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Victim of doctors' indifference?

How many of us would die due to apparent negligence, wrong treatment and indifference on the part of our doctors?

Nearly three years ago Tawfique Aziz Khan, a renowned journalist of our country died, partly due to wrong diagnosis. He was treated for tuberculosis for three months whereas he was suffering from cancer which was later diagnosed in Kolkata. Now his wife Suraiya Begum (Bijlee), an Associate Professor in the Department of Information Science and Library Management died apparently due to lack of timely and appropriate treatment at PG Hospital.

Suraiya who was under treatment of a renowned cardiologist for her blood pressure, went to him while she was having acute pain in her chest. She was admitted to Jabel-E-Noor clinic for one night and then shifted to PG Hospital. But she was kept in a cabin where there was no facilities to give appropriate treatment to a heart patient although there was CCU in the Hospital. I still cannot understand why she was not kept in the CCU. Also a question comes to my mind why she was not immediately taken and admitted to a heart hospital like Suhrawardy, Heart Foundation or Shikder where she could have received intensive care? Two sons of Suraiya were absolutely nervous, out of their mind to decide what to do, and completely depended on the decision of the doctor, they thought he would know best.

When I went to the hospital I found her in a hot, dark cabin under oxygen and a monitoring machine. She was in a state of delirium, breathing and sweating heavily. Two doctors came and after checking told that her condition was normal and they should let her sleep. But hardly a couple of minutes passed, she seemed to be collapsing, her heart was arrested. Doctors came and started to give artificial respiration by hand and it went on for an hour or more. Then Suraiya's doctor arrived and arranged to shift her to CCU. I don't know why the hospital doctors could not take her there earlier?

People come to hospital to get treatment not to die without getting proper treatment.

As we all know here in Bangladesh doctors have no accountability to the patients or others who pay for their service to the patients. Everybody is afraid to take any action against doctor's negligence or wrong treatment thinking that other doctors would be offended, and seek consolation thinking that he or she was destined to die in that way!

But in my opinion, and I know everybody would agree with me that doctors should be made accountable for the patients' treatment. Some day some of their near and dear ones may fall a victim of such indifference or negligence.

With Suraiya's departure from the world we lost an expert on Library Management, a good teacher and a good social worker. When our doctors would start feeling that life is precious and they are here to save it?

Munira Khan
Dhaka

Too poor to ...

I am writing in response to Ms

Keep it in perspective



Leaping forward

The Bangladesh cricket team deserves the plaudits for their performances in the Test series against Australia. They deserve loving, encouraging pats on their hopefully strong backs. They deserve to be commended. They deserve to be applauded even. But please, do not let all this extend to hero-worship. Since being granted Test status in 2000, and perhaps even before that, it is hard to remember a better phase of good, consistent cricket from our self-proclaimed Tigers. I personally put our performances in the two defeats Down Under over our victory against Pakistan in that quite forgettable match at Wantage Road four years ago. Wantage Road, 1999 was forgettable. Darwin and Cairns, 2003 are indispensable. In winning against Pakistan we showed that like all other dogs, we too would have our day. But against Australia, despite losing, we showed that unlike many other dogs, we could fight and scrap and bite and scuffle till the very end. This is the indispensable lesson we have learnt which we cannot forget if our cricket is to progress. And in a way, it is better that we have learnt these lessons in defeat rather than victory.

It is absolutely pointless to compare our performances with those of other nations against the world champions and spin fantasies like we were better than Pakistan and West Indies. To imagine them beside us would only serve to hamper our drive towards catching up with them where they really are, which is a long way in front. That is why we should assess our performance in of itself. What have we proved to sympathisers like Steve Waugh, critics like David Hookes and most importantly, to ourselves? We proved we can bat freely and yet keep wickets in hand on the first day at Cairns. We proved we can bowl and field efficiently if not spectacularly on the first day at

Darwin. We proved we have a bowler coming through who deserves the respect of the opposition in Mashrafe. And a batsman bestowed with the guts to stand up to big, mean fast bowlers at the top of the order in Hannan Sarkar. And that together as a unit, we can be competitive although not yet dominant. The players and Dav Whatmore, the coach, really looked determined to turn things around. And although completing the turn may take a long time, at least the indicator light is flashing the right way.

