

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.

Sensible thinking



Counting Royal loss

The initiative by the Bangladesh government is praiseworthy. The headcount of tigers (DS, July 29) in the Sundarbans (both Bangladesh and India) is a long-standing issue, which will be resolved if this decision is implemented. As the saying goes "together we can make it happen". Moreover, tiger is the national animal of both Bangladesh and India and is endangered in the wild.

This decision also has a scientific justification. By characterising the tiger population, for example population structure, size distribution, and sex ratio will help us to gain some understanding on the ecology of this population. These primary data will give insights into the population composition, percentage of the population that is reproductive, and the recruitment rate. From management perspective, the population structure will help in assessing the viability of the tigers. It will assist in determining the feasibility of a tiger conservation plan and related social and economic development plans.

The numbers of tigers in the Sundarbans has been 'static' as far as the government figures go, estimated between 350 and 450 for more than two decades. The question -- how many tigers are there in the Sundarbans has also been debated on several occasions in the national parliament and we, the citizens of Bangladesh, also want to know the answer. It is a pity that despite our limited resources to repay, several million dollars was taken as loans from multinational organisations for projects directed to collect basic biological resources information and develop management plans for the Sundarbans. But how much we have benefited is yet to be demonstrated.

Many of us will be happy to at least hope that one of the important issues of the tiger headcount in the Sundarbans will be resolved. How long will it take to get the answers will depend on the goodwill and priorities of the two neighbouring countries. The headcount will allow us to examine where our national animal stands in terms of its struggle for existence. Let us not forget that extinction is forever, once we lose our national animal we also lose our national pride.

S. M. A. Rashid
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Mujib Bahini led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's nephew Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni, as they opposed Tajuddin Ahmed's leadership and also General M.A.G. Osmany as the Chief of the Mukti Bahini. But that could not prevent him from going ahead with his plan. Finally on the 17th April 1971 Mujibnagar government was formed at Baidanath Tala, later renamed Mujibnagar.

When Tajuddin Ahmed came to know that Khondakar Mushtaq Ahmed who was the Foreign Minister was hatching a conspiracy against the Liberation war and the Mujibnagar government and also wanted to make a confederation with Pakistan, he was not allowed to go to New York to attend the UN General Assembly as a leader of the Bangladesh delegation. Thereby the conspiracy was nipped in the bud.

Tajuddin Ahmed and General M.A.G. Osmany were invited to attend a high level ministerial meeting held in New Delhi in the last week of November. At that meeting it was decided that if the war broke out between India and Pakistan, then only the Indian troops would go to Bangladesh and fight. But both Tajuddin Ahmed and General M.A.G. Osmany vehemently protested against it. Tajuddin Ahmed forced Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to change her decision by saying that, it was the people of Bangladesh who were fighting for independence and they only wanted India's help. So both the Mukti Bahinis and the Indian Army would fight against the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh.

Nobody knows what would have been the fate of the Liberation war and also Bangladesh if Tajuddin Ahmed had not taken those bold decisions.

Iqbal Ahmed
New Eskaton Road, Dhaka

Responsibilities and ministers

In parliamentary democracies ministers are responsible to the parliament and to the nation for all the deeds of their ministry -- good or bad. When a train accident happens or a plane is crashed the minister resigns taking full responsibilities.

The prime minister either accepts or rejects the resignation. These traditions are almost synonymous to parliamentary courtesies. Examples are plenty in almost all the countries where parliamentary form exists. Even in presidential form when the administrations fails keep up with the popular aspirations, cases of resignation taking responsibilities are not rare. But in our country perhaps we are making a tradition of irresponsibility. Home Ministers do not take responsibility of failure of maintaining law and order, Shipping Minister fails to respond in worst maritime disaster, Food Minister shakes of responsibilities of famine and so on. Failures of the government are ignored as inevitable. Parliament sans opposition has become the norm of the day. This is really not the true functioning of democracy in any meaningful term.

Acitizen, On e-mail

A freer Iraq?

I have gone through a letter by Mahmood Elahi published on Daily Star dated July 19. I disagree with him on the following points:

- ★ The Iraqi people will be the real beneficiary of Saddam..... ouster.
- ★ Iraq may be on the way to become a freer society.

