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'Fat tummied' police

On May 8, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman stated in his speech about the "Fat tummied" OCs of the police stations who fail to draw guns, walk, move or respond swiftly in times of crisis.

I would like to ask our Honourable Minister with due respect what he has to say about the law makers of our country who form fat tummies and become obese right after being elected? Sir when the topmost authorities show reluctance and are lazy to respond to our prob-

lems how can we expect that from the lower authorities?

Deploying Superintendents will not do the system any good, as the system believes in breaking the law and order not preserving it.

I would like to request Mr Minister to spread awareness in the parliament to be vigilant and they should make efforts to work unto the expectations of the citizens of the country for which they are elected. Once the shoot level is alert the root

level will automatically work with efficiency and loyalty.

**Khalid Rahman**  
Dhaka

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Of late the politics in power has come up with severe criticism of our police force. Barrister Moudud Ahmed opened his volley in a seminar dubbing the police force as patrons of criminals and the vocal Finance Minister singled out tummy bulging Officer in Charges as the roots of fall.

Criticism of this major law-enforcing agency is nothing new and not unfounded. But the present tide of unkind comments has something in novel. The critics are not traditional police bashers like opposition politicians, journalists or general public. They are the important ministers of the party in power. Naturally suspicion arises, are they in a mission to find out the scapegoat for the alleged failure of the govt in curbing the ever-increasing crime all over? The ministers are out in criticising an organ of the government very much in their control. Is it not an admission of failure to provide good governance, the party in power promised?

Law and order was one of the major sectors, BNP leadership vowed to improve. Even if we take the criticism as academic, vulgarity of referring some ones 'pot belly' as the reason of increase of crime does not express good taste. Anyone may refer to some ones height (including tall talks) as the reason of economic failure of the government. People in high office may please mind their language.

**Sonia, Uttara, Dhaka**



Tummy trouble

'Yield of discontent makes food security jittery'

This is in reference to the news 'Yield of discontent makes food security jittery' (May 6).

I disagree with whoever is states that wheat yields and productions are down this year. I am not sure from which source the information has been gathered, but most of the growers I spoke with confirmed that yields were higher in the Greater Rajshahi Region. In some area the production might be less but the overall yield is more than satisfactory.

**Craig A. Meisner**  
CIMMYT, Bangladesh

of our hearts to endure and withstand all these is the essence of Tagore's genius.

The spiritual side of Tagore's life is more fascinating. His was a life full of journeys towards a goal where only the spirit of man can venture. His deep yearnings to reach and feel God gave him a life full of dreams. His offerings and songs all were a garden where his dreams took shape. His life was much larger than his physical person. He scaled the universe, fathomed the unknown and explained them to us. He is an everlasting glowing genius who has crossed the barriers of time.

**Akbar Hussain**  
Toronto, Canada

25<sup>th</sup> Baishakh and Tagore

The very thought of 25<sup>th</sup> Baishakh is itself a promise to the future. Rabindranath Tagore was a visionary poet who had the audacity to challenge the ruthless passage of time.

The physical man can live beyond his life and Tagore is the pure embodiment of this truth. But the pain of losing power to see the future in physical terms is always there and Rabindranath understood this very well. His sighs and tears in 'Sonar Tari' is a proof of human fragility and promise both. The eternity and its mysterious ways of guiding our lives, the pain and pleasure of losing and gaining and the monumental strength

Reckless taxi drivers

When the taxis were first introduced in the city in limited numbers the drivers were sophisticated, gentle and professionally skilled.

Unfortunately with the influx in large number of taxis the scenario has completely changed.

The drivers of these taxis are getting reckless more day by day. Especially the drivers of Black Minicab are almost a menace of road discipline. Multiple number of accidents have taken place in the city involving these taxis every day. This is basically due to lack of accountability of these drivers while driving recklessly.

In most of the developed countries the first step towards controlling traffic is the limitation of speed on the road and severe penalty for

breaking the speed limit. Apparently no body bothers about these aspects, which is making life of the passengers using the vehicle as well as the pedestrian risky day by day. Will the authorities concerned please look into the problem?

**A.K. Khan, Dhaka**

Cantonment restriction

As usual, in a morning of April, this year, I started my journey in my father's car, which I was driving myself, from Mohammadpur to Uttara. Unfortunately one of the tires of my car got punctured. As I had limited time, instead of going to the repair shop, I fixed the extra tire myself and started for the journey again.

I was stopped at the Jahangir Gate of Dhaka Cantonment, and they did not let me in, because my sticker (Permission to pass through the cantonment) got expired. I explained that in fact I was sort of busy and did not notice that it got expired. I gave my identity and requested them to let me in, because one of the tires of my car got punctured and no other extra tire was left, and that if any other tire gets punctured on the way, then it might create a big problem for me, but they did not pay any heed to my request.

