional bully. But their way of handling India is also wrong. The only good thing that has happened in a negative way is the balance of terror established between the two perennial rivals, India and Pakistan, by their being in possession of nuclear weapons. I don't believe that the politicians and military leaders in the two countries are

such idiots as to engage in a full-scale war.

I believe the leaders in the Sub-Continent have kept on making mistakes since the independence from the British in 1947. India went the Gandhian way of traditionalism and embraced communist Moscow for economic inspirations. I wish they had gone the way the Bengali leadership in the Congress, before the advent of Gandhi, cherished the advent of Gandhi, cherished the liberal western democracy and a modern society. If India had done that it would have been far ahead of Korea and China today. Pakistan, on its part, missed all the opportunities. The ambitious Generals and the feudal lords, who had identical interests, intended to grab political power and lead the country to stagnation and turmoil. Pakistan miserably failed to take advantage of its pro-Western policy and lead the country to fast economic development.

Well, that is history. But what is wrong between Bangladesh and India? Bangladesh has no major bilateral problems like Kashmir. It owes its history to the friendly cooperation with and assistance from India. The country gives billions of dollars to India by way of trade, which is miserably lop-sided in favour of India. As a bigger and much powerful economy India has done little to bring the trade balance to a reasonable level. In the SAPTA framework many items that appear under tariff concession are useless for Bangladesh, because it cannot export them. At the same time, our homework in the Ministries is rather poor to match the competence of the Indian officials during negotiations.

I recall back in 1995, when I was Director General (America and Pacific), the then Canadian High Commissioner mused and asked me, why can't your relations with USA? He told that the Canadians, instead of challenging USA politically or

militarily, had decided to solve all bilateral problems, including water sharing of the common rivers. They focused on challenging USA in bilateral trade. The Canadians are proud that they easily flooded the US market with the Canadian goods and the two-way bilateral trade now amounts to US Dollar one billion a day. Bangladesh cannot prosper by exporting labour. No country has ever done so. We are losing our trained people very cheaply to sustain the economies of other countries. We have miserably failed to generate confidence among the investors, both domestic and foreign.

I brought the above in the context of push-in and push-back. The Indians, having marginally more per capita income than Bangladesh, tend to think they are richer than Bangladesh and, therefore, the poor Bangladeshis have no alternative but to seek employment in India. So they seem to believe in their government's propaganda, whenever it suits them, that there are hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshis infiltrated into India for a living. In the Indian eyes any one speaking Bangla, and more particularly if he is a Muslim, becomes a Bangladeshi. Secondly, even if they were of Bangladeshi origin, the Indians don't take into account when they might have gone to India.

As the Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta in the 1990s I had a tough time facing the reports on Bangladesh infiltration. The BNP government was then in power in Bangladesh. So every day there was the news of push-in and push-back. On top of that they were blaming Bangladesh for ULFA activities.

The Indian journalists argued with me that Bangladesh had population explosion and economic stagnation and therefore the infiltration was occurring. I had to work

very hard to refute them. I argued with the facts and figures from the World Development Report of the last twenty years and explained that Bangladesh had a success story in population control and as a matter of fact, if the trend continued, after ten years or so the growth rate of population in Bangladesh would be much lower than that in India. Secondly, I also argued that the Indians earning a few dollars more than the Bangladeshis did not make them any richer than us. We are all damn poor and should be ashamed of our failure to do better. Having been frustrated by the daily reports of alleged Bangladeshi infiltration into India, I decided to meet the Indian media face to face and invited them to a press conference. I read out a prepared text explaining our stand on all the prickly issues. I mentioned in particular that just because India had far more powerful information and propaganda machinery and the Bangladesh voice was feeble and drowned, it didn't make the Indian case any stronger. My meeting with the press made headline news in all the Indian papers, particularly those published from West Bengal. It also provoked a number of editorial comments and opinions, both for and against, in the largest Bengali daily, The Ananda Bazar Patrika. By and large, the Indian media towed their government's line but I got at least some converts.

The point is why are the issues like infiltration, etc., are played up through the media to the detriment of the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India? It is not in the long-term interest of the Indian government. So why take on Bangladesh? Who else is your friend in the region?

