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Rab and Independence Day Award



I am not astonished at the news of Rab receiving the Independence Day Award, 2006. Because our governments are very good at doing things against the spirit of the Constitution. In her speech Independence Day speech the prime minister said that the

present struggle is a struggle for establishing social justice and the rule of law to ensure social security and peace by defeating all kinds of terrorism, but her government has nominated Rab for the award.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), the

elite force, which was set up by the present government for maintaining rule of law is being criticised by different quarters both nationally and internationally for their activities like extra judicial killing. And in the name of crossfire or encounter the government is trying to justify those killings.

Both nationally and internationally the government gave the justification of such killings by saying that the Rab has improved law and order situation of the country and is eradicating crime and also the government is proud to say that the actions of Rab against criminals have already drawn widespread support of the people. But the fact is that the people are frustrated with the gradual deterioration of law and order and their support for the killings by Rab is in reality a vindication of their loss of confidence in the existing law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to maintain law and order and deliver justice.

Despite huge loads of criticism and demand for judicial probe into each allegation of extra judicial killing, none of the allegation has gone under judicial investigation so far. Instead, Rab has been rewarded!

It is true Rab has succeeded in arresting most wanted criminals and militants. For the performance, it deserves praise and I think the people also hailed them. But in no way can the nomination of Rab for the prestigious Independence Award could be justified as the extra judicial killings committed by them have clearly gone against the spirit of rule of law and democracy. Noteworthy is that during 1971 our people fought and sacrificed their lives, honour and wealth with a view to establishing democracy, rule of law where every citizen, irrespective of their social standing, would be able to enjoy basic human rights.

According to the notion of rule of law, every person must be prosecuted in a court of law for the offence committed by him or her, and in that process he or she must have the opportunity to defend himself or herself through a lawyer, irrespective of whether the individual is a criminal or not. This provision is also embodied in our constitution under articles 27, 31, 32, 33 and 35. **Shammy, On e-mail**



Bring SAURAV back

Indians have shown once again how vulnerable they are without their most successful captain in the history of Indian cricket. Saurav Ganguly was a true leader and had all the qualities a leader needs to lead a team to success. During his captaincy, India reached many incredible milestones at home as well as outside the country. Rahul Dravid is a great player but that doesn't

mean that he will also be a great captain. A captain should be someone who has a strong personality and, above all, the instinct of never say die. The Indian cricket board should have let Saurav remain the captain of the Test team, at least. Bring him back! **Munna Wahid Dhanmondi, Dhaka**

Why are we poor?



We have a course on Bangladesh economy this semester. One day, our course teacher told us to bring a write-up including some major reasons of poverty in Bangladesh. So in the next class, we brought the write-up and our teacher requested any of us to come forward and speak about the topic. An interesting thing about this particular course is that our course teacher always wants to make this class more interactive so that the students can have a better understanding of each topic. One of the students went forward and started to point out the reasons of poverty. After his explanation on every reason, our teacher asked us to put our arguments. Now, the students did not seem that much interested to make arguments. But our teacher was very efficient in making arguments against him. He was not at all satisfied with the reasons. He

explained why issues like over population, corruption or even political unrest are not the major reasons behind poverty in Bangladesh. According to him, these are either consequences of poverty or not reason at all. However, as the time of the class was over our teacher left the class leaving us in a quandary. We thought about the topic and found out some reasons. Someone said that we are inside a vicious circle of poverty where one problem creates another and makes things worse. Thus the process goes on and it gradually becomes very difficult to get rid of these problems. We have more views on this topic. But we are still in the dark. Is there anyone to help us? **Miraz Ahmed On e-mail**



Parliament members

Time has come for all of us to elect honest, educated, dedicated, patriotic and suitable people as the Members of Parliament in the next election, who will work selflessly for the welfare and the betterment of the country. If we fail to do so then definitely it will bring disaster for Bangladesh.

If any party nominates a corrupt or criminal or terrorist or smuggler or black money holder or loan defaulter or uneducated or half educated or unsuitable person as its candidate in the election, will we elect him? No, of course not.

If the voters of any constituency think that no one is suitable to be an MP, then they should refrain from voting.

