



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.

# Israel and the Arab World



This is a response to "Concerned Muslim's" letter on the following subject. I would like to remind him that Bangladesh didn't demand the whole of Pakistani land and didn't deny Pakistan's right to exist simply because we had no right to do so. But the Palestinians DO AND THEY REALLY DO have a right over the land Israel is currently occupying. Israel was formed by forcing out TWO MILLION Palestinians from their homeland. As a result, they became refugees in their own country. Their fight for freedom is absolutely just and no one can deny or ignore their fight to earn back their lost rights. Mr. "Concerned Muslim", your statement that all these years of fighting had given the Palestinians NOTHING is absolutely incorrect. Tell me what did the Palestinians gain before the latest "Intifada" began? It was only as a result of continuous and fearless resistance that Israel was forced to evacuate Gaza after 38 years of illegal occupation. If Allah wills, one day, for sure, the whole of Palestine will be freed from illegal occupation. Also, your suggestion that the Palestinians should be ready to make sacrifices

simply shows your support for the adage "MIGHT IS RIGHT" instead of "JUSTICE SHOULD PREVAIL". The Palestinians are the true owners of Israeli lands and entirely it is up to them to recognise or not to recognise Israel. As a rational being, your duty is to stand for justice as has been prescribed in the Holy Quran. Finally, I believe that as a "Concerned Muslim", you are CONCERNED about the fact that recovering "MASJID-UL-AQSA" from illegal Jewish occupation is a duty entrusted upon the entire Muslim community, not only the Palestinians.

I would request all not to make comments that will undermine the Palestinians' legitimate fight for freedom. **Mohammad Abdullah Dhanmondi, Dhaka** \*\*\* The Muslims and Jews have a long history of mutual cooperation and coexistence, as well as suffering and persecution at the hands of Christian zealots. Even before the Holocaust, during Christian Crusades to free the Holy Land from the grip of the 'infidels' the

Christian zealots from Europe (USA did not exist at that time) annihilated all the Jewish habitations on their way from Europe to the Middle East as an act of piety, before massacring the Muslim and the Jewish population of Jerusalem.

During the Spanish Inquisition when the Muslims and the Jews were given two choices: death or conversion to Christianity, many Jews found safe-haven in Muslim lands. Not only that, Jews had always enjoyed high and prestigious positions in Muslim empires up until European colonisation of the Muslim lands.

Yet today, disillusioned by false promises of the imperialists, Zionist Jews are waging a ruthless war against Islam and fighting America's war. It is sad that the Israelis are allowing America to use them, just the way America used Afghan Mujahideens to fight America's previous adversary, Communist Soviet Union. **Shukla Mirza, Doha, Qatar**

## In response to an editorial

I concur that the number of criminal cases awaiting disposal in Bangladesh courts is too high. It is axiomatic that due process requires a fair and speedy resolution of the issues presented before the courts. Criminal charges that are not effectively disposed of, as set out in the procedural code of Bangladesh, serve neither the interests of the defendant, the alleged victim nor the state.

Nevertheless, it is incorrect that very little investment has been made in building the capacity of the Bangladesh judiciary, as you mentioned in a recent editorial.

The Judicial Administrative Training Institute (JATI) was established as an organisation under the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs by an act of Parliament in July 1995 as the focal point of training for all subordinate court judges and as a support and resource facility for Supreme Court judges. More information can be found on JATI's website at: [www.jatibd.org](http://www.jatibd.org).

JATI trained 177 judges in nine judicial training courses. On 20 July, an additional twenty nine additional district and sessions judges will complete their two week training course with a certificate awarding ceremony.

Two months ago, JATI decamped from its temporary premises in the Old High Court and moved into the recently constructed JATI Building Complex on College Road.

This modern five story building is equipped with over seventy computers and it has high speed internet access. Judges and support staff in each course receive comprehensive training in the use of computers and the internet. This computer training can provide the foundation for judges to better organise their dockets, research case law and improve their knowl-

edge of legal issues in general. **Md. Sagir**, Director, Judicial Administration Training Institute, Dhaka

## Participation in online survey

Through your newspaper, may I take this opportunity to request Bangladeshi citizens from home and abroad to participate in an online survey on Bangladesh's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and its 'participatory' nature (in its preparation). I am a Bangladeshi researcher based at the University of Liverpool, UK. I am researching on civil society participation in the development of Bangladesh's PRSP.

PRSP is the key document for various poverty alleviation programmes and other development activities in a national context. The government of Bangladesh finalised the PRSP in October 2005. The PRSP was supposed to include views and participation from all major stakeholders i.e. direct representatives of poor, labour organisations, women groups, civil society organisations (CSOs), political parties, parliament (where applicable), sectoral ministries, regional banks and international donor agencies, to name a few.

Everyone who will take part in this survey will have a chance of winning one of the two complementary cash prizes of Tk 15,000.

