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## "9/11: Was it a conspiracy?"

It was an unforgettable evening. I was watching the BBC on TV, but as we had visitors that day, the volume was lowered at a minimum level and we were talking. So none of us really noticed what was on the TV screen. I saw telecast of the WTC crashing down, but presuming it to be a "Die hard" type Hollywood movie trailer, did not pay much attention. The visitors left a bit later and I went on to watch the BBC news before going to bed. I could not believe what was happening and tried to call my younger brother in New York immediately but could not get through.

I have just gone through the full text of ex-minister, M. Meacher's, article in the Guardian. He has raised certain anomalies

and produced some supporting evidences. I also remember reading an article of our own respected writer Mr. Badruddin Omar where he ascertained the Zionist involvement in the event of 9/11.

I also read somewhere that a proper investigation, whether judicial or otherwise, was never instituted to unearth the total picture. The minimum that we expect in every accident-- and 9/11 was not a mere accident rather a catastrophe, not only because of the lives that perished but because it seemed to have facilitated an upsurge of terrorism and occupation never experienced before is a proper investigation. It seems that a grand plan was put into action with the invasion of Afghanistan

and then Iraq, but strangely enough the real players, whether Bin Laden or Saddam Hussein, always remained untraced.

The Afghans could hardly be considered a serious threat to world peace. Nor the Iraqis, who could not even win the war against Iran, but were regarded a serious threat to the UK/USA axis. Or, is it a grand chess game where Afghans or Iraqis were mere foot soldiers and, as such, thought to be expendable to ensure full control over world's natural resources?

**Khandaker R Zaman**  
Allseas Shipping Limited, Yousuf Chamber, Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka

know exactly when to shoot and thus know their job. Congratulations to the editorial team as well. I bet the lawyer has seen himself in your reported daily, and must be feeling a lot refreshed and rejuvenated. Well, every dog has his day.

**Mohammad Kamran**  
Water Works Road, Postha, Labagh, Dhaka

## World Vision wrongly blamed

Reports on the activities of World Vision Bangladesh, an international Christian NGO, published in some national dailies most recently both in Bangla and English, have drawn my attention. The writers of those reports have wrongly blamed the organisation for converting people from other faiths into Christianity. This allegation is without any foundation. If ever there was anyone converted from any other faith in Christianity, that was as a result of the personal voluntary choice on the part of the person concerned. World Vision is not a church. Any proselytising activity is outside its mandate by any definition.

I worked for World Vision Bangladesh for seven years from June 1995 to May 2002, and I personally know for sure that it does not do conversion work, neither does it have anything to do with any organisation or any individual doing any evangelical work in this country. Since 1970, World Vision has been dedicated in Bangladesh in providing emergency relief and rehabilitation help, poverty alleviation, socio-economic empowerment of poor people with holistic and integrated approach and in thrust for sustainable development.

Behind all the work of World Vision lies the inspiration from the example of Jesus Christ's love and compassion for the needy people irrespective of caste, creed, colour or race. World Vision wants that the ethno-spiritual life of its Christian staffs in place so that they can work for the needy people with genuine love and concern as exemplified in the life of the Christ. In order that the spiritual values are sustained, Christian staffs attend Morning prayers and some other activities, adding to their spiritual and ethical values. Non-Christian staffs are never required to attend any of these activities. If any attend that is on a purely voluntary basis.

**Rev. Martin Adhikary**  
Old DOHS, Banani, Dhaka

## Why to the UN now?

The situation in Iraq has turned super-critical. A panic-stricken Mr. Bush has gone to the UNSC, something which he ignored in the past, with a request for a fresh resolution requesting more troops for Iraq. But just a week earlier Bush had arrogantly declared that he had no intention of moving a fresh resolution to please powers that "seek influence in post-war Iraq" but had failed to support the war itself. A New York Times report says that the Americans are leaning heavily on the UN to encourage former opponents of the war in Iraq to contribute military aid. Yet, when US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, met UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, he made it clear that the war coalition would continue to command all military forces in Iraq. It would not cede any of its political and economic authority, though the UN's future role "can be discussed in the course of our negotiations on a resolution". In other words, other countries contribute soldiers and cash and, in return, they would get meagre rewards. It means the participating countries and the UN must accept US hegemony and control over Iraq.

