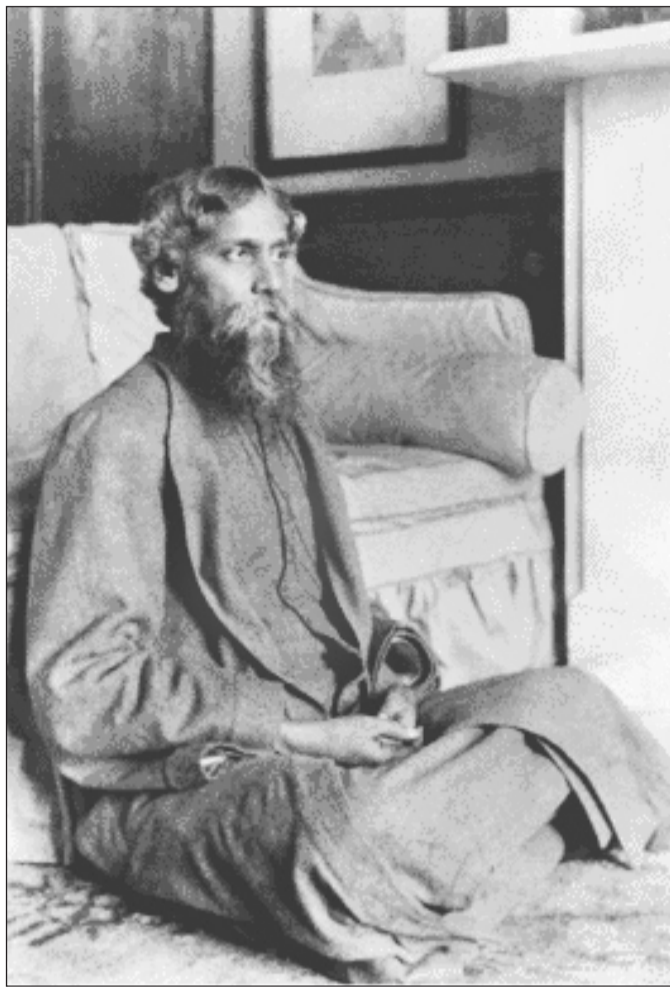


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Modernisation of Tagore's songs



Apart from the BTV, there are other private TV Satellite channels operating with a significant number of programmes which are both entertaining and educating. Now a days, Channel I has been gaining popularity and attention for some of its special shows and "Tritio Matra" (Third Dimension) is indeed one of such programmes.

However, my discussion is neither about Channel I nor about its program. Rather, let me highlight the subject matter discussed in "Tritio Matra" in the morning (9:45 AM) of 6th August.

All Bangladeshis must be aware that 22nd Srabon is an important day in our national life as Bisha Kabi Rabindranath Tagore left the world on this very day. On the occasion of Tagore's 62nd death anniversary, Channel I had telecast a discussion session to flash back his literary life that spanned over 60 years. The discussants were renowned and eminent literateurs like Dr Humayun Azad and noted economist Dr Atiur Rahman. The program was presented by young host Zillur Rahman. The speakers were discussing on all the branches of Tagore's activities and contributions. Anyway, an informal discussion on Tagore and his unique creations made the program lively.

At the ending part, Zillur introduced a new dimension and invited comments on modernisation of Tagore's songs. According to Dr. Azad, nobody has yet modernised Tagore's songs but if it is possible by any genius in future he has no objection.

He however made one thing clear; manhandling is not tolerable in the name of modernisation. On the other hand, Dr. Atiur echoed Dr. Azad's comment but underscored the need for prohibiting modernisation of his songs. Naturally, there has been a volley of questions on this matter.

Who, where, when, how, why and what all these queries are pertinent when such a debate occurs. I simply want to know whether there has been any song as modern as "Rabindra Sangeet?" The Rabindra experts must know the best.