To participate in the survey and for more details about the cash prizes please visit: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/sspsw/research/survey.htm>

**Md. Kamruzzaman**, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Liverpool

## DU

DU was known as the Oxford of the East. There were reasons for earning a reputation of that nature. DU students of olden days do still feel proud of their university, but

are very unhappy about the present chaotic situation prevailing in the university. Who should we blame?

Things are going wrong in every area. In the past, results of final exams would be published in less than three months. But what do we witness these days? **Bhuiya Saiful**, Dhaka-1217

## Islam in South Korea

Islam came to Korea during the Korean War through the Turkish troops who took part in that war.

are studying Islam and Arabic language in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, Turkey, Libya, Malaysia, Indonesia and Pakistan.

**Tanzila Nur**, Department of English, International Islamic University, Chittagong

## Rainy season onion

Onion is an essential element with various uses all over the world from prehistoric times. For us onion is preferable to heavenly foods. Onion is generally produced in Bangladesh as winter crop. So

The rainy season onion is a new variety and an innovative one in the field of onion cultivation. It requires 150-160 days from sowing seeds to harvest. Seeds have to be spread from the last week of April to second week of May. The seedlings of 40-45 days are sown in the root land. Crops are harvested within four months from the time of sowing. People think that it is quite possible to meet up extra demand of onion by cultivating rainy season onion successfully. The seed beds of rainy season onion has been established at Natore Horticulture Centre with the help of the 'Inte-

grated Entrepreneurship and Nutrition Development Project' of DAE. Three hundred gram seeds were sown on April 30, 2005 for the first time experimentally. After 47 days seedlings were sown and harvested on 7 October. On the other hand, the land pattern for cultivating rainy season onion is same as the summer season one. Doash and sandy soil are especially fit for the cultivation of rainy season onion. For rainy season onion, high land is needed so that the stored water of rainfall may get down

land are the same for both types. **Md. Nurul Alam**, Public Relations & Protocol Cell, BKB, H.O, Dhaka.

## Election and ethnic minorities

A half-day workshop was organised on 26 July 2006 by RDRS Bangladesh in its conference room situated at Uttara as an Election Working Group (EWG) member. At the initiative of Asia Foundation, 35 NGOs have been selected to promote democratic culture and create an environment to ensure that the ethnic community including hard-to-reach people participate in the overall election process. In view of different challenges confronting the ethnic poor, a strategic training module in draft form was presented by RDRS Bangladesh for general discussion.

In the process of establishing a strong-rooted democracy in a country like Bangladesh the mass participation including that of the ethnic minority and 'hard-to-reach' people is a significant factor. This training module has been developed precisely detailing with why one should become a voter, how to vote, what is the benefit of being a part of the election process, what should be done to tackle the obstacles, etc.

The draft was articulately explained, which was followed by an open forum discussion and finally with some modifications the same was approved unanimously for onward submission to the Asia Foundation. The role of the relevant NGOs is to create awareness and encourage the ethnic people to participate in the election by using the training module guidance. These NGOs are also entrusted to act as vigilant observers to oversee the election activities and prepare a surveillance report.

More than 40 participants representing different NGOs attended the meeting and they are expected

in return to hold workshops, meetings and trainings in their working areas to motivate the ethnic minority people living there by using the same training module everywhere. The NGOs will take initiative to form committees with civil society consisting of local elites and professionals. They will also hold discussion meetings with influential personnel and professional groups to make the learning process easier, understandable and to invite cooperation of all. Moderator referred to a write-up published in the Daily Sangbad on 25 July 2006 on 'Voter list of ethnic minority' by Mithushilak Murrnu, an ethnic columnist. The writer appealed that in the event of debacle in Election Commission Office with regard to preparing a fresh voter list, ethnic persons should be engaged in listing their names as voters, for the sake of preparing an authentic list of the ethnic people.

We all are aware that socially, economically and politically the ethnic minorities are grossly neglected. They are often forcibly deprived of their civil and legal rights. They are driven out of their homesteads and lands. Ignorance, poverty and illiteracy are the basic causes of their backwardness. They need education, training and motivation. There is a need to instil in them confidence, courage and inspiration. The step taken by the Asia Foundation is indeed commendable and appropriate for organising the NGOs in this direction. The Asia Foundation will extend financial support to the NGOs for fulfilling the objective efficiently by involving the ethnic minority and hard-to-reach people in the process of election. **Jerome Sarkar, On email**

## Stop crossfire killing

My condolences to the bereaved families of those who were killed in crossfire. The people of Bangladesh should put an end to crossfire deaths. When an innocent man dies because somebody took advantage of an illegal system, the

benefits of crossfire killing of criminals become irrelevant. The act of killing a person without proper trial is illegal and amounts to extra judicial murder.