The most important thing is the need for quiet diplomacy. By taking recourse to the media to gain cheap publicity on the alleged Bangladeshi infiltration, India is spoiling the recent independent foreign policy initiatives by Bangladesh as manifest by the visit of president Musharraf to Bangladesh in June last year, Bangladesh prime minister's visit to Myanmar, Thailand and China, particularly its defence cooperation with China. There need be no suspicion that this policy initiatives are at the expense of others but clearly in the enlightened self national interest of Bangladesh. In recent times India has entered into similar defence cooperation agreement with the United States.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan during his meeting with the Indian leaders should make it clear in unambiguous terms that Bangladesh treats India as a tested and valued friend and a neighbour regardless of small irritants of some unresolved bilateral issues, and the

chance to settle the problem amicably. This seems to be an issue which the uniformed personnel on the two sides of the border cannot resolve. It is good that the Indian Foreign Minister invited the Bangladesh counterpart for talks and the Bangladesh Foreign Minister should visit India sooner than later. Both sides should keep the press briefed in a positive manner without being dramatic to score points and impress their respective constituencies. Secondly, it is imperative for India to see that Bangladesh can march hand in hand with India in the path of economic progress and prosperity. A poor Bangladesh and a rich India will be disastrous for India in the long run. India has world-class business community and they can invest in Bangladesh taking advantage of cheap labour and a big market. They can even export to India from Bangladesh.

Thirdly, India should not make public statements against Bangladesh on sensitive issues, even if the Bangladesh leadership provokes it. It should not forget that Bangladesh is the closest neighbour and friend and that India should do everything to demonstrate its long and mature democracy for Bangladesh to emulate. Despite the momentary memory lapse of our political leaders at times that the whole basis of Bangladesh is rooted in secularism and freedom of religion, Bangladesh is still the model of religious tolerance in South Asia and has remained the oasis of religious harmony in the whole region.

Finally, India should not adopt the policy of going alone, however large and powerful it may think it is. It should project SAARC in the forefront in every respect. I should strongly suggest that at least in the cultural arena, India should take the leadership to project the SAARC or South Asian culture as a whole, as the ASEANs have been doing. Instead of six-month long India

Festival, it should be the SAARC Festival. The addition of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives will make it so much more exciting. India should have nothing to lose or fear from it.

As for Bangladesh, the leaders must stop India-baiting at all costs. While we must defend our territorial integrity with blood if it comes to that, the leaders should not spread phobia that India is going to jeopardize our sovereignty and thus get political mileage out of it. They should rather ensure that we beat India by being smarter on the economic front and sell enough of our goods. Why can't we be like the Canadians and take economic advantage out of the next-door big guy?

Speaking about the brighter side of Bangladesh-India relations, we must not forget our achievements, viz., the Indian assistance during the Bangladesh liberation war, the quick withdrawal of the Indian army from Bangladesh, the implementation of the Tin Bigha accord, the Ganges Water Treaty and the Peace Treaty in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, to name a few. In all these cases both the governments showed considerable maturity and mutual concessions.

In conclusion, let me say this. The SAARC countries must look ahead with optimism and build up harmonious relations. The leaders must be bold enough to amend the SAARC Charter and include all bilateral issues in the SAARC agenda. They should look at Europe and see what they have done. Even the ASEANs are doing fine. How long will it take us to think in terms of SAARC and forget the past animosities?

Syed Noor Hossain is the former ambassador of Bangladesh to Sweden and Brazil.

FM's forthcoming India visit

ABDUL HANNAN

WITH the sober, sage and serious elder statesman of Indian politics, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee now, on the eve of the forthcoming visit of Foreign Minister Morshed Khan to Delhi, joining the fray of recent strident Indian accusations of alleged Bangladesh link with Pakistan intelligence agency ISI in harbouring anti-Indian terrorists, all hopes, if there be any, out of the visit of a thaw in the bitter and sour relation between the two countries may well have dashed to pieces. The foreign minister, contrary to his stated expectation of discussing bilateral, regional and Middle East questions had better prepare to face tough talking apparently on the

single Indian agenda of alleged anti-Indian terrorism and illegal immigration by Bangladesh during his meeting with his counterpart Yashwant Sinha in Delhi.

Since November last, senior Indian cabinet ministers including Deputy Prime Minister L K Advani, Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha, defence minister George Fernandes, the revered former West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu as well as Chief Minister of Tripura, Governor of Assam and the Indian army chief General Padmanavan have been leveling various unsubstantiated charges against Bangladesh of providing safe haven to al Qaeda fugitives; shelter, sanctuary and training to insurgents from north-eastern Indian states and harbouring ISI trained terrorists to

carry out terrorism into India. On top of it, Advani alleged that 20 million Bangladeshi and Pakistani illegal residents in India would soon be thrown out. The threat was followed by the recent attempted push-ins. The government vehemently denied the allegations as baseless and unfounded.