Md Rayhan Sharif
Mirpur, Dhaka

BTV archive had a faulty opening

I am happy to know that the state run electronic media BTV has established an archive of its own. I would like to thank the BTV authority, especially Mr. Mustafizur Rahman, the Director General of this institution. He has done an excellent job. But I was astonished to learn that the BTV did not have archives for all the last 40 years. What an embarrassment! The BTV has a glorious past. We have watched many beautiful programmes over the years in the BTV. I can recall dramas like 'Rokto korobi', 'Mukhara Ramani', 'Bashikoron', 'Ai Sob Din Ratri', 'Bohubrihi', 'Somoy Asomomy', 'Kothao Keu Nei', etc. and maga-

zine programmes such as 'Soptobarna', 'Jodi Kichu Mone Na Koren' were of high quality.

There were some decisive moments in our national life during last four decades. The most important of this was our independence in 1971, Sadhikar Andolon in 69, end of autocracy in 1990. All these are very important events. I am sure, people of Bangladesh would like to see the proper preservation of these invaluable events in the BTV archive.

It is also very essential to form a committee whose duty will be to select the programmes and various events, which will go to the archives. Only an independent body consisting of reputed media personnel can ensure this right preservation. We have already

seen 'Bangabandhu being neglected in the archive opening ceremony which obviously was objectionable.

Intiaz Ahmed Chowdhury
Kemal Ataturk Avenue
Banani, Dhaka

AL strategy is self-defeating

If the Awami League fades out, its top leadership would most likely be held responsible by the posterity for the slow death of a pioneering political party in Bangladesh. Narcissism in politics has a profound historical background. It is the major weakness of many developing nations.

South Africa is full of it, and countries of the South and SE Asia

are full of this vice. Why name should matter when the fame can last? It is time to ditch away marble politics (foundation-stone laying ceremonies), Awami League's vision is too myopic and ad hoc. The party is too busy with criticising the opponents and finding fault of others. It is also a party difficult to convince, and not willing to compromise (latest: boycotting the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Dhaka).

The AL does not believe in tolerance. The party believes that others should arrange for what it wants. It demands services without providing the same at public level. It hibernates during the five years in the opposition, making its presence felt through nagging

programmes.

The party has not digested fully the result of the last election it won only one-fifth of the 300 seats. But it talks and behaves as if it had won 49 per cent of the seats. The voters can see the game. Charisma alone cannot save a party, in today's fast-moving world of change (the other major party should also note this point).

A myopic approach might pay short-term dividend, but it does not strengthen the foundation of the party or the nation. Nelson Mandela kept a low profile and survived even after his quitting of power. Power does not lie in power. Poor leadership is like the effect of the Farrakka dam less flow, and salinity. The AL strategy is self-defeating.

AZ, On Mail

Louder protest against loudspeaker use in campus

The Dhaka University is the highest seat of education in Bangladesh. About twenty five thousand students study here with an aspiration to making a good career. Among the students, a small minority does engage in politics and some are involved with other voluntary or cultural organisations.

Almost everyday different student organisations bring out processions or demonstration to press home academic demands and political claims. To reinforce their activity or movement, they use (abuse) loudspeakers. The leaders with their activists usually take position in front of arts building. Their yelling and inflammatory speeches merely irk our environment of study. Loud and provocative slogans intensely divert our attention away from class-lectures.

Most of our classes are being held while these unscrupulous leaders call for meetings nearby. Besides, whining of loudspeakers seriously affect both our mind and body. High volume of loudspeaker is detrimental to our digestion and hearing and can make a sober mind excited and neurotic.

Furthermore, often other organisations call for meetings on campus during our class hour. Their annoying speeches through loudspeaker adversely undermine the whole atmosphere of surrounding classrooms. This adverse situation confounds our problem by the day while our study gets hampered. Consequently we cut a sorry figure in the examination.

On the other hand, loudspeaker is also used at the dormitories due to different programmes being held there. In short, loudspeaker hampers our health, mind, concentration in study, and, above all, the overall environment of the campus.

I expect from the student leaders and other cultural organisers that they consider this unbearable and anti-environment situation as a problem and strive to spare us from such nuisances. I earnestly request to the authority to take immediate steps to stop the use of loudspeaker.

Palash Podder
Dept. Of Sociology,
Jagannath Hall,
University of Dhaka

Dhaka-Agartola bus service is a farce

Like every other sectors of the government, the Dhaka-Agartola bus service too has fallen prey to the notoriety of the bureaucrats and the politicians. It took literally two years to sign the accord. After a television show of the inauguration, the question arises why the service started at all? And, for whose benefit?

