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Israeli war crime!

The Israeli massacre of more than 54 civilians including 34 children at Qana, Lebanon, the other day is the latest war crime by the blood thirsty Zionist state.

The Muslim Council of Britain said, "The continuing refusal of the United States and the United Kingdom to insist on an immediate ceasefire has diminished us in the court of world public opinion and has made us complicit in these atrocities in the eyes of hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world." It's really distressing to see that the British PM is so deaf to the calls from the British public and his own party and cabinet, to speak out against the repeated Israeli violations of international law and Geneva Conventions.

It is a shame that a country like the UK still allows US weapons to reach Israel through their own territory and airports while hypocritically its govt. is calling for more blankets and food to be sent to Lebanon! We believe that Israel's slaughter of civilians in Lebanon and occupied Palestinian territories will not break the resolve of the attacked people. This cowardly policy has been tried for decades by

successive Israeli governments and has only produced highly motivated resistance movements.

Many more will be recruited into their ranks across the region and beyond due to Israel's criminal attitude and uncivilised behaviour.

In line with other Muslim brethren around the world, let us all express our concern regarding the rape of Lebanon by arranging strong demonstrations all over Bangladesh and show our solidarity with the oppressed.

AF Rahman, On e-mail

As the world watches in pain, grief and silence, the US is executing its plan of creating another Israel in Southern Lebanon.

Tanvir Shakib Dhaka

I am writing about the massacre that is currently being committed in Lebanon by Israel.

Being a civilised and conscious person, I cannot support the atrocities, but the surprising thing is that the world leaders have no plan of effecting an



immediate ceasefire!
Anis Rahman
162, Zahurul Haq Hall
University of Dhaka

Israel has declined the offer given by

the UN. It has demolished the important places in Lebanon by air blitz. Israel's avoidance of negotiation with others has made the situation very complex.

However, the international commu-

nity must act before it is too late.
Tuhin
Jagannath University



PHOTOS: AFP



PHOTO: STAR



Tributes to Novera

Novera, a talented young journalist, is no more with us. She took her life under very tragic circumstances. Her smiling and glowing face did never tell the pains she had been enduring. She never thought of herself, rather she entertained us providing news.

Her article 'Dhaka: Yesterday, today and tomorrow' in The Star City with the interviews of veteran personalities from different sectors let us know about many unknown things of the capital. Her decision of choosing journalism as career was definitely correct. She proved her worth in this challenging field.

Though I didn't know her personally, I miss her a lot as a reader. She had the power to win the hearts of unknown people through her writing. On 28 July morning I was shocked reading the news of her suicide. It was the worst day for me this year.

I pray for the departed soul and my deep condolence and sympathy for the bereaved family members.

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

Buet incident

The whole country witnessed what happened in BUET on that day. Here we want to point out some other things which were not covered by the newspapers and TV channels.

Our scheduled term final exam was to be held on 3rd June 2006. And the routine was good enough. But some football freak students raised an illogical demand to postpone the examination. After 2 or 3 processions of students (there were also some anti-postponement processions) BUET authorities postponed the exams till 14 July. The new scheduled date of examination was 1st August, 2006.

Now, after a few days we came to know that our new term is going to be held in December-January. After the long vacation of the World Cup, we are still going to get a new long vacation! (Why??)

Then a huge number of students proposed two things -

1. We are ready for exams if the authorities ensure that the new term will begin in September.

2. If not, then we want one more week as preparatory leave.

The second demand may seem illogical to all. But some students were suffering from viral fever and could not prepare for the exams. And we are sorry to say that it has become a tradition that BUET students try to extend the preparatory leave and the BUET authorities allow it all the time!! (after 2 or 3 processions)

Now, the authorities gave a notice that they won't disclose the starting date of the new term before the exams and they will take the exams from 1st August. After that students reacted and organised processions once again. This situation continued for 2 days.

Students surrounded the Vice Chancellor's office and demanded a decision. At 5:30pm our VC called a meeting. In the mean time, hundreds of 'Danga Police' surrounded the campus. At 9:00pm the meeting was over but the decision was the same(!). The students who were waiting for a good decision all day long, became excited and only two or three students threw bricks on the glasses of the cafeteria. After that the police attacked the students with teargas and rubber bullets.

We don't understand why police were deployed and allowed to attack students.



PHOTO: STAR

Some students of BUET, On email

You concluded the editorial of August 2, 2006 with "what a pity". Indeed! What a pity! The BUET students asked for and got their final examinations postponed by more than two months so that they could stay up all night and watch World Cup soccer matches. Classes were not held during this time as well. This could happen only in Bangladesh. Not a single school was closed or exams postponed in Germany, where the soccer matches were played, or in any other country, for that matter.

In my opinion the BUET administration made the first mistake by entertaining such an unreasonable demand. Now their only option is to stick to their guns and keep the campus closed until the hoodlums are brought to justice. If they don't, they will relinquish their control (if they have any) for ever.

