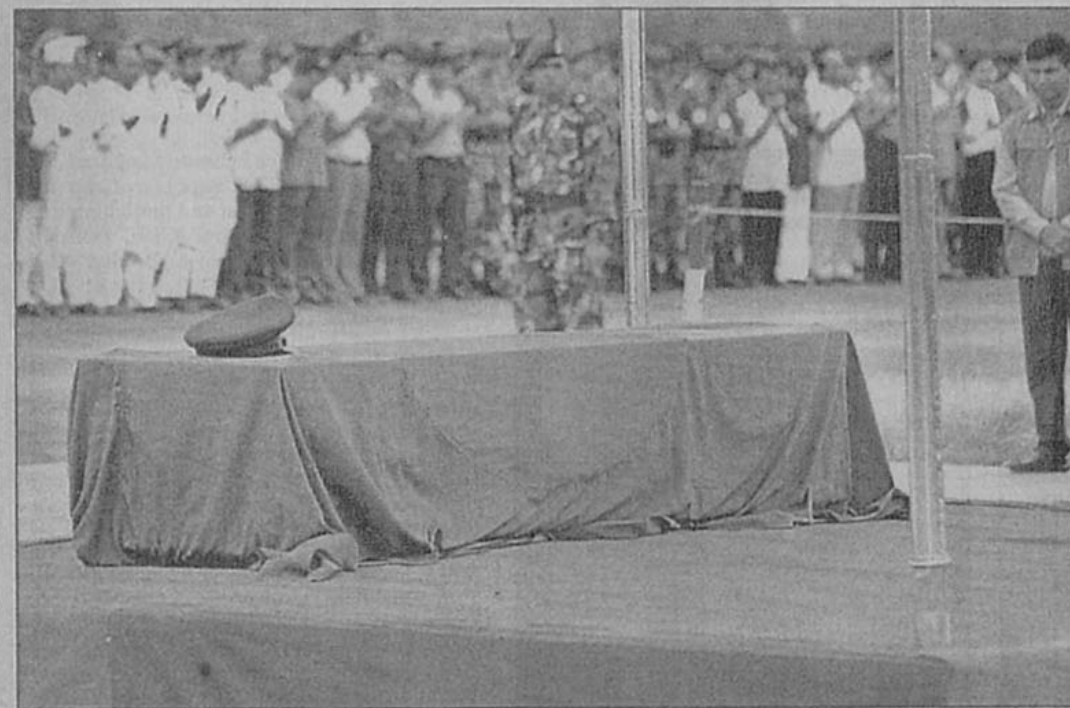


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# Bir Sreshtha Matiur Rahman



I was overcome by emotion to learn that the remains of our hero, Bir Sreshtha Matiur Rahman, are now back where they belong, to rest in our motherland for eternity.

But I am intensely curious to know how this came about behind the scenes. For Pakistan to release him, there must have been a request made

by authorities from Bangladesh. Also, did they acknowledge his role as a hero of a friendly country, or was it a quiet compromise? Given that Pakistan has yet to officially admit its genocide role in 1971, this may be evidence of an extremely positive move by them, and we should give all responsible their due for skilful diplo-

macy and negotiation.

Perhaps, we could have some reporting on the events leading to this joyous occasion.

Sanjoy Kumar Nath  
Chittagong

Sreshtha Matiur Rahman and burial on our soil with full state honour. It should have featured on your front page. The government, however, has little credit as the efforts were made by a group of freedom fighters and the martyr's family. From this land of plenty I fondly remember the teen days of active participation in the

great liberation war. In fact my spirit drove me to set up a liberation war monument and dedicate a flower bed for each of the Bir Sreshtha in my workplace at Ashuganj beside Bhairab.

Please convey our sincerest respect to the members of Matiur's family.

Saleque Sufi  
Melbourne, Australia

## Grand tamasha!

The CEC headlines and the interesting cartoon alongside (DS: 26 June) are amusing. But I could not decipher who represents the desperate swimmer and the man-eating crocodile chasing him in the castle moat? The only thing very clear is that the CEC badly needs hair transplant, with the willing donor standing right behind him, landing probably by hair-raising parachute accuracy! May be the hair transplant will cool his brain and he can think coolly without guns or gums to stick to.