The fly-over at Moakhali will be helpful for every one, but what will happen if the fly-over gets out of order?

The Army has the right to maintain their privacy, but it would best

if the Cantonment were shifted out of the city and the citizens were allowed to use their city without any restriction.

**Nazrul Islam Rizvi**  
Teacher, Scholastica School, Dhaka

'Be fair in criticism'

Once again we find the brain-washed democracy and freedom lovers, coming out with soundbites and irrational points. Mahmood Elahi in his letter on 9<sup>th</sup> May, defends US action by saying it was in response to being attacked in peacetime on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

Al-Qaeda declared war on the US years before the attack took place. These attacks were an act of war, any independent military analyst will tell you that Al Qaeda followed the norms of war in their attacks, norms which Muslims are not obliged to follow.

The Twin Towers were a strategic and economic target, just like bridges and power stations were bombed by the US in other conflicts. The only point where Al Qaeda could be held to account, was their use of civilian aeroplanes.

During the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) the non-Muslims broke their own rules when dealing with the Muslims. Today the same is happening - the rules of war, especially POWs is not being followed by the US.

Mahmood Elahi and his like are spewing out the same propaganda the Arabs of Makkah did against the Muslims 1400 years ago. I have refuted many of Mahmood Elahi's previous false points, but as a true follower of democracy and freedom he continues his blind faith.

**Abu UK**

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After some silence Mahmood Elahi is back again supporting and justifying the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan (May 9). He probably considers us as a bunch of fools who will fall for the self-defence argument by the lone superpower. As a matter of fact eyes of the right wing hawks have been set on Iraq since the fall of Soviet Union. They had been planning to invade Iraq for a long time. The first Gulf War was the result of one such plan and Saddam Hussein foolishly fell for the trap. I am sure it was the defeat of Bush Sr. that caused the pause in implementation of the complete plan. The plan to invade Iraq resurfaced with the return of Bush Jr. in the White House.

The initial reason given to invade Iraq was to destroy WMD. When they were not able to fool the world opinion on WMD then it shifted to "liberating" the people of Iraq.

Funny thing is that it was the Western power who divided Iraq and created Kuwait due to oil discovery there, it was CIA who helped bring Saddam to power, it was the same Western powers who supplied the so-called WMD to Iraq and helped Iraq when it attacked Iran, and now the same Western power has occupied Iraq to "liberate" it. And they will not leave Iraq till the last drop of oil is drained out from the country.

**Irfan Ahmed, Dallas, USA**

Passport fees

We in the UAE are asked to pay a whopping fee of Dh 405.00 (taka 6400.00 appx) for an ordinary new passport whereas I believe it's more than double the government approved rate. We would like to know who has authorised the Bangladesh Embassy in the UAE to fleece the poor Bangladeshis in this style? It's also worth mentioning here that the Indian Embassy charges around Dh 30.00 and the Pakistan embassy Dh 150.00 respectively.

Will the Foreign Ministry please do something regarding the matter and bring some semblance of justice in the rates of passport fees in the UAE?

**Ahmad Kamal, UAE**

A Diplomat's letter answered

a) His Excellency David Carter in his letter (May 7) repeats the line about how the UK had waited "12 long years" for Iraq to disarm. As any interested student of the period should know, the truth is that the UN Weapons Inspectors had largely disarmed Iraq by 1993 at the latest. The inspection process was dragged out on one pretext or the other for another 10 years precisely because the US and its Israeli masterminds did not want sanctions against Iraq to be lifted, permitting the country to resume normal life. In fact it seems clear that the plan to invade and occupy Iraq was devised when it became apparent that the international community would no longer permit the sanctions regime to continue as it had lost all semblance of justification.

b) It is noteworthy that any mention of Iraq's WMD is conspicuously absent from the High Commissioner's letter even though it was supposedly the imminent threat which forced the Anglo-Americans to carry out their aggression.

c) It is simply absurd to say that Security Council resolutions 678 and 687 permitted the invasion of Iraq, showing once more that His Excellency has not bothered to read the text of these resolutions and has probably relied instead on media spin. If this were true the US would not have gone to such great lengths, using up enormous political capital, in the attempt to get a second resolution passed after 1441.

d) The formula advanced that the US-UK troops will "stay in Iraq not a day longer than they have to" may make the High Commissioner feel better but a moment's thought will show that it is so elastic as to be meaningless. How do these countries arrogate to themselves the right to even make such a statement? Who are they to decide how long the Iraqis have to put up with occupation?

e) Does the High Commissioner honestly believe that the use of cluster bombs, of depleted-uranium shells, of intense high level bombing of civilian targets, of vast numbers of cruise missiles, of targeted destruction of Iraq's infrastructure show that an attempt was made "to minimise casualties"?

f) Another example of this kind of inverted logic, blaming the victim for the actions of the victimisers, is provided by the letter's claim that "under Saddam 60 per cent of its people became reliant on food and other emergency aid from the international community."