Polycymakers of many states have been learnt to be eager to send troops to Iraq are keenly watching the evolving situation. A new UNSC resolution is likely coming on the lines of the Afghan or Kosovo models so that the friends of the United States can stretch the cover on the lines of what NATO is doing in Afghanistan now. Under the favoured formula the so-called Interim Governing Council of Iraq, a US puppet indeed, would invite friendly countries to dispatch troops. Many believe that countries like Turkey, India, Pakistan would then send troops to Iraq because many ruling governments in the world now believe that the reality is that the US is the only power that matters. So, align with it and prosper; or oppose it and perish.

But this view grossly distorts reality. The US has proved it is a military giant by technology but not all that capable with ground combat, and it is incapable of devising a wise political strategy to stabilise Iraq, leave alone combat terrorism. Indeed, Washington has snatched political defeat from the jaws of military victory by turning a country that was not a terrorist threat. The attack on the UN office in Iraq may or may not be the work of non-Iraqi groups, as Western intelligence officers suspect. But it shows how vulnerable and unsafe everybody and everything in Iraq is. It is futile to pretend that opposition to the Anglo-American occupation is confined to the 'Sunni heartland' around Baghdad. It is widespread and extends to the Shiite centre of Mosul to the south and to the Kurdish city of Kirkuk where oil pipelines were

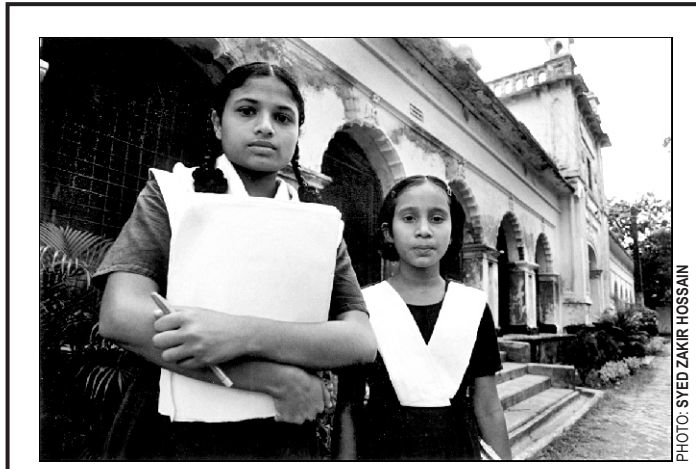


PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

## Good grades are not everything

I was glad that you gave due publicity to the unacceptable face of education in Bangladesh, in the article in your 'City' inset (September 7). It was about two little girls (in Class 3 and 4 of a High School) who were so distressed at poor exam results that they did not dare go home to face the anger of their families but ran away and were lucky to be found.

It is a story that is easy for some of us to believe, especially those who are trying to balance two things -- the reasonable desire of both parents and teachers that pupils should get as good examination results as possible. Often both parents and teachers say that anything less than a high grade is not acceptable. Either the child is blamed because he/she did not work hard enough or the school is blamed because it did not teach well enough.

I could write you an article on this but let me just tell two stories. One is of a British Asian girl in a prestigious High School there. She was working very hard and doing well but was not brilliant. The staff reluctantly agreed to write nothing but 'A's' on her reports when they heard that, if they gave any 'B' grades, her father locked her in her room and told her she must work harder. She was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

The other story concerns the University that is round the corner from my home in the UK. It has the highest percentage of overseas students in the UK, many of them living in rooms in high, tower blocks. While on my annual holiday last month, I heard that the authorities have had to put special catches on the windows to stop students jumping out of the windows to kill themselves because they cannot face their families who have paid so much for their education but the children did not receive 'necessary' high grades.

Over-ambitious parents and some schools and coaching centres that feed off them have a lot to answer for. It is these precious children who are paying the price of an interpretation of the word 'education' that pays no attention to the reality and the way it should be allowed to dove-tail with what childhood and growing-up, too, should be about.

**Angela MV Robinson (Rev Mrs)**  
Principal, The British School in Dhaka

bombed. The resentment leaves nobody secure.