And despite the commendable performances against Australia, they must have only one thing on their minds. Improve. Improve further. You can never stop improving. Trying to find the same level of performance against Pakistan next month will only serve to make you miss it and fall on the wrong side. Ask yourselves why 150/1 had to turn to 295 all out in the first inning of the second Test. Ask yourselves why you lost six wickets in the first session of the last day of play in the series. Mashrafe must look into why 3-34 off 17 overs had to turn into 3-74 off 22 overs in the first Test. Hannan must regret not being able to turn one of his magnificent fifties in the second Test into a heroic hundred. And Ashraf, our little jewel, must learn to cultivate some caution with his breathtaking inborn aggression. The importance of self-criticism must never be underestimated. At this stage of infancy, every step must be treated as a platform for jumping on to the next step, not as a destination. And our cricketers will only be able to do that if we let them and make them. So praise them. Applaud them. Love them.

Shayan Khan
Dhaka

Sinha's letter about the difficulties her brother faced while he applied for a French VISA (Too poor to go to Paris, Daily Star, 07 Aug 03). She sounded impractical and carried away with the flux of "patriotism".

Yes, we are too poor to go anywhere, but this poverty is not necessarily the poverty in terms of monetary wealth, but we are poor in many

other socio-political aspects. A country is represented by its leaders, who in turn represent its people. From that standpoint, we have to admit that our representation in front of the world is anything but impressive.

We are famous for stealing aid meant for the poor, our administrative branches are famous for brib-

ery, our students kill each other on campus, our lawyers fight instead of upholding the law, and the list can go on. Of course, we have a lot of good things: our poetry, our regular hardworking people. But that's not the world's responsibility to seek positive aspects of Bangladesh as a nation. It's our responsibility to present whatever positive aspects

we have to the rest of the world. Could we do that since 1971? The answer is very short: No. Until we are able to do that, we will always have that difficulty in getting VISA.

India is not a rich country. Yet, you may already know they get VISAs to western countries very easily. Even, many Indian states have courier service for the Indian VISA applicants, so that they do not have to appear at the foreign consulates personally. The chief reason is India's strong foreign policy and also the country's excellent education system. Even only a few years ago, top 5 per cent computer scientists of the Silicon Valley, (near Santa Clara, adjacent to Stanford University in California) were Indian.

How many good engineers could we produce so far in last four years? Well, obviously not too many. Not because our students are dumb, but mostly because our universities were too busy resolving so many clashes: students vs students, teachers vs teachers, students vs govt. and etc. (I used engineering as an example only). So, from such an unproductive country, it is expected that there would be a huge influx of migrants or migrants-to-be. And any nation would have to be cautious. We would too.

Of course it's sad that Bangladeshis get hard times because of the country's image. But we should point the finger at ourselves first before blaming anybody else. It's our image and we have to improve it. If not, the apparent discrimination will continue to be the way it is.

By the way, I just could not figure out why Ms. Sinha mentioned Van Gogh in her letter about France, since Mr. Gogh was a Dutch, not French. Moreover, I think her mentioning of "being pretty" or talking Art History course is somehow irrelevant or may be too distantly connected to the fact she tried to establish. Was it some kind of subconscious self-advertisement? As to her last line about fighting "discrimination", I would like to say: the first step to fight international discrimination is to fight discrimination at national levels. Before whining and complaining about what other nations are doing to us, we need to consider what we are doing to ourselves. I assure you, if we can do that seriously, "Green Passport" will be treated with much more respect than it is now.

Tirtho Mahmood
Albany, CA, USA

Private universities

It is encouraging that private universities are rapidly growing in the Dhaka city. The authorities and the ministry concerned should look into this matter that such essential institutions are built and set up evenly across the country.

There is also a dire need for a university teachers' training academy that can be set up around Savar or Gazipur area where the would-be-teachers would receive formal training and impart quality education when they join these growing private universities

Golam Ashraf
DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka

DU stalemate

Dhaka University has always been used by political parties to gratify its own motives. But it had a noble

history. The political leaders never think about the future of the students. Probably because most of their own offspring study at famous foreign universities without the kind of anxieties we normally face here.

We, the students of MSS (new), have just completed a 4-year honours which took us more than five years to finish. Indefinite strike by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) during the time of the last caretaker government and the Shamsunnahar hall tragedy literally took three hundred and sixty five days from our lives. Such type of pernicious game has again begun at DU. Declaration of 4-year honours as a professional degree was an academic demand by the general students. But our political parties' main target is to dominate the campus and dormitories. Why did Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) poke its nose into this non-political matter? And why did the JCD attack on the procession of the BCL? Is it a political game? Why are they playing with our valuable academic career? What's our destination? We are general students, want to lead a normal life and not like the special students leaders, who will be the ministers one day. Why can't a congenial atmosphere prevail at DU?