As a BUET alumni, I am saddened to see my beloved university in such chaos.
Siraj Haque, Houston, Texas, USA

It is really a shame to learn that some BUET students went on the rampage just for deferment of their exams. The BUET authorities did the deferment twice due to World Cup. Here we go. The World Cup, where Bangladesh did not participate and in foreseeable future do not have any chance of participating, has a big impact on the country. We do not want to work properly; we do not want to study properly due to the World Cup.

The countries which participated in the World Cup did not show this kind of a lousy and irresponsible attitude. Everything was open, Everybody worked properly, studied properly and also supported their country. There was no news of closure of any university.

The BUET students are the brightest students of our country. If we see this kind of behaviour from them, the future of our country cannot be very bright.

The matter deserves a closer look.

Some students
On email

Ershad factor

President Ershad has opened his mind. His address to party workers was aired on tv on Monday July 31st evening news. He looked quite eloquent on issues like corruption, killing of President Ziaur Rahman, reference to Jamaat's political future etc. It is still too early to comment on President Ershad's politics, but one thing is increasingly getting clear that neither the BNP nor the Jamaat, nor the JP has the confidence to fight free and fair election individually against the AL. Therefore, the present political process of alliance of like minded parties like the BNP, Jamaat and JP will continue for some time. The only bottleneck one can see is the reform programme of the 14-party alliance. The reform programme will weaken the position of the BNP, Jamaat and JP and a new scenario will emerge in the political field of Bangladesh. The survival of democracy in Bangladesh now highly depends on political leadership and high moral of the constitutional institutions created for check and balance against faulty governance.
A Reader
On email

Election fever

As the election is approaching very fast, its impact is now quite visible on our present day politics.

Even though it is still uncertain whether election will be held in due time under this 'controversial' CEC, yet the political parties are preparing themselves for the election. The main two political parties are now forging unity with other small parties in order to secure victory in the coming election. So once again the Ershad 'factor' has become the talk of the town in our political arena. Both the Awami League & the BNP once termed Ershad as an autocratic ruler & ousted him from power but now both of them want

Ershad in their respective alliance. As a result, these days Ershad is getting wide media coverage & has become the centre of public attention!

From newspaper reports, it is clear now that Ershad will join with the four party alliance in September. In return, the coalition government has agreed to meet some of the key demands made by him.

To gain petty political interests, our politicians can do whatever they wish and in this case the point has been proved again. That's why recently LGRD minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan rightly said, "There is no last word in politics!"

But for common people like us, it is surprising how could they (politicians) forget the past so easily? Anyway, it is still refreshing for general people because at least our politicians are getting ready for election and the opposition is not opting for any violent programme.

We hope a free & fair election

would be held in due time & all the major political parties will participate in the election. But for that to happen, we need electoral reforms, resignation of this present CEC & other 'politically' appointed commissioners as they have completely lost public trust on them.

The upcoming election is vital to preserving our democratic culture. Hence a free & fair election is a must.

We all have to do our respective jobs properly to ensure a fair election acceptable to all.
Nazmus Saquib
Notre Dame College,
Dhaka

Naushad

A brilliant write-up by Syed Maqsood Jamil on Naushad, widely respected as one of the greatest music directors this sub-continent has ever produced was published in your weekly magazine (July, 07, 2006). However, I feel tempted to add a few more lines on the celebrated melody maker. While narrating the entire range of musical compositions that Naushad made in different films, Mr. Jamil has not said anything about the fact that it was he (Naushad) who gave Talat Mahmood the most important break in his career by using him for the first time in the film "Babul" as the playback singer for Dilip Kumar. Who can forget the solo of Talat "Mera Jeevan Sathi Bichhar Gaya" sung for the dejected lover Dilip Kumar or his duets with Shamshad for Dilip and Manwar Sultana. Mr. Jamil has also said not a word for the classic "Deedar" wherein that unforgettable song "Meri Kahani Bhulane Wale" by Rafi and the inimitable performance of Dilip Kumar, in the role of a blind young man who had his eyesight restored but disillusioned with the cruel adversity of life made a heart-rending cry 'Booja De Ye Chirag' for a return to the world of perpetual darkness, brought tears even to the eyes of an iron-hearted man. Mohammad Rafi might have enjoyed most singing the song "Duniake Rakhwale" of Baiju Bawra but "Meri Kahani" remained as the most favourite song for Naushad himself till his death.

Naushad missed K.L. Saigol in his prime when the listeners were thrilled to find Saigol singing those memorable songs like "Dunya Range Rangeli Baaba", "Aab Mai Keya Karu" and the Bengali hits like "Ami Tomai Jato Shunite chilem Gaan" etc. In any event, Saigol was never a playback singer and nobody could forecast how long he would have continued as a singer for the films.

Naushad had a special place for Lata in his heart. Thus, in the midst of a heated argument when a Western Music Director challenged Naushad to name anything that India could take genuine pride in, Naushad's prompt reply was "Why, we have our Lata Mangeshkar, the like of which you will never come

across in the Western world." Convealescing in a far away hospital in the States, Naushad made a long distance call to Lata in Bombay requesting her to sing the song "Rashike Balma" of the film "Chori Chori" over telephone.