Actually it was more like 100% and this was entirely due to the prolonged and unjustified sanctions which prevented Iraq from re-establishing normal economic life. Despite these crippling sanctions all accounts agree that the Saddam Hussein regime had made an impressive effort, based on self-reliance, to largely rebuild the country's infrastructure after the damage inflicted in the 1991 bombings. All these infrastructure of course has now once again been destroyed and this time the intention is that the rebuilding work is to be contracted out to American companies.

g) The High Commissioner refers to the Middle East Road Map as evidence of his country's sincerity. Strangely no one seems to know exactly what are the contents of the Road Map. After some searching I have learnt that one of the components is that Israel is required, by the end of May 2003, to accept in principle the concept of a viable Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Let us see if this critical requirement is indeed fulfilled.

**Rafiqullah Bhuyian**  
Maghbar, Dhaka

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The recent letter by the British High Commissioner to



War diplomacy

Bangladesh, David Carter, lacks the very balance and objectivity that he claims is absent from *The Daily Star's* coverage of the Iraq war. In his letter, Mr. Carter pitches one after another fabrication as he tries to justify his Government's involvement in a war deemed illegal by most of the world's leading experts on international law. Not surprisingly, Mr. Carter's letter makes no mention of Robin Cook, the respected Leader of the Commons, and Michael Jabez Foster, the parliamentary private secretary to Britain's Attorney General Peter Goldsmith, as well as a significant number of British ministers and diplomats who quit their respected positions to protest this war.

Mr. Carter alleges that Britain worked with 'full legality' in terms of Security Council resolution 1441. But when does engaging in war without a UN mandate qualify as 'legal'? Bangladeshis saw Mr. Tony Blair break one after another promise, when he assured people that his government would aim for a second resolution and override only one veto (i.e., Russia). Later Mr. Blair reneged on his promise of one veto and told people that Britain may override several vetoes but would still require the minimum nine Security Council member votes on a second resolution before engaging in war. The minimum nine votes would have not made this war legal but may have provided Blair with a moral victory. In the end, however, Mr. Blair's promises amounted to nothing.

To justify war under resolution 1441, much has been said about Iraq's much maligned 'weapons declaration'. As we all know, resolution 1441 was designed as a tougher inspection regime to provide one final opportunity for Iraq to disarm and comply with all previous UN resolutions, including resolutions 678 and 687. To ensure compliance, resolution 1441 required Iraq to perform two main tasks. The first task, listed in paragraph 3, was for Iraq to provide an accurate and complete declaration of its weapons program. The second task, listed in paragraph 5, was for Iraq to allow immediate and unimpeded access to any sites UN weapons inspectors wished to inspect, including presidential palaces. We all know that Iraq fully complied with its obligations under paragraph 5. However, doubts were expressed whether Iraq properly complied with paragraph 3. The Anglo-American position was that breach of paragraph 3 constituted breach of the entire resolution. Legal experts, on the other hand pointed to paragraph 4, which clearly stated that Iraq had to breach both paragraph 3 and paragraph 5 to be considered in breach of resolution 1441. But with Iraq currently under coalition occupation for over a month and still no trace of WMD, it now appears that Iraq's weapons declaration was accurate and complete from the start. Hence, Iraq had

complied with both paragraphs 3 and 5, which voids any argument for using resolution 1441 as a justification for this war. In addition, I fail to see how Iraq could breach previous U.N. resolutions again without first breaching 1441. If Britain were to invoke resolutions 678 and 687 to declare war against Iraq, why did it vote for resolution 1441?

Although it is now proven that Iraq's weapons declaration was accurate and complete, the same cannot be said for the evidence presented by British and Americans as justification for war. Much of Britain's dossier on Iraq's weapons program was proven to be plagiarised from the Internet. Similar questions arise about the authenticity of Colin Powell's presentation to the UN Security Council on February 6, 2003 and George W. Bush's description of Iraq's WMD in his State of the Union Address on January 28, 2003.

In his letter, Mr. Carter puts much emphasis on the brutality of Saddam Hussein's regime. Mr. Hussein was a brutal man, but stories of his brutality have been vastly exaggerated by the lies constantly pumped by the American and British government and media. Especially, the Americans have been so successful in their propaganda by mentioning 9/11 in the same breath as Iraq that a recent poll showed 44 per cent of Americans actually believe Saddam Hussein was behind the 9/11 attacks! In the end, Saddam didn't blow up Iraq's oil rigs, destroy roads and bridges to impede invading armies, or use poison gas on his people and blame it on coalition forces. Meanwhile, Mr. Carter can explain why coalition forces are killing unarmed Iraqi protesters in Falluja and Mosul, letting looters run amok, allowing Kurds to dispossess Arabs from their homes, and arresting Iraq's Shia leaders.