Here I would like to add a few things. I request all our political leaders, political parties and the 140 million people of the country to recognise Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani as the Dreamer of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Founder of Bangladesh and Ziaur Rahman as the Proclaimer of Independence as well as Builder of Bangladesh. We should all respect them as they are our National Leaders. Statues of Bhasani, Mujib, Zia, General M.A.G. Osmani and Tajuddin Ahmed should be built either at Kalurghat or at Mujibnagar or near the National Memorial at Savar. We should also build a Pillar of Hatred to remind the nation of the collaborators of 1971. **Iqbal Ahmed New Eskaton, Dhaka**

Same course!

The ruling party and the opposition are following more or less the same course.

What difference does it make? I don't think things would've been different if the boot was on the other foot. **Readul Islam Kalyanpur, Dhaka**

Independence Day Award for Betar

It is welcome news that the government has awarded the Independence Day Award 2006 to Bangladesh Betar for the memorable role it played during the War of Liberation in 1971. Bangladesh Betar had kept the hopes and aspiration of millions of Bengalees alive during the war.

After the tragic incident of 15 August 1975, the name of the radio station was changed to Radio Bangladesh.

Nobody bothered or dared to change the name back to Bangladesh Betar till the Awami League came to power again in June 1996.

I am more delighted because the present BNP government has given due recognition to the name Bangladesh Betar by bestowing the award.

History cannot be changed. **Ziauddin Ahmed On e-mail**

Afghan man

This is in response to a letter of Mr. Hassan from Plano, TX US. In his letter he expressed his concern for an Afghan who was tried in court for converting himself from Islam to Christianity. The writer called upon the Muslim community to support him.

The truth of the matter is that Islam doesn't permit such conversion and societies are left to address the issue in their own ways.

Onel Osman On e-mail

Allah Hafez

This is in reference to the letter "Allah Hafez" by Thomas Gomes Bhura. First I would like to ask two questions. What is the base of your perception that Khoda Hafez is more universal than Allah Hafez? How do you compare Allah Hafez vs Khoda Hafez with somebody being treated as the first lady of the country?

Now for your clarification, saying Allah Hafez or Khoda Hafez at the end of a meeting or speech is purely an Islamic and Muslim culture. Some Muslims say Allah Hafez others Khoda Hafez. Allah Hafez is pure Arabic and it is absolutely correct. Nobody has raised any question about its correctness. **Monir Uddin Ahmed Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, Dhaka**

They are still active

This refers to the news "Sayeed's legal notice to Shahriar Kabir resented" published in The Daily Star on 30 March, 2006. The news points out how the rights of our freethinkers are threatened by the black magic of war criminals. These collaborators helped Pakistan during our liberation war but their heinous attempt failed. They joined with the Pakistani soldiers to kill the intellectuals of our country on the eve of our victory. Besides, they are still active to kill our intellectuals. Killing of prominent writer Humayun Azad and Rajshahi university teacher Prof Yunus prove the point.

But they should keep in mind that the new generation will never accept them.

Golam Rosul Maruf University of Dhaka

Disgraceful!

It's happened again. The inevitable thing that few of our athletes would flee away while participating in a game did not change this time also in Melbourne. One of them disappeared from the camp.

However, another athlete disgraced the nation further. He was arrested and fined by the Australian police on charge of sexually assaulting an Australian girl. This is the worst humiliation our players have ever brought for the nation.

We never questioned the performance of our players in a game. But we expect a sporting attitude from them. In contrast, they bring bad name for the country. The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has to take the responsibility for this.

Mohibul Dhaka

Energy crisis

We have been passing through a great hardship. Energy crisis has made our life miserable. Being a third world and developing country it may happen, but when it reaches its peak, it becomes intolerable. If a country wants to develop, it must ensure proper and sufficient energy supply. To develop social and economic conditions there is no alternative to it. In the context of Bangladesh, our social and economic progress is at stake. Our students, farmers, industrialists have been badly affected by loadshedding. Students have to sit for exams under candlelight, agricultural costs rise owing to high costs of fuel and shortage of energy supply, industrialisation process is going to suffer because of the short supply of gas and electricity. On the other hand, our social life is limping.

Though the privileged class has no headache about it, I think now is the right time to address the issue if we don't want to fall further behind in development.