After all is said and done, our election is a grand tamasha of snakes and ladders; now with a few crocodiles thrown in for good measure! The party with the longest ladder of fake or firm (gummed) votes attains the goal! The rest are thrown to the snakes and crocodiles.

If dead people can apply in the voting game; what about unborn babies in the womb? The election game is posing interesting options and possibilities. Hopefully, the last will and oral declaration of a dying person should be a sure entry of his or her vote!

The rules of this election game like "Alice in Wonderland" give different views as you view it through Alice's "Looking Glass".

Tamasha Watcher  
One-mail

## Primary school teachers' demands

Is our education ministry, government paying any attention to the demands of the primary schools teachers? How long they have to be on the road under the open sky starving for their legitimate demands? They are the backbone of our educational foundation.

We have the highest allocation in our budget for the education sector, then what is the obstacle to increasing their salary? They are the teachers; direct contributors to nation-building. They taught us, you and each and every educated of the country, their demands cannot be illogical. Rather, it is illogical to beautify the lawn of the parliament building by spending public money, it is illogical to spend millions of dollars to make a useless voter list. When shall we wake up?

Md. Habibur Rahman  
One-mail

## Bleak future?

We are bewildered and feeling very upset by the situation in the country. Suddenly, we are being assailed by unthinkable problems. Violence is erupting from every corner, when one fire is looking down another is flaring, there is no end to it.

Now the Khatme Nabuwat Movement (KNM), an anti-Ahmadiyya organisation, has come to the scene; they marched to capture a mosque of Ahmadiyya community at Dakhkhin Khan of Uttara. When police interrupted they clashed with them and Uttara turned into a battlefield. Fifteen people were injured and the KNM activists damaged 10 vehicles, which stopped transport movement on the Airport Road. It seems that everybody is taking advantage of the chaotic situation in the country.

My question is why suddenly all these are taking place and who will be benefited by this unrest?

A deep sadness has engulfed me, the dream of living in peace and harmony is being shattered, it seems everything is crumbling down around us - it is unbearable.

The valiant sons of this soil laid down their lives to give us a free country but what a mess we have made, we fought with the Hanadar Bahini, now we are fighting with each other, we should be ashamed of our conduct.

Nur Jahan, Ctg

## Overbridge needed at Rampura

We, the people of Rampura, have to cross the busy road in front of TV centre. At times we have to wait for a long time to get a suitable chance to cross over the road. The obstinate and rash drivers even do not care to stop the vehicle or slow the same for the benefit of the pedestrians.

We desperately appeal to the authorities concerned to kindly look into the matter. The place needs a foot overbridge. For the time being, they should build a speed breaker to deal with rash driving which is a source of great danger to the local people.

Nikhil Chandra Das  
Rampura, Dhaka

## Voice of reason

Finally one voice of reason and maturity amidst all the posturing over the RMG crisis. Mr. Wasim Rahman has brilliantly highlighted the factors that just about everyone has ignored.

Sadly, his voice seems to be one in the wilderness. I fear that with a weak government, rapacious vested interests and a media not strong in its understanding of business, he may be the sole voice of reason.

MAH  
One-mail

## A matter of focus

It was end-1957, to recall. In one of those evenings, the then chief Minister of East Pakistan Ataur Rahman Khan hosted a reception in honour of the newly installed Prime Minister of Pakistan Sir Feroz Khan Noon at the sprawling lawn of his official residence on Bailey Road of Dhaka city. The residence, to note, built during the heyday of British rule is a delightful piece of classical English architecture, which importantly was anointed with history when Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip stayed overnight at the building during their visit to East Pakistan in

1960.

The guests were seated under a large canopy and drawn, as they were from different regions of Pakistan, they were a colourful gathering. Pakistan Prime Minister was obviously the main drawer of attention of the guests present. When H. S. Suhrawardy, the leader of the opposition in Pakistan parliament arrived, the Prime Minister and the guests rose to greet him. He smilingly responded to the greetings, told Sir Feroz Khan Noon, "This is your turn".