Finally, Mr. Carter does the folly of mentioning Blair's commitment to the 'Roadmap to peace' for solving the Middle East conflict. Anybody who has carefully studied this roadmap knows that there are so many triggers built into it that it would be easier to walk on water, than implement the roadmap in its entirety.

*The Daily Star* has done an excellent job portraying both sides of the argument and should never stop publishing anti-war letters and editorials until Iraq's occupation is over.

**Nipun Wasur Rahman**  
Washington, DC, USA

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The inaccuracy and distortion of facts in the letter of the British High Commissioner is stunning. His arguments in favour of going to war against Iraq even after the failure to find or invent weapons of mass destruction, the ostensible reason for waging war on Iraq, is sickening. His contention that the Security Council resolutions 678 and 1441

authorised war on Iraq is misleading. Why did then Britain and America unsuccessfully try for a second resolution? He has mentioned about the new found freedom for holding pilgrimage by the shi'ites at Karbala but has deliberately remained silent about the daily protest demonstrations by angry Iraqis against the presence of Anglo-American occupation forces. He attributes the sufferings of Iraqis to the misrule of Saddam and has ignored the oppressive impact of 12 years of most ruthless and pernicious UN sanctions denying Iraq of rightful gain of its own economic wealth. And to talk about Britain's economic and humanitarian assistance to war ravaged Iraq, is a mockery after having wreaked ruin, chaos and lawlessness and wantonly destroyed in merry abandon the infrastructure, homes, hospital, water, power and sanitation facilities in Iraq.

His unsubstantiated charge of lack of balance and objectivity in the editorials and commentaries in *The Daily Star* on the war, is abominably indiscreet and inappropriate. It is an irony that at last we have to unlearn afresh the much-vaunted Western standards of balance and objectivity in journalism. *The Daily Star* has established an enviable record of truth, honesty, fairness and fearless journalism in its coverage of the war. If *The Daily Star* was without balance and objectivity so was over two million milling demonstrating crowd in London protesting against an unjust war. If it was without balance and objectivity so was 230 rebel Labour MPs expressing concern and protest at unilateral application of military force against Iraq. If it was without balance and objectivity so was Robin Cook, former foreign secretary and leader of the of the House of Commons who resigned his cabinet post protesting against going to war. If it was without balance and objectivity, so was the deputy legal adviser of the British Foreign office who resigned on protest, if it was without balance and objectivity so was the vast majority of concerned international public opinion against the war.

The High Commissioner would also like us to believe that the only thing that was objective and balanced was the much trumpeted hollow and unfounded dossier of evidence about Iraq's WMD produced by his PM Tony Blair out of a research paper prepared by a student. He will also perhaps point out that what is balanced and objective is Tony Blair's bluff and bluster about a 'vital role' for the UN in post war Iraq, which is a far cry from the present Anglo-American political and administrative stranglehold over Iraq completely sidelining the UN. The High Commissioner's letter is a futile attempt to flirt with sanity about the war.

**Abdul Hannan**  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Arabian Nights



This is the story of an omnipotent king of the world who in the year 2003 A.D. waged a war against a country called Iraq, which is militarily and economically weaker than his own country. He created a series of make-believe arguments so as to rationalise his mass killing of innocent Iraqi civilians. His chief ally, once the greatest kingdom of the world, has backed up every action of his blindly. Both the countries conveniently ignored the million voices of protests in their respective nations and went ahead to fight a one-sided war that has been condemned by parliaments and governments, churches and mosques, international organisations and media alike. But, the most important World Body of Nations chose for itself the role of spectator.

The king fought a pre-emptive war, meaning it feared the small country Iraq, situated thousands of miles away, had enough WMD to pose a threat to the security of the 'greatest democracy' in the world. He also said the ruler of Iraq was a ruthless dictator who killed his own people and harboured terrorists. He fought the war to bring about a 'regime change' in Iraq and 'free' the Iraqis. He sure did 'free' them for once you are dead you are as good as 'free'.

Now there are other reasons as well, for example, this king's father had waged a similar but unsuccessful war in the Gulf some 13 years ago and it was the son's duty to finish what his father has started. But the most important reason is that Iraq is a supremely oil rich nation. The war is over and the Liberators of Iraq are now protecting their wealth, well sure some of their ancient artefacts have been stolen but then again that's not important is it? Not as long as the oil is in their guard!

**Farah Tasneem, One-mail**