If it is for the interest of the people of Tripura, it will not serve its purpose due to the present context. And, if it is for tourism development in Bangladesh, that too seems unachievable.

Let me clarify. With fixed fare, only a small number of people can travel. On the very first day, Tripura bus authority sold only four tickets out of 43 seats, while Bangladesh authority sold only one ticket. There is very little viability of this service. The main problem is the unusual fare.

The government wants our tourism sector to develop, but refuses to issue visas to foreigners and fixes exorbitant travel tax for visitors. All these are contradictory steps. Dhaka-Agartola bus service can be viable if double entry or multiple entry visas for few months or one year are issued to the citizens of Tripura. That could increase the number of travellers in this route. And, Bangladesh can earn more from these passengers as service charges.

To do that, our bureaucrats should do the proper math and planning. We should not give a second thought about issuing double or multiple entry visas for the citizens of Tripura since it serves economic interest of Bangladesh as well as of the people of Tripura. The respected bureaucrats and politicians should think for the interest of their motherland and act accordingly.

Dr.Q.M. Ohidul Alam

When law maker's become law breakers



Days ago, I was shocked and astonished like millions of other readers by the news published in the DS, "court area has been turned into a war place". The egregious activities of a few political hooligans under the supervision of law enforcing authorities gave rise to widespread condemnation. I think both the lawyers and the law enforcers are lawmakers but what we saw in the court premises make us think that they're law breakers.

Reports say nearly 80 people, including some honourable members of the bar and noted journalists became victims of those brutal attacks. Needless to say, both the groups had the duty to maintain law and order, besides controlling criminal activities by applying rifle law and by giving stringent punishments to lawbreakers.

By not doing that, they had broken all rules and regulations in our secured court premises. This is a shame for all. A question is peeping in my mind "which country are we living"? Did we create a country where people who are supposed to be lawmakers will break laws so shelessly?

Md Aktaruzzaman Dipu
Dhaka University, Dhaka

Chittagong

Childhood beating pays off

It is a funny and short story related to my early childhood, which contributed to my life to be a good and attentive student. My childhood was full of worries and terrors. When I was only six, I was admitted into a primary Madrasa near my home. I used to go to the Madrasa in the morning and to Madrasa at Noon.

One day, on my way to Madrasa, I was possessed by an evil spirit which took me to the playground instead to the Madrasa. I felt little happier and clever, being able to deceive my mother. In the afternoon, I returned home with a heavy heart, but none told me a word.

Next day too, I dared to arrive soon at that playground with less fear. But nobody came to know and I was not to be abused at all in the afternoon. On the third day also, I decided to do the same. I could never understand that my mother

mother. But now I realise that she was very affectionate to me, and only out of affection she beat me. I am identified now as one of the ideal students among Madrasah-fellows. My mother proudly told me once "To the best of my knowledge, you haven't fallen anymore into the hand of evil spirit since the day I administered a good beating on you."

Truly, I can not remember a single class I'd missed ever since. Similarly, my father has no flexibility about the education of her children. I am quite right in attributing my whole achievement to my parents who have been paying careful attention to my life since my early childhood.

They have devout wishes for my success in life. Thanks to Allah whose kindness always surrounds me. Best compliments to my parents too. May Allah give them a long happy and healthy life and fulfil their long cherished hopes.

Azizul Haq
On mail

female ones, are badly affected due to this inadequacy of public transport. In the local buses, a few seats have been fixed for female passengers. Normally there are four to five seats for them at the front left corner of the bus. Again, this number is not enough.

Moreover, most of the time these female seats are occupied by male passengers and they usually decline to leave the seat when a female passenger gets on the bus. Not only that, even the helper and conductor of a local bus often refuses to take a female passenger when these seats are occupied by the male passengers.

Many times they have to travel by standing with their male counterparts in a packed bus. In a standing position they face another problem. While standing, they are sexually harassed by some lewd passengers; sometimes even by the helpers and conductors of the bus.

Our communication minister has taken some laudable initiatives to improve the communi-

Cinemas must have "aesthetic value"



It has been three years since I enjoyed a Bengali cinema. As a young man, I am fond of visual entertainment that are culturally refined. If we all encourage such "cinemas", eventually, it will turn into a trend.