The resentment's roots are America's own making. About half of the Iraqis polled by the Iraq Centre for Research and Strategic Studies attribute the anti-US resistance and violence to 'provocation' by American forces. The US' failure to provide a minimum of public services and security to the people is compounded by a series of political

blunders, including the creation of an interim council of ministers under the guidance of American advisors headed by Paul Bremer.

The August 19 attack has undermined the image of the UN as a relatively invulnerable institution, guarantor of security and Iraq's future 'peace-keeper'. Yet, as former UN Assistant Secretary General in Iraq, Hans von Sponeck, says, the attack "isn't a surprise. The

Iraqis are angry. The range of anger goes with dissatisfaction about the lack of progress in restoring normalcy.

This is not freedom. An externally imposed rather than an Iraqi-made freedom is not real freedom and we will see more of what has happened today as we go along..." It would be foolish to respond to this situation by demanding more troops and greater application of force. The US will be tempted to do exactly that -- and to bulldoze the UN, to cut its own military losses. Washington under its neo-conservative leadership will also blame 'foreign hands' and resist the plain fact that the occupation has created an indigenous resistance. The situation is bound to turn messier and uglier as the US makes more and more political mistakes.

**Sirajul Islam**  
Dhaka

## "Abbas says quits"

This is in reference to the 8 September 2003 Daily Star editorial 'Abbas says quits'. Apart from the keen grasp of the obvious and stating the facts, the viewpoint offers nothing new.

The Palestinian struggle against Israel has been hindered by the nature of Arab regimes and the dismal quality of Arab leadership. But for the convenient excuse and equivocation of Israeli occupied Arab land, the despised and despotic rulers and autocratic and repressive regimes would have no excuse to exist. Saddam Hussein was the most abhorrent and tyrannical of the Arab rulers (that is not to buttress US and British way of deposing him). Arafat may be a cut out of the same mould.

Mahmoud Abbas, better known as Abu Mazen, never stood a chance. Not simply because of intransigence and obduracy of Sharon and Israel, but also obstinacy and opposition on the part of Arafat. The latter would not relinquish or share power or delegate authority that he had amassed and concentrated over a long time.

Arafat has long been an activist and revolutionary, the archetypal symbol of Palestinian resistance and aspiration. But he may not have the gumption, mindset, resilience or aptitude of a peacemaker. Abu Mazen may be better suited for the task. His departure puts the chances of peace and reconciliation in peril. Arafat sought to protect self-interest and to augment his considerable ego rather than enhance the chances of lasting peace or facilitate a Palestinian homeland.

**Omar Khasru, On e-mail**

## Thanks for the confession

Foreign minister, M Morshed Khan, made a comment that the 'politicians make curbing crime difficult,' which appeared in The Daily Star on 6<sup>th</sup> September. This is really a brave and praiseworthy comment. In our country, most of the crimes are committed under the supervision of political leaders. We know that when police arrest any miscreant, the political leaders request the administration to unleash him, or a minister phones to the thane police officer to unleash him saying things like: he is my relative or my political activist and so on.

In the city we see that many miscreants are led by MPs of the government party or top leaders of the opposition party. Both the government and the opposition party foster gangsters for their own interest. They use them to root out their political rivals.

There are two main parties in our

sense, we've won. It is truly the first respectable defeat of Bangladesh in Test cricket and, of course, commendable. Our cricket has reached a different height. Our boys had jeopardised the Pakistan team several times in this test series. But we were victimised by the hypocrisy and dishonesty of the Pakistani captain and others. These things will not be written in the record books because history prefers matters than manners.

Nevertheless, the great achievement in Multan will always remain an encouraging memory. Such performance can indicate something auspicious for our cricket in future. We should congratulate our coach, Dav Whatmore, for his jealous exertion to build up a new Bangladesh team. It is the same team, same players and same environment -- everything is the same, yet we can notice the changes in the quality of performance and results of the matches. We never reached such a height in

prove your worth in the field. I think this is the best way to answer their deeds.

**Saumitra Sarder Piklu**  
LLB final year, DU

Under this specific circumstance, what are the ICC rules?