I would like to explain my dis-

agreement on the first point. I believe everybody understands that the real beneficiary will be the US led coalition force, not the common Iraqis. Mr. Bush's main interest is oil not restructuring Iraq. So "the Iraqi people will be the real beneficiary" sounds like a cock and bull story. Virtually the White House will rule Iraq. Is it what freedom means? I have no hesitation in stating Iraq as a modern colony of America. It seems freedom is still a far cry for the Iraqis.

Fayed Ahmed, Shamoli, Dhaka

Hawkers and beggars at DU

Hawkers and beggars of various kinds are gradually growing in numbers on Dhaka University campus. The arts building and its surroundings are the main target of these groups. Sometimes lame beggars are seen on the upstairs of arts building. They use the teachers' elevator for this purpose. They even enter the classrooms during the class hours. It is disturbing for the teachers as well as students. On the other hand, though hawkers don't get into the arts building, their free movement gives the campus a market-like impression. Incidentally, there is a cigarette shop in front of the main gate of the arts building. The hawkers have good relations with the guards. And as an expression of intimacy the call each other *Mama* (uncle). The DU authorities occasionally take initiatives to drive away the hawkers and beggars, but mostly they remain silent. I hope the authorities will take immediate action about this troublesome matter.

Shamsul Alam Monir
Dept. of Public Administration, DU

Bizarre system at IBA (DU)!

I came to learn (from the Daily Star letter page) that there is no waiting list system in a prestigious institute like the IBA. Even if some students leave this institution, there is no scope for other students who are also capable of getting admitted. We believe that IBA is the most scrupulous institute in Bangladesh and perhaps the sharpest people are involved in running this institution.

Nevertheless, such a matter should be taken under consideration.

Aminul Islam
Suryasen Hall, Economics Department, DU

Improvement examinees

The National University in spite of repeated appeals (through formal applications and appeals published in the national dailies) has not yet allowed the improvement examinees of 1994 and 1995 to pick-up facility. But the improvement examinees of 1996 were allowed to pick-up facility upon representation made by some examinees of Dhaka College, Jagannath College, Titumir College and Eden College. The decision to give them such facility was taken in the 34th meeting of the academic council of the NU held on 3-4-2002. The improvement examinees of 1997 also got the facility to procure as per decision of the 44th meeting of the academic council held on 15-9-02. The improvement examination of 1997 was held in 2001 and the Academic Council of NU was considerate enough to apply the pick-up facility to all the improvement examinees of 1997, who were regular examinees of 1996, 1995, 1994 and 1993. The resolution of the 44th academic council's meeting did not categorically mention any particular year previous to 1997 to be eligible for the application to pick-up. The absence of the mention of any particular year previous to 1997 clearly implies that the regular examinees of any year previous to 1997 are entitled to the pick-up system. Any regular examinee of 1993 or 1994, who has appeared as an improvement examinee in 1994 or 1995 was also included. It can be mentioned here that the improvement examinees of 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997 -- all followed the same syllabus and system of examination under Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong University. Therefore, the facility of pick-up deserves to be uniformly applied to the improvement examinees of all these years, so there is no justification in depriving any examinees of these years. We are convinced that the Academic Council had no intention to exclude any of them deliberately; the apparent exclusion of the examinees of 1993, 1994 and 1995 might have been due to the absence of any representation by the examinees of the years concerned.

In this respect, the principals of all the honours level colleges had a vital role to play. It was not only their official responsibility but also a moral obligation to come to the aid of their students. They could have prepared lists of improvement examinees of these years of their respective colleges subject-wise and year-wise and then sent them to the NU for application of pick-up system. As far as we know there are nearly one hundred colleges under NU. If each college has at least five

improvement examinees, the total number of examinees of a particular year would come, more or less, to five hundred. The NU could not in that case neglect the issue if such a huge number of applications were formally submitted through proper channel of the colleges on their own initiative and the innocent examinees would not have to face any problem. I would therefore request the respected principals of all the honours level colleges to prepare lists of improvement examinees of 1994 and 1995 subject-wise and submit them to the NU authorities. The principals are the guardians of the students; they are expected to render this service to the students.

M. Sadeq
Chairman, Department of Management, Tejgaon College, Dhaka

Speedy trial tribunal and Bangabandhu murder case

I am thankful to the present government as they have taken drastic measures in order to prevent crime and also for the "speedy trial tribunal". I appreciate that the cases, which use to be under heaps of dust are now being brought to justice though we are unaware of their executions.