Anyway, "Chandrakatha," a cinema that was released recently is running full house. The general crowd is enjoying the movie. A good chunk of our people expects to see such cinema more. With the help of our government, we should try to eliminate the obscenity from our regular Bengali movies, so that a new crowd of cinema goers emerges who has a taste for something aesthetic. This is the desire of our generation.

Shiekh sumon,
Shahidullah hall
DU

was more clever than I and my whole naughty scheme was at the tip of her finger.

When I returned home in the afternoon pretending to be honest, then, to my utter surprise, I saw my mother standing inside the house just smiling ironically with a stick in her hand. Devoured by worries, I was brought back to reality. She immediately began to beat me remorselessly with that stick, saying only, "It's enough and no more, once and twice are excusable, but not thrice."

I was foolishly considering her to be a persecutor and a cruel

Special buses for women needed.

Public transport, especially buses, play a vital role in commuting people in Dhaka city. During rush hours, most of the local buses are so crowded that it is difficult to get on them, let alone get a seat.

After banning two strokes three wheelers and rickshaws from certain roads, the situation has become even worse. Though some new routes and buses have been introduced, they are not adequate in number.

Passengers, particularly the

tion system. Honourable minister should take another praiseworthy step for these ill-fated female passengers by increasing the female bus services in Dhaka city and advice bus owners to increase the number of female seats in the bus. Better even to allot special buses to commute women only.

MD. Foyaz Ahmed,
Economics Department,
DU Dhaka-1000

Fly over from Jatrabari to Gulistan

Reports published in the newspapers say that the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is going to construct a four lane fly over from Jatrabari to Gulistan, a length of about 7km (including ramp and approaches) on the principle of BOOT i.e. Built, Own, Operate and then Transfer to the authority. This is a very new concept in our country and needs careful handling. The foundation of this project is reported to have been laid in October 2003.

DCC in the past has had the reputation of mismanagement of construction of few over bridges in Dhaka city, which had to be abandoned after incurring huge cost. Hence, at the outset, there is the question of competence of this organisation to undertake such a project. We assume that DCC has already undertaken studies on the different aspects of this complex project, by conducting feasibility studies and making preliminary design-planning-cost estimate, etc. This is very much necessary to meet the principle of BOOT; because the client will have to be satisfied as comparison will be made with their own assessment.

We cite the example of the Jamuna Bridge. In that prestigious project, there were pre-feasibility, feasibility studies, detailed planning, design, cost estimate etc. by independent reputed consultants. Even in the tender for construction of the Jamuna bridge, there was a provision for the construction of the bridge as per design of the contractor when the client too had the design. With this approach we had the bridge in stipulated time.

This example indicates that even in case this structure is going to be built on the basis of BOOT, the client must have a yard-stick so that they can find out the rationality of the offer from the developer. The government being a responsible institution cannot and should not depend on the whims of certain developer.

I wonder how was it possible on the part of an organisation like the DCC to conduct such studies in such a short period (unless they have heavenly bodies on their payroll) and make a realistic evaluation of different offers of builders? The offer was called on the 29th April and received on 30th June 2003, a period of about 2 months. The developer, who submitted the bids, must have heavenly traits. Otherwise, it seems something simply impossible to assess the needs and requirements of the project in such a short period of time.

In Bangladesh, we have a tradition to undertake projects in a hurry without detailed studies, planning, design, evaluation, proper estimate etc. and the result is seen everywhere. All projects are delayed and never completed in time, causing huge loss to our scarce resources and time. We don't like to see this important project only half built like other city over bridges, which were hurried and buried.

We would request the honourable Mayor of Dhaka city to arrange a seminar/workshop in association with the IEB/BUET regarding the construction of this prestigious project. The DCC engineers/economist will present the methodology of construction and other salient features of the project to a gathering of reputed engineer/economist of this country.

This is necessary for the smooth execution of the project and for greater good of the country. We do not like to see an improper structure constructed in Dhaka City where reluctant road users will have to pay high toll, arbitrarily fixed by the developer to whom the structure may be mortgaged for a period of say 50/60 years.

M Bazlur Rahman
Ex. Addl. Chief Engineer,
RHD Uttara, Dhaka



PHOTO: ZAKIR HOSSAIN