Decades later, I find those inimitable words uttered by H. S. Suhrawardy do still have a resonance in our egocentric corridor of power. Presentation of annual budget by the Finance Minister in the parliament is an occasion the entire nation looks forward to most eagerly. He is the lone actor on the day, and remains the focal point of attention of all citizenry across the nation. To follow the norm, no distracting factor must intervene in between them to dilute the focus on the Finance Minister. With us, however, it is a different story. Blissfully oblivious whose turn it is (to be in focus) our Finance Minister is not alone; he is in accompaniment of the top brass in nation's governance. Apparently innocuous it might seem, this intervention obviously causes a distraction in focus, which normally should not go amiss to any observant eye. A cultural aberration it has been with us since long, - virtually making it a fait accompli, - must go at the earliest not rationalised for any wrong reason.

Syed Badrul Haque  
Lalmatia, Dhaka

language. It is unfortunate, however, that he had to use this asset negatively to vent his frustrations against his colleagues during his time in office. It appears that Kazi Fazlur Rahman's frustrations cling to him even three decades after the incidents took place - why else would he publish a diary which, after all, is a place where people confide even their most biased animosity without censure.

Aliya Haq  
Autumn Mist Circle  
Germantown, USA

## Indo-Bangla relations

The news item on Sheikh Hasina's meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Manmohan Singh as reported in The Daily Star on 23rd June, 2006 drew my attention. Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, the political secretary to Hasina, said, "We appeal to the BNP that India be not made an issue in the general election in Bangladesh and Dhaka should conduct its ties with New Delhi based on its national interests." Did he try to appease the Indians? Rather, it would have been most appropriate if Mr. Saber stated that it would be appreciated if the Indians implement all the agreements so far agreed upon and signed by both the countries within the time frame and in toto. But, unfortunately, this has not happened.

Just to remind him, immediately after the signing of Indira-Mujib Treaty in 1974, Bangladesh handed over the Berubari enclave to India even without waiting for the ratification, but after a lapse of 32 years India is still reluctant to handover Angorpotha and Dahagram on one pretext or the other, in spite of the fact that the Bangladeshis in the enclave are undergoing immense hardship.

Presently, the news of BSF killing of Bangladeshi nationals appears in our newspapers daily. One would like to observe here that there is no reaction of political parties on this issue. The day one BSF soldier was killed, came the

## A bureaucrat's diary

Though "Amlar Dinilipi", the diary of an erstwhile secretary Mr. Kazi Fazlur Rahman was published in 2001, I only just came across it. After reading it, I was moved enough to pen these thoughts.

I must compliment K. F. Rahman on his extensive vocabulary and superb command of the Bangla

reaction of the Indian High Commissioner and very rightly at that. Of course, the foreign ministry spokesperson then denied the contention of the Indian High Commission by giving details of actual happenings.

I would like to refresh the mind of Mr. Saber by drawing his attention to the outstanding issues between the two neighbours. The list is enormous as you know.

Brig Gen AHM Abdul Momen (Retd)  
DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka

## Corruption at ZIA

The customs officials at Dhaka International Airport can cause a lot of trouble to the travellers. I can't help share the problem that I had to encounter while coming back to my homeland after a long time. The plane landed at the wee hours of the morning and after clearing immigration, at the custom's area I expressed my intention to declare my cash dollar amount. I was then pointed towards a clerk behind a casual desk. He handed over two forms to fill up and asked me questions that made me feel that I had done something wrong in bringing the foreign currency into the country, as if I was connected to some sort of illegal transaction. Following that I was ushered to a senior customs official's

room, where two of them started to count the dollars which were in one hundred dollar bills. Already exhausted from the long flight & not being up to speed with their dishonest dealings, I was told to my surprise that my declared amount was wrong. Refusing to accept their alleged acquisition, they recounted them again & this time they informed me that the declared amount was correct. Then after a few other official procedures I was freed. But after arriving home when I counted & recounted the money, to my utter surprise, there was a one hundred dollar bill missing from the bundle!

I'd like to pass the lesson learned from the episode to other unwary travellers so that no one is victimised again. Firstly, do not allow anyone to touch or count your money. Always count the money yourself no matter how tired you are from the journey. Actually, there should be a government directive on this matter to safeguard honest people.

I just cannot fathom that myself being a highly professional person, doing a honest job abroad could be cheated by corrupt people in my own country. And these are the people who have been entrusted to enforce the laws of the country.