Late, but I think that government has somewhat realised, that anti-social acts cannot bring them votes nor will the citizens of Bangladesh will tolerate any such acts of violence for long. But, I would like to know what our law ministry is planning for a particular case, which was in proceedings during the past Awami League government. Why, not the killers of Bangabandhu, and his family are not yet brought to justice. When the recent government is capable maintaining law and order why they are delaying the verdict of this assassination, which has been the greatest spot on the history of our nation.

I demand as a citizen of a democratic country that these ruthless outlaws should be dragged in front of justice as soon as possible and given the punishment they deserve. This will not only set an example but also, as a nation will come out of the era of darkness, which engulfed us on the 15th of August 1975.

Khalid Rahman
Dhaka

North Korea got to be pragmatic

North Korea, billed as a "rouge state" by the USA, has now been under mountain of pressure of the international world for its atomic project that is being run to generate plutonium important chemical

Madhupur Garos, justice denied

I am writing in support of the letter written by Shah Mushtaq Ahmed regarding the Madhupur Garo people of Bangladesh.

I feel that your government is at a critical "crossroads" regarding decisions that need to be made regarding treatment of the Garo people. The forestland in Madhupur is truly a wonderful resource to be preserved. Equally important are the Garo people. They are a unique historical and cultural treasure.

As an American citizen, I know that our country did not recognise our Native American Indians as a cultural asset to be preserved until it was too late. For generations, most Americans have felt the shame and guilt associated with the poor treatment of our native tribes in the early years of our country's history. I hope you will learn from our mistakes before it's too late and will avoid such a curse. As your government establishes the guidelines and regulations for this new EcoPark, please make assurances that the Garos will be

able to conduct their lives exactly as they have done for so many earlier generations: caring for the forest, cultivating their rice and vegetables, and caring for their animals. Surely they must be allowed to freely visit between the various tribal villages both within and outside the fenced EcoPark. I pray that you consider every aspect of the traditional Garo lifestyle as you make the decisions that must be determined to establish this new park.

I have stayed in Garo villages several times while living in Bangladesh and have been very touched by their culture, values and traditions. Bangladesh is a beautiful country with beautiful people, surely someday you will become a tourist destination. The Garo communities will be a part of your country's heritage that you will want to share with others from around the world.

Dr. David Fussell
A/ISD, Baridhara, Dhaka



Nowhere to go

really solid, at least capable of give some counter response which Iraq deprived of. That is why, during the time of attacking Iraq, we noticed, the USA played a softer tone regarding North Korea's threat of disobeying international atomic non-proliferation accord which was quite unusual to America's war philosophy. International war strategists found some interesting ingredients in this policy of US. They expressed their suspicion by having said "it proves that North Korea has had strong foundation of atomic ingredients and that, it would be immature and risky to fall on North Korea before they get a clear picture of

The tension the North Korean leaders have stirred up in this region is perilous. After Iraq war, Asian economy has observed slowdown, so further war could turn it into a total disarray. Asian economy is completely intertwined with that of the USA and so, any Iraq style solution of North Korea problem would definitely dash the Asian economy.

Sulav Barua

Criminal Justice & Criminology Middlesex university, London, UK

Thanks to Mr. Ron Chepesiuk

Thanks for the excellent perception and writing on "The war on terrorism and the western media" published on 25th July, Daily Star.

When many Americans and their media are blindly devoted to Bush foreign policy and the invasion of Iraq, it was really unexpected and very inspiring to see such an analytical views, that are completely exceptional and praiseworthy, from an American. I have read the article with deep attention but failed to figure out the analysis of media remour that 9/11 Twin Tower attack was actually done by Jewish Zionist and they did this to ensnare the Muslim world. It is clear from your argument that when the US embassy in Kenya and Tanzania (1998) and FBI building in Oklahoma city (1995) was attacked, then no battle was started against terrorism but after the 9/11 attacks, Bush started fight against Afghanistan and Iraq, even though till now no link is found between Saddam and Al-Qaeda.

I hope in near future he will analyse this media remour more elaborately.

Md. Zillur Rahaman
Bangabandhu Hall, DU

Bangladesh cricket

Our cricket team has again suffered an innings defeat by the mighty Australian side. I wonder how much our cricketers have learned from their past-mistakes. Appointing Dave Whatmore as a coach, is definitely a positive sign for the future of our cricket but one thing that our cricketers need to do is to change their attitude towards the game.