"Latif had dropped the ball and picked it up from the ground which went unnoticed by umpires Ashoka deSilva and Russell Tiffin". How they could give judgement, without referring to the third umpire, of an event that they were not sure of! So, I think they are equally responsible for the 'mistake'. If Rashid Latif is punished, I think the umpires also deserve similar punishment. But Rashid Latif has been made a scapegoat! What are the relevant rules in this respect? The right judgement at the right time could have turned out the result of the game most probably in favour of Bangladesh! Besides, there was one, if not two, unmistakable LBW. Therefore, I think this game should

From now on, we can hope that the Bangladeshis can win. So, let's not regret that they have lost, but salute them for their endeavour.

**Iffat Hossain**  
Jahangirnagar University, Savar

## Shabash Rafique!

It was indeed a disappointment that we marginally missed our first Test victory, but I must declare that much of my agony was over when I came to learn that Mohammad Rafique did not run out Umar Gul at 212/8 when he left the crease before the delivery.

This was indeed a demonstration of the highest level of sportsmanship. It has certainly made me much more proud than I would have been had we won with the dismissals obtained the same way as did Rashid Latif's catch. We have defeated the Pakistan team in sportsmanship, and we all hope that further victories in the field will soon follow.

**Abdullah Shams Bin Tariq**  
Southampton, UK

## Knowledge of etiquette

The much debated subject of our cricketer boys being seated in the economy class while the host team enjoyed business class service is no doubt an act of being un-courteous and, inhospitable. It also shows the negligence and disrespect for protocol by the Pakistani Cricket Control Board. In the aviation industry such errors are quite common as the airline can only fill in the seats once the names of the passengers are given (unless those seats are blocked by the reservations department).

Even though the Pakistan team was seated in the business class section, the whole situation could have been handled tactfully, had the Chairman of the Cricket Board, or the Manager of the Pakistani team or even Rashid Latif, the captain, made a spontaneous gesture by giving up the team's seats for the guests.

A simple apology for the mishap and a friendly offer of those seats would have made all the difference, regardless of whether our team would have accepted the offer or not. It does not take a foreign affairs expert to make such instant decisions, it takes a warm hand shake, a good heart and a little knowledge of etiquette to avoid such embarrassments. These are some indispensable human qualities that the Pakistanis should learn for their own sake!

**Farhan Quddus**  
Old DOHS, Banani, Dhaka

## "Rough justice"

Thank you so much for providing such a thoughtful photograph, showing Quick Justice, in the back page of The Daily Star dated 08 Sept'03. A picture can definitely say more than a thousand words. Being the usual hardy soul that I am, I had a very good laugh when I saw justice being meted out to the pickpocket by being kicked by lawyer(s). Even now, I am laughing. The strong kick given by the tie-laced lawyer... it was really funny. Looks a lot like the Maradona that is in every Bengali mind, above age 28. The photographer shot the straight leg of the lawyer, showing the glossiness of the lawyer's left shoe as well as the exaltation, frustration, consternation, contemplation and irritation, not to mention the fervour in the face of the lawyer. He kicked his best, and hopefully, it was his last shot, for ever.

I congratulate The Daily Star for having taken and printed such a picture. You do have a bunch of keen and alert photographers, who