I suggest that government & regulatory bodies investigate into

such criminal behaviour of dishonest officials. If the government wants more foreign currency to come to the country in a lawful way, it must change the way it conducts its business.

Avictim  
One-mail

## AL and Jamaat

A few weeks after the 2001 general elections, a lengthy interview of Jamaat leader Golam Azam was published in a daily wherein he had been asked whether he had ever met Sheikh Hasina personally to which he replied in the negative. He further stated that there was no telephonic conversation between them.

It may be mentioned that in the 1996 general elections Jamaat-Islami had won only 3 seats whereas in 2001 they won more than 20 seats, thanks to BNP's surrender of seats in their favour! Therefore, the allegation that Sheikh Hasina had sought blessings from Golam Azam seems to be baseless. Perhaps, this is the reason why the Speaker expunged the remarks of the BNP lawmaker so promptly.

Abul Mohsin  
Siddheswari Circular Road, Dhaka

## Muslims vs. Muslims

This is in response to Mr. Mahmood Elahi's concern "But no one seems to have any idea how to stop Muslims from slaughtering fellow Muslims". I have an idea, which is not political. Let us go back to over fourteen hundred years when the last Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) was given the title of

"Al-Ameen", meaning truthful. If we follow the meaning and speak the truth all the time we will get rid of Muslims slaughtering fellow Muslims.

Since we know that charity begins at home, let there be banners requesting people to speak the truth. That will bring about a radical change.

Taher, J. Sharjah, U.A.E.

## Football war!



This is a war sans weapon of mass destruction, but not without bloodletting. This is the war which is jolting the whole universe. Here adrenaline plays the crucial role. The beautiful game mesmerizes all.

The match between Portugal & Holland showed how a football ground could turn into a battlefield. Ronaldo's tears said how much passion he has for his country. The brawl between the players of the two teams showed their desperation. The match had everything, a spectacular goal by Maniche, skills showed by Persie, tenacity of Portugal's defence, their coach's tactics, Deco's blunder, four expulsions, tears, joy everything!

But total football is lost to doggedness. Another chance to lift the World Cup has slipped away from the men in orange. But this is the reality - one team wins another loses.

So far the grand meet has been highly contested, so enjoy the game whoever may win.

Solaiman Palash  
East Jurain, Dhaka

## A tribute to Bangladesh

In April this year, my family and I had to say goodbye to Bangladesh our home for the last four years. I want to thank many people who welcomed us to this wonderful country and made us feel so much at home.

So, thank you to the rickshaw-pullers who always greet us with smiles and work so hard under the scorching sun or in the pouring rain to support their families. Your resilience should make some of us feel ashamed of our comfortable lives and unwillingness to help others in need.

Thank you the women and children who break bricks all day long to help ensure that there is enough building materials for roads and construction project. Knowing how much you earn each day breaks my heart but I admire your patience and your hard work. I hope that your working conditions will improve and that your rights will be properly protected.

Thanks to the garbage collectors who work day and night to ensure that our homes and streets remain clean. Thank you for risking your health to keep us healthy. I hope you will be provided with suitable protective working gear.

Thanks to the local people in many villages around Dhaka who always opened their homes, invited us in for a drink and climbed up trees to pick fruits for our children. Your hospitality and integrity should make Bangladesh proud. I hope you will benefit from improvements of basic social services such as health care, clean water

and schooling for your children.

Thanks - you to the sari makers for producing this stylish and elegant fabric while helping to maintain Bangladesh's heritage. I will keep wearing my sari on special occasions and be reminded of your hard-work and diligence. I hope Bangladesh's trade can be better promoted so that your beautiful products can be enjoyed by many women outside your country.

Thank you to the shopkeepers and traders who often go out of their ways to meet customer demands, from elegant pearls, antiques, teak-wood furniture, to ceramics. I hope Bangladesh can soon enjoy a more stable political environment so that you can open your shop each day and don't have to worry about hartals.

Thank you to so many volunteers who are working hard to protect and provide for the educational needs of poor women and children living on the street or in slum areas. Your courage and commitment are changing more lives than you ever know.

To the common people of Bangladesh who have to battle regular floods and cyclones to survive and to earn a living, I admire your courage and I hope that your living conditions will soon improve. You deserve better and I hope to return one day soon to see your wonderful smiles on your faces again.

Que Nguyen  
One-mail