Time has come to take a firm stand against "crossfire" killing. **Imran M. Khan, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, School of Medicine, University of California San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093

## Road in bad shape

Rajbari is a district town. The Rajbari-Jamalpur road starts from Rajbari district and ends at Jamalpur bazar. It is 15 kilometres long. The road has become unusable for lack of maintenance. The road passes through many densely populated villages and links the commercial area which is Jamalpur bazar with the southern part of the district town. This is the only main road which connects the area to the district town. Every day thousands of people use this road to go to the district town. Until now no maintenance work has been done for the road after its construction. Under the project 'Food for Work' sometimes some earth work is done but there is no real maintenance. The road goes under flood water every year. Thus it is damaged.

The authorities concerned should look into the matter. **Areader, On email**

## Indiscriminate use of loudspeaker

Quietness is natural and highly necessary for a peaceful living. But sound pollution is a major threat to our modern life. The authorities should come forward with a systematic plan to control sound pollution.

It is necessary to create awareness among the people and also to enforce the law strictly. **Tamanna Fardous Munni**, Chittagong

# Attracting tourists

We know Cox's Bazar is the largest sea beach in the world. But due to lack of proper measures the beach is losing its reputation and people are not interested in it like in the past. Rangamati and Kapitai are beautiful places but there is no arrangement to attract tourists. Buddhabihar of Comilla is also losing its charm. But the authorities concerned are not showing due sensitivity to this matter.

People usually pass their holidays enjoying the natural beauty. But due to lack of proper steps to save our natural beauty from being spoiled, they are going abroad to pass their leisure time.

The tourism department should look into the matter. **Urme Chittagong**



## Nuclear power for Bangladesh

In a special article entitled "Nuclear Power for Bangladesh" (The Daily Star, July 28, 2006), Chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission Dr. Anwar Hossain rightly recommended that we go nuclear for our energy needs. It appears from the article that he has given careful thoughts on all aspects of such an important project, especially the site selection, land acquisition, feasibility study, engineering, safety and safeguards, waste disposal, environmental, financial and political issues.

Problems of power shortage and outage in our country can hardly be overstated and therefore the justification for adequate uninterrupted supply of electricity needs no elaboration.

The current method of production of electricity through burning of fossil fuels, or by construction of river dams, is not very efficient, cost-effective or environment-friendly, and definitely not enough to meet our needs, considering the high demands for electricity now and obviously more so in the future. The spiralling increase in costs of imported petroleum, uncertainty of its supply in the world market, current international political turmoil and ongoing wars in the Middle East are just some of the factors that we need to seriously consider as our obstacle for affordable and reliable source of energy in the long run.

## Moreover, burning of excessive

coals and petroleum to produce electricity will add considerably to the already alarming levels of air and water pollutions, with simultaneous increase of health problems and accompanying medical expenses. On the other hand, a small quantity of nuclear fuel can produce a large amount of electricity, with almost no such environmental effects, as long as the plant design ensures radiation safety and proper disposal of the nuclear waste.

Therefore, it is time for the government to take positive steps towards nuclear power plants, but it has to be done right from the start. Initial financial cost for a project like this will be undoubtedly heavy, but it is a very worthwhile investment for our future that deserves our best efforts. Once decided to go ahead, this matter should be of utmost national priority without any compromise, and there should be no slide back or change of heart on the change of government after elections. Moreover, the bidding should be done in a way that would award the contract to unquestionably the most reputed builder of nuclear plants with best track records of safety and efficiency, not necessarily the lowest bidder, keeping in mind that this is a nuclear power project (and remembering the Chernobyl tragedy).

Our leaders and politicians must keep this matter above politics and put all of their support squarely behind this project. The whole

nation should be united for this great project, and the Ministry of Energy in collaboration with BAEC should arrange for seminars, symposiums and public meetings at district levels to make people aware of the needs and benefits of a nuclear power plant and to rally mass support for it. The whole nation, with all of its political parties, should be fully united and prepared to face a lot of objections, criticism and even intimidation from some international quarters and pundits.

The West is too wary these days of any country, especially a Muslim nation, resorting to nuclear power for its energy needs, as if a nuclear power plant is a factory of nuclear bombs in disguise. Therefore, we need wise and determined leadership and collective political will and vision to brave the storm of protests and opposition. However, any decision by our government regarding nuclear plants must be done through prior consultation with and due guidance from the International Atomic Energy Commission in order to avoid political wrangling later as much as possible.

**Dr. Matiur Rahman**, Professor, Austin Community College, Texas

# Bangladesh Biman



We know there are many anomalies in Bangladesh Biman. There is corruption and insufficient service in this organisation. A lot of complaints and criticism are there, but the Biman authorities seem to be unmoved. There could be a profitable flight from Dhaka to Tokyo, but due to very bad service passengers opt for alternative flights. Many Bangladeshi nationals living in Japan like this flight as it is a direct one.

Poor service is keeping passengers away from Biman. That is really a sad tale of the national airline.

The media should focus on the issue. **Mohiuddin Ahmed Bhuiyan**, PhD Research Student, Department of Pharmacology, Niigata University of Pharmacy & Applied Life Sciences