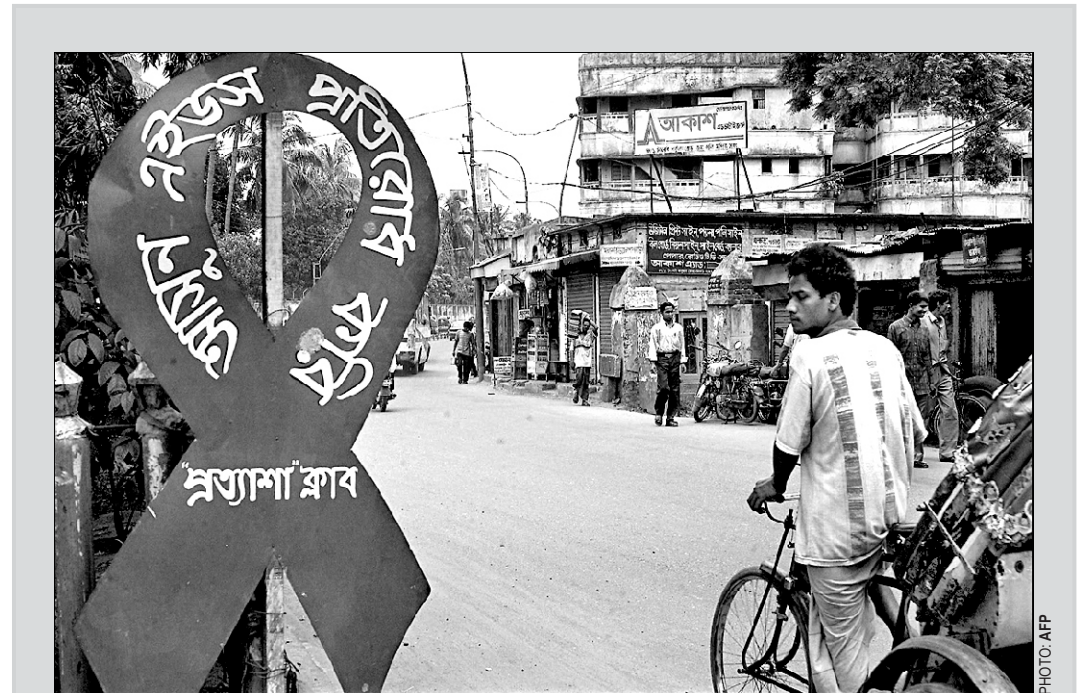


PHOTO: AFP

## HIV/AIDS

Bangladesh is a high risk country for HIV/AIDS infection although the denial, discrimination, stigma, and ostracism are reducing day by day. A lot of advertisement in the print and electronic media, bill signs, bill boards, and good cooperations from the GO, NGO's etc are helping to improve the situation by generating awareness about HIV/AIDS among general people.

Yet, HIV/AIDS is still considered a taboo, so the service providers remain behind the curtain. But the problem is increasing, and the infected are terminally sick. There is preparation in many hospitals for HIV/AIDS patients. It is the right time to face the reality and act upon it. While observing a good drama we praise the stage personalities, not the workers behind. We voraciously eat good food, but rarely praise the cook. My request is to give proper tribute and respect to quality persons before they die. We should not like posthumous rewards.

**Dr Mustafa Abdur Rahim**  
Director, Samajik Shasthya Kendra, Mirpur, Dhaka

country, Bangladesh Awami league and Bangladesh Nationalist Party. These two parties harbour most of the miscreants. If both the parties take steps to free their party from miscreants, crimes of our country can be reduced. For this, political consensus is necessary.

**Abul Hafaz Bashir**  
Dept of Economics, BB Hall, DU

## Reactions: Multan Test

September 6, the last day of Multan Test, was one of the incredible days of our cricket history. We almost reached near our first Test victory. But we lost by one wicket for some of our weaknesses and also for some wrong decisions of the umpires. We were keenly waiting for the first Test victory. We've become a little frustrated, but at the same time it was very encouraging to see how our boys were striving to win the match.

Although we've lost in Multan, in a

the past. Since Whatmore has taken the responsibility of our cricket, everything is changing, and, of course that change is positive.

We also want to congratulate Shujon and his boys for presenting us some memorable moments. Four more one-day matches are ahead. We can't give up our hopes though, in the first one day match in Multan, Bangladesh was white-washed. We hope that the boys will keep up their performance in one-day matches as they did in the Test series. We wish happiness for all of the members of Bangladesh team.

**Leo Lipon Gomes**  
Tejkunipara, Dhaka

A number of unexpected events have taken place during the current tour of Bangladesh cricket team in Pakistan. Needless to say that the host country showed their narrowness and we never expected that. We consider cricket as a gentleman's game.

My advice to our cricketers is --

be declared abandoned and null and void.

**Alauddin Talukder**  
Siddeshwari, Dhaka

Every one who watched the game hoped that the Bangladesh team would defeat the Pakistanis.

I was one of them, too. But personally I don't regret at all that they have lost. We have seen them trying. We have seen the spirit in them. It's true that, if they have won, everybody (including me) would have celebrated it tremendously. That win would have been one of the victorious wins of all time. But that doesn't matter at all. The pressure they created on the Pakistani team, was a huge thing. And also the nine wickets they took. Above all, they tried, they tried with their heart and mind. Another thing is that, the youngsters did very well. I think that sometimes change should be made in the team. There are many youngsters in our country who play really well, they should be given a chance.