While some dismissed it as a pressure tactics and expression of dissatisfaction with Bangladesh for not supplying gas to India, others tried to ascribe this anti-Bangladesh propaganda as a strategy to forge support in victory by the Hindu nationalist BJP alliance dominated by Sangh Parivar in the next general election, bolstered by the electoral victory by the militant Hindu chief minister Narendra Modi in Gujarat, while many attributed it to the expression of displeasure at some

recent independent foreign policy initiatives by Bangladesh as manifest by the visit of president Musharraf to Bangladesh in June last year, Bangladesh prime minister's visit to Myanmar, Thailand and China, particularly its defence cooperation with China. There need be no suspicion that this policy initiatives are at the expense of others but clearly in the enlightened self national interest of Bangladesh. In recent times India has entered into similar defence cooperation agreement with the United States.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan during his meeting with the Indian leaders should make it clear in unambiguous terms that Bangladesh treats India as a tested and valued friend and a neighbour regardless of small irritants of some unresolved bilateral issues, and the

suspicions are groundless. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said that Bangladesh believes in peaceful resolution of all bilateral and international issues. Unless we are out of our minds and sense of gratitude, we cannot join forces with Pakistan, a failed state by all definitions with a shameful record of economic exploitation, ruthless repression, atrocity and genocide in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, and choose in its favour to cause harm to India which came to our rescue at great cost morally, materially and physically at the hour of our dire need of survival. We all know that we will never ever serve our national interest by serving the cause of Pakistan against India. The foreign minister should reiterate that we do not have any knowledge of any anti-Indian terrorist camps in

Bangladesh, and if India has any such intelligence or evidence to corroborate the charge, Bangladesh would only be too willing to cooperate with India to wipe out such activities.

Echoing the recent voices of reason and decency by IK Gujral, the former prime minister of India, Muchkund Dubey, the former foreign secretary of India and the noted columnist Kuldip Nayar, I wish to conclude by saying that public statements of scurrilous allegations against Bangladesh by Indian leaders hurt the sensitivities of Bangladesh and are not at all helpful and conducive to the promotion of Indian interests or good neighbourly relations.

Abdul Hannan is a former press counselor, Bangladesh UN Mission in New York.

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

In memory of a beloved friend-Tawfiq Aziz Khan

On this day our dear Tawfiq Bhai left us forever. Two years have passed since his sad demise, but still in the very heart of my heart I wait for a sweet humming along with his presence in our living room every night. After a good days work at his office (*The Daily Star*) Mr. Tawfiq Aziz Khan used to come and spend some time with his closest friend, my husband Iqbal Ansari Khan.

Witty, friendly, lively as they were, they were a great source of pleasure to many friends who used to come to our home to spend some time too. Now that the Cricket World Cup is going on I miss their presence so much that I dare not enter into the same room, where they used to watch World Cup 1999 after every evening. Cricket was a passion for Tawfiq Bhai and his commitment to his work is exemplary.

Often I wonder why some one who could have given so much for the family, for the society, for the nation has to leave early keeping his

talent and ability unused--leaving friends and dear ones to mourn for him. I only hope and pray that his immortal soul may rest in peace and tranquility; and we could remember him with fond memories as long as we live.

Munira Khan, Dhaka

"Money laundering"

This refers to the letter "Money laundering" (February 5). While endorsing the views of Mr. Enamul Huq, I would like to raise a few points which have occurred to my

mind after going through his letter.

Bangladesh Bank has removed the CEOs of three Banks with an embargo for two years imposed on them. How will Bangladesh Bank ensure that if they can manage to get jobs as CEOs in any other banks after two years, they will not be indulging with the same or similar type of clients? Banks are financial institutions dealing with public money as trustees. If any one is found to be guilty of playing with public money and exposing the bank to heavy financial losses, he should be barred from joining the

financial sector for good. Bangladesh Bank should have also taken action against the Board of Directors for sanctioning the loans exposing the Banks to such losses.

As I learnt from the letter of Mr. Huq, a few bank officers also lost their jobs 2/3 years ago. Didn't the CEOs of those banks know what was going on in their respective banks? I am surprised to learn that these officers were even denied their basic fundamental rights to defend themselves. Did the Central Bank ever question the role of the CEOs of those Banks?

For their involvement in money laundering, Bankers are being axed. But what about the *launderers* themselves? I do not remember having seen any of them being arrested or any legal action having been taken against them. By the time the Central Bank wakes up, they are out of the country. Funny isn't it?

Hasan Tarek, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Trawler capsizes

I just noticed a report on the back page of February 9 issue of *The Daily Star*

about 13 cows drowning when their trawler was hit by a launch, the *Coco-3*.

Purely out of idle curiosity, does the *Coco-3* have any relation to the *MV Coco*? Remember that one? Something like a hundred people died after the *MV Coco* and another launch collided? If I recall correctly there was supposed to be an enquiry after that accident.

Maybe *The Daily Star* can remind us who owned the *MV Coco* and what eventually happened with that enquiry.

Azad, Dhaka
Hopeless and help-

less

I was utterly shocked when I read the news of the daily *Prothom Alo* deputy editor being mugged and stabbed by a gang of eight muggers.

It tells us how helpless we are. May be the politicians won't realise how helpless the ordinary citizens are but if they don't realise it, then why do they ask for votes from the citizens during election time? If they cannot protect the citizens then there is no point asking for votes.
Minhaj Ahmed, Uttara, Dhaka