Lata complied with the request. "Chori Chori" with Raj Kapoor and Nargis was a poor version of the famous movie "It happened one night" of Hollywood with Clark Gable in the lead (the second and a much superior version being "Dil Hai Ke Mante Nahi" with Amir Khan and Puja Bhat). Incidentally, the music director of "Chori Chori" was Shankar Jaikishan.
S.R. Shaheed
Banani, Dhaka

A game of cards!

It is told that a game of cards has got such a wide range of variety that fifty-two cards can provide much more variations than the cards are in number! The present political situation in the country before the imminent election has been taking different amusing & interesting turns at different times that appear to be more intriguing than any game of cards!

Take the recent development in the political plot of the drama that includes, most delicately, former president Ershad's getting merged with the ruling BNP led four-party coalition government. And the way the former president, who was ousted from the country's politics through a concerted movement by the people of the land in 1990, is ventilating his pent up emotions is really interesting. More interesting episodes are yet to unfold. It is being told that Ershad will be exempted from the corruption charges that were hanging around his neck as a gift for his joining the four-party alliance! The law minister was seen informing the nation that the power of withdrawing the existing charges against Ershad are at the hands of the ACC, and the ACC, on the other hand, was trying to make the point clear that the issue entirely depends on the government and it can appeal to the High Court for removal of the charges! Ershad has ultimately triumphed, as it appears, in terms of establishing his position in the safe berths of the political parties! He is found rejuvenated at the sudden turn of political scheme in his favour.

Another intriguing point that is looming large on the political horizon is the voter list updating. With lots of drama staged at the expense of money & perturbation, now comes the trouble of updating the voter list. It has been reported that the act is getting slowed down, as the finance minister is not disbursing the required funds.

It is indeed more dramatic than the intriguing game of cards!
Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Local television

channels

It is true that our local satellite television channels are not at all worth watching. I can't name a single magazine programme or drama series that is good enough. All these channels have just one trait in common, that is, they show programmes of no quality. I do not have a single clue why the government has banned 13 popular pay-channels.

If the government & the authorities of the local satellite channels will create mass viewers for the local channels, then they are wrong. No one will care to watch the trash programmes.

It is the Bangladeshi channels that should come under scrutiny for showing trash programmes & vulgar movies.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara-Dhaka

Role of NGOs

In the recent months, many write-ups have been published against a few renowned NGOs and other private organisations in the national dailies covering such activities known as microcredit programmes. These organisations are not only dealing with banking activities they are also dedicated to reduction of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development which involves various kinds of projects where thousands of jobs have been created. Micro finance sector/NGOs have emerged as the leading actors contributing to the national economic growth with aims and objectives such as (1) To work for ensuring occupational health and safety as well as improvement in the overall work environment, (2) To alleviate all kinds of discriminations among working people including that of sex, and work for establishment of women's equal rights in respective workplaces. (3) To conduct multipurpose activities for human resource development. (4) To make efforts for improvement of the living standard of workers and their families. (4) To work for education, adult education, workers' education, economic education, technical education and training of the workers. There is ample scope for broadening such tripartite partnership to enhance the economic growth of the country. All these endeavours support people living in poverty to manage technical change in order to improve their livelihoods as well as safeguarding their environment.

However, the civil society and the government should encourage these sectors to get involved in more poverty reduction programmes or microcredit financing for the betterment of the country's economy.
Peter J Rebeiro
West Raja Bazar,
Tejgaon, Dhaka

Internet for research

organisations

The Ministry of Post and Telecommunication has taken a very wise and proactive decision of providing free Internet facilities to the educational institutes. If we could take such a wise decision in every case, then the state of Bangladesh would become a modern one.

However, this wise decision should and must be extended for another type of organisations, that is, research organisations. Internet facilities are essential for the all types of research organisations in this age of information technology. But in most research organisations in Bangladesh scientists don't have enough Internet access in their organisation and at home. This is a matter of shame and great regret for young scientists like us.

So we expect that the science ministry will take the initiative so that the decision of providing free Internet connection to the scientific organisations can be taken. Organisation of scientific professionals like Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, Bangladesh Atomic Energy Scientists Association, Bangladesh Society of Microbiologists, Botanists, chemists, physicists, zoologists and other such organisations should raise their voice demanding free internet access to the research organisations.

M U Ahmed
On email

Gold medal award by Academy of Sciences

Recently, the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, the most prestigious and influential organisation of scientific professionals, has awarded gold medal to eight scientists for their contribution in scientific research in the country. All the newspapers published report on it. But we could not be satisfied as the report was not very informative. There was no information on the identity of scientists, contribution of the scientists for which they were rewarded. I think there is still scope to give due importance to the matter. And your science page is the place to give it due treatment.

I think the science page can and should publish eight reports on the eight persons highlighting the academic background, scientific contribution, organisation involved etc. An interview of each scientist focusing on their suggestion on what the science ministry should do for better performance of scientific organisations can also be included in the report.

Information can be collected from www.bas.org.bd
Monir Uddin Ahmed
Scientific officer
Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission