



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.

Stop destroying Lebanon



As I write this hurriedly scribbled note, a few more apartment buildings, many more bridges, roads and warehouses, not to mention human lives are sure to have been the casualty in Lebanon in the intense Israeli blitz. Israel has ruled out the possibility of any ceasefire till realisation of its campaign objectives. They are not counting the dead at the moment. They are at war. Well, how much more damage and toll of human lives does Israel want before it can quench its thirst for blood? Shall we then have to brace for the worst to come? Israel is unstoppable. If "might is allowed to justify the right" then so much the worse for all of us. Not only Lebanon or Gaza, the whole international order that took so many thousands of years to evolve to this point will crumble to pieces. The rule of jungle will take precedence over norms of civilisation. The promise for a world peace based on justice, equity and humanity will prove to be an utterly self-fulfilling prophecy.

Who will dare stand up against this barbaric game and call Israel to halt this paranoia? "No you have absolutely no right to do this. Stop it immediately and get the hell out." Who will utter these few words and risk the Zionist ire? Rarely had the world been through such a leadership vacuum. The world in its current uni-polar dynamics is fast losing its check and balance. There is no sanity in this global size madhouse. Everybody is in mad rush for petty self-interest. Japan ran amuck drumming up support for trade sanction against N. Korea for mere test firing a few missiles. The big powers are uniting to ostracize Iran for its maverick stand and asserting its right as a sovereign nation. Tears were shed for the refugees in the Darfur region in Somalia. Not an eyebrow, so to say, was raised for the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and Lebanon. The world as it were is engaged in a conspiracy of silence. It is none of their concern what goes wrong with a vibrant democracy and a beautiful country being pounded day and night and reduced to rubble! How can the world survive the

burden of a guilty conscience of this magnitude?
Yusuf Azad
 Chief Evaluation Officer
 Board of Intermediate and
 Secondary Education Board, Rajshahi

Kidnapping of two Israelis cannot be the reason for destroying Lebanon. That was just an issue to get into the country & wipe it off from the world map. The UN should play a vital role here. There is no other alternative way to stop the bloodshed in Lebanon.
Rajul Hasan, Sydney



The crisis of Muslim world

This is a response to the view of Mr. Mahmood Elahi published on July 11, 2006. He started his writing questioning why Muslims kill fellow Muslims because he did not find the answer or explanation of it in Mr. Anwarul Karim's writing.

Interestingly enough, no answer of his own question, let alone any explanation, is found in his entire writing. He started his writing with a point yet he missed that! Actually this makes whatever he wrote after the introduction of his letter rather pointless.

He said, "Muslim slaughter of fellow Muslims is at the heart of today's crisis." It is not clear what does he want to mean by the words, "Today's crisis". Is it a crisis of Muslim world? Is it a crisis of Muslims in a particular region? Is it a crisis of Islam?

What is the crisis? Or is it a crisis or a symptom of underlying real crisis. It seems Mr. Mahmood Elahi himself is quite confused about today's crisis.

Sunnis are killing Shiites in Iraq and Shiites are doing the same.

Why? Because they are just Sunnis and Shiites? Or is there some other reason? May be it's just happening due to a power struggle.

For a long period Sunnis have enjoyed power marginalising the majority Shiites and Kurds, so it is very hard for some quarters of the Sunnis to just give up power to Shiites and Kurds. May be Sunnis are discriminated the way they did discrimination and injustice to Shiites and Kurds. Sunnis are killing Shiites because Shiites are supporting a foreign occupational force. This can be a strong point. In the same manner Shiites have

many strong reasons (they suffered a lot during Saddam's regime) to kill Sunnis. Muslims are killing fellow Muslims not because of the victims' Muslim identity. Spreading anti-west feelings by killing fellow Muslims (Shiite or Sunni) is just one of the many reasons, and not to mention a pathetically unnecessary one.

Pathetic because there exist numerous examples of crimes committed by the USA against Muslims, such as Abu Graib prison, Guantanamo Bay, rape of Iraqi women, secret prisons in Europe and what not. These incidents are enough to stir anti-west feelings.

If being a Sunni or Shiite is the main reason behind these killings, this sectarian violence could prevail during Saddam's rule. In fact, an acceptable level of social harmony was present among different sects during that period. No sectarian violence at social level prevailed during Saddam's regime. Violence and atrocities were there, but at state level. Saddam was a dictator hence, he did not spare anybody (whether a Shiite or a Sunni) who was a threat to his absolute power. Saddam was a Sunni so the Kurds were. So how could Saddam kill the Kurds?

Saddam was a proponent of secular ideology throughout his term. That's why during Iran-Iraq war West supported Saddam with deadly chemical weapons and other conventional ones. Saddam used those chemical weapons against Iraqis and Kurds of Iraq. So, western powers are not angels either. What is a Muslim state? The Pakistani journalist mentioned some names of Muslim states. To become a Muslim state, a state has to comply with Islamic principles

based on the Holy Quran and authentic Hadith. In that state Islam is to be followed not only in private life but also in social and state level. Domestic and foreign policy, financial system, judicial system—everything has to be compliant with the Holy Quran and authentic Hadith. Do those states maintain these standards? No. Those states are not Muslim states but Muslim Majority states at best.

That's why they can easily slay fellow Muslims.
Muhammad Mamunur Rashid
 Uttara, Dhaka

An appeal
 The circular for holding examination for registration and certification of non-govt teachers has been published vide NTRCA Memo-BASINIK/PARIKHA-1/2006/108 dated 10.7.06. The last date for submission of application is 6.8.06. Results of Honours and Masters Final examinations held several months ago under public universities, namely DU, CU, RU, JU, have not been published as yet. A large number of examinees anxiously waiting for publication of results will not be able to sit for the ensuing registration examination unless the results are published very shortly. The next examination will be held after more than one year. This means a clear loss of one year from the life of hundreds and thousands of job seekers. To ensure larger participation in the Registration Examination and save loss of a valuable year of our youngsters (examinees under public universities), I would like to offer the following suggestions for sympathetic consideration of the public university authorities and Non-govt Teachers Registration and

- Certification Authority:
1. Public Universities (DU, CU, RU, JU etc) should expedite publication of pending results of Hons and Masters examinations, so that the examinees can avail the opportunity of appearing in the upcoming Registration Examination.
 2. NTRCA should a) accept Provisionally the 'Appeared Certificates' of Honours and Masters examinees, and make submission of Hons/ Masters Pass Certificates compulsory before publication of Registration Examination results. If any examinee fails to submit his Pass Certificates, his results shall remain postponed. It shall be released as and when he produces his certificates b) extend date of submission of applications up to 20.8.06 and shift the date of examination to 20.9.06.
 3. Arrange sale of application forms through all the district branches of Agrani Bank. Last year a number of candidates could not sit for the examinations due to non-availability of application forms. It is rather difficult for a few numbers of branches, mostly located in the city and divisional HQs. to meet the demands of applicants.
- M Sadeq**
 Chairman
 Department of Management,
 Tejgaon College,
 Farmgate, Dhaka

Bangladesh power scenario
 In any under developed country like Bangladesh, the demand for electricity is expected to go up at a compound rate of may be 10 percent per annum. If the demand for power today is 4,000 MW then by 2016 it should be 8,000 MW. Adding 20 percent operational power reserve we shall not be wrong to plan installations for at least additional 4,800 MW by 2018. Further, we need to replace at least half of our existing plants. Total demand including replacement could well be for 4,800+2,000 (replacement) which indicates additional 6,800 MW by 2016! Is there any long term planning for this? Or will we go on bickering between the BNP & the AL and let power demand go down the drain and only go for more power rationing? Cynics say the BNP stands for "Biddut Nai Party"! May be it should be "Bangladeshey Nai Power"; the way things are going today! It is unfortunate that the nation suffers, because of political bickering and we have no common agreed agenda beyond political in fighting!

There is a lot of talk going round about nuclear power generation as an option for Bangladesh. However, there are two main problems— one is the capital cost per KW of installed nuclear based power, which is way above any other electrical generation process! Although today's nuclear reactors are much safer, they are still very complex and dangerous equipments to handle; even potentially disastrous compared to conventional power plants. Safety is the next most important problem that has a serious impact for nuclear power plants.

Further, technical discipline and safety standards in nuclear power plant operation are extremely high. It is much higher than even the standards in civil aviation! Also the extra investment for reactor containment and safety installation's redundancy and spare fail-safe auxiliary capabilities make a

nuclear power plant very capital intensive! We may consider the CANDU route, developed by Canadian atomic energy authorities based on natural uranium as fuel or the pebblebed South African design. Both are considered to be safer options. However investment for a 500 MW plant could be well in excess of US\$ 700 million plus today. Additional local currency cost of over Taka 150 crore for auxiliaries, switchgear, and infrastructure and safety protocol is needed. Where do we get this sort of funds, leaving aside the cost of technology transfer and training expenses?

The cost will not be proportionally lower for a small plant. Even a 100 MW nuclear power plant may cost over 60% of the 500 MW set up! The technology transfer and training cost may come to another Tk. 20 crores or more for either size. Further the import of nuclear fuel is a costly and fundamentally a political issue that has no easy solution. The safeguards for procuring nuclear fuel for a small country like Bangladesh could be complicated with various financial and other political guarantees that may not be possible to provide.

Considering these important factors I believe the nuclear option could be looked at may be twenty years from now if we can maintain steady positive economic growth, which is already stumbling for lack of power!

Gas and coal are our only potential hydrocarbon fuel source, and improved and efficient proven combined cycle thermal power plant the only way to go. Our emphasis should be on energy conservation and maximising the use of renewable energy sources. All efforts should be mobilised and operated on war footing to harness wherever possible wind, sunlight and waterpower sources. The investment cost may be high, but there is tremendous gain in life term operating cost. We should go all out for bio-fuels and power from municipal waste. Proven process for power generation with this fuel is available, and we need not reinvent the wheel.

S.A. Mansoor
 Director, Engineering
 Partex Group

Relations with India
 I used to think that it was not the common people but the politicians of India who were responsible for the negative foreign policy towards Bangladesh, but my idea was struck hard by the letter from Ashwin, Mumbai.

Indians think that they have given us independence, although 30 lakh people embraced martyrdom here for that noble purpose.

India never cooperates with us to remove trade imbalance between the two countries. I wonder why Indian BSF follows its policy of killing innocent people and also tries to 'push in' people across the border. They keep the Farakka Barrage open during floods. How can we take India as a friend as it has become the second home for outlaws of Bangladesh?

Dear Ashwin, I really like Lata Mungeskar, Sachin and Shahrukh and have no negative attitude towards India. But I hope India will act with greater responsibility to have a better relation with all its neighbours.

Md. Jamal U Tanin
 CMC, Chittagong

Rights of teachers

It is a matter of great regret that the teachers, who teach people to make them good citizens, responsible and patriotic, are being beaten up by law enforcers. The cops, who are responsible for assaulting the teachers physically, may have not gotten education from any real teacher.

The poor teachers are struggling for their rights. As the citizens of a democratic country, it is their democratic right to organise a procession. No one has the right to stop them. But is it the democratic right of the cops to beat the poor teachers?

The government allocates the biggest amount of money for the education sector every year. Then why are the teachers being deprived of their financial rights?

Teachers are to educate us, not to boycott classes. But the government is forcing them

to agitate.

My sympathy and support is always with the teachers.

Mrinal Sarkar
 Lecturer in English
 College of Development Alternative
 Dhanmondi, Dhaka

I suggest the government raise the salaries of the teachers without any further delay. However on one condition! All teachers have to refrain from earning an extra - exuberant - and tax-free income by providing so called "coaching" to students, and close down their illegal coaching centres at once.

Ms. Mariam Ferdousi
 Ramu, Cox's Bazar



DRUG ADDICTION

Drug addition is now a global problem. This social cancer has spread its vicious tentacles in all directions. It has grasped not only the young generation of the developed countries but also the young generation of the poor countries. It is spreading quickly. Because of the cheap prices of phensidyl, youngsters can

buy it easily and it is a profitable item for drug peddlers. Now all types of expensive and cheap drugs are available in the luxury flats to dirty slums. The parents of young sons and daughters are so much worried about their future. In general, the young people are very curious about taking anything new. If drug

peddlers can convince one young student, it is possible to get a large number of students through him.

Only timely steps can check such activities. Otherwise, the lives of a huge number of youths will be totally ruined.

Sonia Akter
 International Islamic
 University

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