No matter whoever scores a century or a half-century, no matter whoever takes 5 wickets in a match, I think no compliments should be given to them until and unless these individual performances lead up to team victory. On the other hand, those who make silly mistakes in the field should not be excused because they should know that they are letting their country down and these types of mistakes cannot be repeated over and over again.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

Reduction of Dhaka-Sylhet train fare

Our Communication Minister, Barrister Nazmul Huda assured immediate reduction of Dhaka-Sylhet Train fare to cope with that of Dhaka-Chittagong. But we are extremely sorry to note that there

has not been any such implementation of his declaration. Rather, the sufferings of the passengers of Dhaka-Sylhet train has been increased and the passenger are paying more for their tickets as some unscrupulous Station Masters and the Booking Clerks are manipulating the whole matter.

We know not what action has been taken against such licenced dacoits. Our minister promised the Sylheti passengers to introduce a super Delux train in the Dhaka-Sylhet route and he assured people of establishing a magnetic train in the Dhaka-Chittagong route. We don't know when will all these happen?

We request the mister to kindly reduce the train fare in Dhaka-Sylhet route and thus implement his assurance one by one.

Peerzada syed Rofiqul Hussain
Hiala Shaheb Bari, Habigonj

Chilli-hot terrorist-flavoured pizza?

American president says his country is willing to do absolutely anything to win this great war against terrorism and make the American people feel safe and secured. The only problem is, it seems that American people are being threatened more by their own politicians than the terrorists! How else do you explain the most grotesque and most greedy idea of Pentagon running a "trading market" on terrorism (a type of business where people can bet on the most likely time and place of a terrorist attack)? Those "intelligent" people who came up with such ideas are in fact the biggest threat to America. It is sad to see American people's hard earned money is being used to pay ridiculous amount of wages for these people who are hell-bent on terrorising none other than the American citizen themselves.

I guess it is going to be the next big thing for the Americans to come home after a hard day's work, switch on the 'telly' to get the latest update and then learn that everyone around the country are betting that there going to be a terrorist attack just near your home. And in such an event, what exactly do you do? Do you get a heart attack fearing for the lives of your loved ones, or do you go to the nearest betting shop and bet couple of thousand dollars? And if the "unfortunate" event of a terrorist attack do not take place, how would you feel? Would you feel happy to see your seven years old girl, your little angel alive; or would you bang your head on the wall with anger because the terrorists didn't attack and you have just lost thousands of dollars?

Terrorism is a hot business nowadays and it wouldn't be long before you see some Terrorism Insurance Co., Terrorism Motels, Chilli-hot Terrorist-flavoured Pizza, Chocolate-Terrorism Cookies and perhaps even The National Bank of Terrorism; providing Terrorist-loan, Terrorist-mortgage, Terrorist-Credit Card etc!

American people may be fighting this war against terrorism at huge costs to themselves, unfortunately, it is their politicians who are winning.

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

A glance of history

In 1994/95 BBC Bengali service broadcast a programme on the War of Liberation, Bangladesh, 1971 and India's role. Two of former India's bureaucrats D.P. Dhar and late P.N. Haksar were among those persons who participated in it. Let me tell what they had said about Tajuddin Ahmed, the first Prime Minister of Bangladesh in that programme.

Tajuddin Ahmed played a major

role and showed his foresightedness during the Liberation War in 1971. Tajuddin Ahmed understood very well that it was very difficult to achieve independence through guerrilla war only for instance the people of Palestine had been fighting since 1948 for their independence but yet to get it. So on the 1st April he decided to form a government with the Members of Parliament who were elected in the 1970 elections. At first he faced stiff resistance from the members of the

Card-phone sufferings



Calling for aid!

In Dhaka we have only a few card-phone booths. Unfortunately most of them are out of order. There are two types of phone-booths in the city. In the old ones you have to try many times before you know that it is out of order. Thank god, in the new phone-booths you do not face such problem.

In the Kamalapur railway station there are ten card-phone booths. Among them six are old and four are new. Among the six old booths, at least four are completely dead and the other two are half-dead. Three of the new phone booths are also out of order. No point in mentioning the condition inside the phone-booths. You can guess that. The condition of BRTC bus terminal phone-booths are the same. We, the card-phone users, are requesting the authority concerned to take necessary steps to make the phone-booths useable.

Mithun Das
Dhaka