Shamsul Alam Monir
MSS (Final year), Department of Public Administration, DU

The burden of income tax

Many of us are a bit surprised seeing the recent activities in the highest seat of the country's judiciary where, it is assumed that, everything maintains order. This year the budgetary law requires the professionals including lawyers to submit income tax return. The lawyer community is against the submission of tax return for reasons best known to them. Questions cropping up in public mind whether they (the lawyers) are a community or group of people who are immune to the law of the country? Why the lawyers should be any different from other professionals regarding this tax matter? Will the honourable lawyers kindly explain more for our knowledge?

I am a service holder and as a law-abiding citizen, I pay my income tax and submit return to the tax authority, regularly for many years now. To spare money from the salary for income tax is not easy while one fails to meet other basic family and social obligations. The tax is deducted in advance from the salary as if salary is earned to pay the income tax. Unfortunately the tax-free limit is just ridiculous when you cannot implement the same uniformly.

I suggest that the government think about a reasonable tax-free limit that can be implemented and will not put much pressure on the taxpayers.

Abdullah, On e-mail

Where the administration is going?

Some recent incidents indicate serious flaws in our administration. The wild cat strike of custom officials, ultimatum of the BTTB staff, fulltime politicking of DESA/DESCO

officials should give a clear picture of our present day administration. A few custom officials were arrested in a corruption case involving crores of taka defalcation. Anti corruption department filed the case after due enquiry and arrested some of the accused on definite charges. The accused persons are the citizens of this country and are fully guaranteed of their right of defence in open court. But instead of taking refuge of legal system they pressurised the government abstaining from duties. Government succumbed to their illegal strike. The finance minister acted as a middleman to bring back the striking officials to their desk. It is also learnt that government is contemplating to take action against the anti-corruption official who as a part of duty tried to protect the financial interest of the state.

BTTB case is no different. The General Manager dared to punish some corrupt officials who tempered the metres of UNDP telephones to allow a phone/fax shipowner to reap illegal profit. The General Manager is given an ultimatum to vacate for taking departmental action after due enquiry.

DESA/DESCO episode is even more alarming. Two officials of these government organs are directly involved in politics. These two officials who are violating rules and regulations hold official positions of the ruling party. Corruption charges against these officials turned politicians are not pressed because of their party affiliation.

All these incidents clearly express the present forlorn condi-

tion of our administration. Wide spread politicisation is taking its toll. Government is surrendering to the Frankenstein it has created. And there are hardly any possibilities of development. A serious awakening of the civil society may only create some awareness among the policy makers.

Sonia
Uttara, Dhaka

Thanks to Mr. Ron Chepesiuk

Along with Mr. Zillur Rahaman, I also thank Mr. Ron Chepesiuk for writing such an excellent article

"The war on terrorism and the western media." There is no doubt the incidents of 9/11 was actually done by the Jewish Zionists. Hard evidence is there that some top officials of Bush Administration and as well as the Pentagon are Jews. We also know most western medias are run by the Zionists. So the true stories are never told. I myself believe that the incident that took place in 9/11 was just to suppress the Muslim countries so that USA can dominate the Muslim countries of the Middle East just for the sake of Israel. At the end, what will happen is that, Israel will have full dominance in that region. I wonder, one day Israel might have full dominance over USA. Who knows!

Minhaj Ahmed, Uttara, Dhaka

"A personal view"

I strongly disagree with Mr. Ali Ahmad Mabru letter "A personal view" (Aug 08). He is entitled to his biased opinion about gay people. However, he cannot claim that his view is that of the rest of the society.

Homosexuality is not a choice. It is an orientation a person is born with. A person's homosexuality is part of his/her nature. It cannot be altered or suppressed just because of societal demands. To express bias of any kind against any person because of their sexual orientation is regarded as an act of hatred. Homophobia simply reveals the inner insecurities of a person. It just makes him look ridiculous as well as resentful and malevolent. Being homophobic is not something to be proud of.

The assertion about the movies like Fire being a conspiracy against culture and tradition is not only ludicrous but borders near paranoia. I guess if culture and tradition are so fragile that they fall apart at the mere mention of different points of view, then they are not worth the trouble. I am sure our thousand-year-old culture is sturdy enough to survive open discourse on something so important as human sexuality.

Yahya, USA



Justify my choice

Traffic terror



Accelerate solution

It seems that an angel was finally able to administer a dose of magic potion and the authorities/planners are finally waking up and talking about some realistic and sensible solutions to the mammoth traffic problem at hand. Last week came the news that the Shonargaon road from Tongi Diversion intersection is being extended to connect Biswa road; then came the news of a new road from Rangs Bhaban to Tongi diversion road and the last and the best news was, getting rid of the Shonargaon and the

Shahbag circles! We must congratulate the authorities concerned for doing something that they should have done a long time ago! Better late than never, we must say. I would like to raise a few pertinent questions and make some comments relating to the planned improvements and would welcome readers comment as a constructive engagement towards reaching the best possible solutions for Dhaka city.