Kazi Abubakar Siddique Lalmatia, Dhaka

Power failure

I really do not think that Dhaka is the capital city of Bangladesh. I have never seen a capital of a country so saddled with all sorts of problems.

Power failure is definitely one of them. I do not think that any government ever existed in this country, otherwise they would have surely looked into this matter seriously. This problem should have been solved a long time ago but still no government could eradicate it. It has been almost five years since this government came to power but still they could not resolve this

crisis.

The government should keep in mind that the power failure might prevent them from retaining "power" next time.

Minhaj Ahmed Uttara, Dhaka

Rejuvenated postal service

Reading the article on the sad picture of the postal service on Star City (March 29th issue), I felt that the depiction was not entirely fair. In my experience, I have always received impeccable service from the post office.

I applied to the US for admission this year and needless to say I had to send tons of recommendations and tax documents. I don't think everybody knows this but there's a service called the EMS (Express Mail Service) provided by the post office which is a guaranteed service (i.e. if the mail is not received you can hold the post office responsible) and will deliver your mail within five days and the cost is very minimal. Documents that cost me about Tk.500 by the EMS would have taken four to five times that amount by DHL or other private courier services. And that would have been absolutely impossible for me to afford. Even the regular foreign mail service is extremely reliable. It will take no more than two weeks to deliver, and that I think is very reasonable for eighty bucks. I would also like to say that not a single of the thirty or forty pieces of documents I have sent over the last two months to various states around the US has been missed. Yeah, there was a time when I too winced at the sound of the GPO, "What? That old place?" But I stand corrected.

Shammi Shawkat O.R.Nizam Road R/A, Chittagong

Open spaces

I too feel strongly, like Quazi Zulfuqarain Islam, about the lack of public playing spaces and fear for the future of certain sports because of the lack of facilities. He also expressed concern over the fact that many city children only 'play' with their computers and video games. Lack of exercise, plus the passion for sweet things, is, I read, one of the reasons for the epidemic of teenage diabetes 2 in poor countries. I urge leading landowners and local politicians and leaders of the community to fight like tigers to get more playing spaces in their areas.

But there is one possibility that few seem to have done anything about and I am surprised that creative thinkers have done so little about this. Nearly every block of flat

has a flat roof and, if the parents in that block got together and spent a bit of money, it could be turned into a very good play area. Such areas, with necessary permissions, could be roofed in and have metal grills to provide space for volleyball or even basketball, cricket practice nets, handball (a very Bangladesh-friendly sport with its own league) or just for happy rushing around and riding small bicycles. Those who build such flats must avoid putting unnecessary things on the roof and the wise landlord should inform his architect of his plans to make his flats especially desirable for parents.

However, I fear there are some parents who, however much space you give them, will not approve of their child's playing nor make time to promote or share it. I know of some children who only play in their own small backyard and not in the public field opposite, because "It is full of bad people." Oh, dear!

Angela Robinson Lalmatia, Dhaka

Attention: CU authority

We, the third year students of anthropology department at Chittagong University, want to draw the attention of the authorities to the uncertainty that clouds our improvement exams in the current syllabus for second year, 2004-05 session, the courses get reshuffled i.e. the contents of 202 no. course (Marriage, kinship, descent) were changed and replaced by 'selected ethnography' which was the content of 203 no. course in the syllabus of 2003-04 session.

Other departments of the university follow the preceding courses in such cases. Our department was no exception to arrange a special exam when course no. 104 was divided into two of fifty marks each for second year students who appeared at the improvement exams. We are told that the rule was revised very recently.

We appeal to the authorities concerned to look into the matter. **Students concerned University of Chittagong**

Opposition's attitude

The government has formally invited the opposition political parties for a dialogue but they are making many excuses and declared that their agitation programmes will go on side by side with the dialogue.

We resent this attitude, what is the need of confrontation when they are going to sit together for a solution? We have got the feeling that the opposition parties' acceptance of a dialogue is a sham, they will continue dilly dallying, stage street programmes in such a way that they will get the opportunity to call hartal and violent demonstrations.

The latest news is that the opposition declared that they might shun the talks if the Jamaat is on the committee. Jamaat is part of the government, so how do you leave it out?

The issues boil down to one point: the opposition parties are not sincere about the dialogue.

Nur Jahan Chittagong