With regard to the proposed extension of the roads from Tongi

diversion road to Biswa road and Rangs Bhaban to Tongi diversion road, I foresee lot of the road works involving low lying marshland (old Hathir Jheel) which is an environmentally sensitive site and most essential as a water retaining body during the monsoon season to avoid flooding. Ideally, the roads could be built with keeping canals on both sides to keep the waterways intact and flowing into a larger water body downstream. Canals on both sides could be designed in such a way to offer public leisure and enjoyment like the Dhanmondi lake development project for example, if not better. With regard to the road from Rangs Bhaban, it was mentioned that land on both sides of the Rangs Bhaban would be acquired and two separate roads around it joined further down will be built, keeping Rangs Bhaban in the middle. Without meaning any loss or harm to any one, has the authorities considered building a road straight across, relocating the Rangs Bhaban and offering them alternative site and compensation? It might be a cheaper and a better alternative. How on earth the Rangs Bhaban was allowed to be built in its present location defies logic! On the Shonargaon circle removal, since it is not an ideal crossroad (one road cutting across another), existence of the Sunderban Hotel/Eastern Plaza road will prove to be a special challenge for the planners.

Shabag crossing would be a standard situation. However, the road from the museum to TSC and beyond will pose a problem in terms of the unpredictable nature of the Dhaka University situation. Most of the time it is being barricaded for student disturbance of one kind or the other. To derive maximum benefit, the authorities once and for all should take the decision to keep this all important road open at all times, which can carry lot off traffic all the way to the High Court crossing and beyond without putting pressure on the Shihu Park road contributing to unnecessary traffic load and congestion. Needless to say, authorities must be vigilant and take the responsibility of maintaining law and order and providing security against loss or damage to vehicles or property due to student or any other agitation at all times.

While on the subject, I definitely would not like to forget another problem area, which is the dead end of the Mohakhali road from the rail crossing at Jahangir Gate (Cantonment). I had written about this issue earlier and needless to say, this road must be extended all the way to the Mirpur side through the old airport; if necessary by building an underpass beneath the existing runway. I believe such a project was discussed and approved by the past government. This would relieve congestion on the VIP road as most of the Mirpur traffic and some of the Dhanmondi/Mohammadpur/Shaymoli traffic going towards Tejgaon/Mohakhali and similarly traffic from Gulshan/Banani/

Baridhara going to Mirpur make use of this road at Rangs Bhaban intersection.

It was mentioned in the DS article today that Executive Engineer of Dhaka Urban Transport Project confirmed that to build underpasses or underground grade separators are much cheaper than building flyovers and the numbers mentioned by him and the cost savings are mind boggling! My humble request to the authorities, please follow the most cost effective route to save scarce resources of the nation. By doing so, we shall be in a position to finance more projects to solve more of the Dhaka city traffic problems.

Thinker
On e-mail

I refer to the news published in The Daily Star on August 7, 2003 about the decision of the DTCB to remove the traffic circle at Sonargaon and subsequently at Shahbag and Matswa Bhavan. I commend the DTCB for such worthy decision which was long overdue. I thank them for understanding the dilemma of the roundabouts and their contribution in hindering smooth vehicular movement. I remember, once, while an international cricket match was being played at our stadium, and during breaks while the TV camera was zoomed on a nearby traffic circle, probably the Zero Point, the visiting overseas Cricket Commentator ridiculed our way of traffic management observing the vehicles being trapped round the circle. Myself a daily commuter at the Sonargaon Crossing, often wondered at the hindrance the SAARC Fountain had created for the traffic. I was very much shocked to learn that the fuel consumed for delaying at the Sonargaon Crossing costs Tk. 7.6 crore a year and no doubt the opportunity cost of the time wasted by the commuters of about 10,000 vehicles passing the circle each hour will surely be enormous, creating negative effect on our economy. I urge the authorities to take necessary steps to remove all the circles on different road crossings of the city as soon as possible and pave the way for smooth vehicular traffic in the city.

Duncan Chowdhury
Tejgaon, Dhaka

I congratulate the DTCB on its decision to remove the SAARC fountain. It will save countless lost hours spent in that roundabout and solve one of the major bottlenecks in Dhaka.

MA, On e-mail