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## Ershad factor



Nothing is impossible in our politics. But this time around the entire nation is astonished and shocked. Our frontline political parties are the BNP and the AL, which agitated together in the street to remove the dictatorship of HM Ershad in the 90s.

Now, the same political parties are in the competition to make coalition with the Ershad-led JP to participate in the next general elections. The words and attitudes of our forthcoming political leaders from both the parties have made it quite clear. Tareq Zia, Joint Secretary of the BNP, has already met Ershad to convince him to make coalition with his party. On the other hand, Sajeb Wajed Joy, son of Sheikh Hasina, said that if needed he would go to Ershad to convince him to make coalition with the AL.

It is so unfortunate for the nation.  
**Galif Ahmed**  
Mirpur, Dhaka

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All of us know that Bangladesh has been branded as one of the most corrupt country in the world for four consecutive years. Of course, the ruling party has always dismissed the ranking of corruption by TI saying that the report is based on unauthentic sources. They see no corruption. If this is true, how do the politicians become millionaires within a few years of being elected?

Of late, the BNP is trying to take Ershad into their election alliance. The media has reported that all corruption cases against Ershad would be withdrawn provided Ershad's JP unites with the BNP in the next elections.

The BNP-Jamaat government boasts of establishing the ACC to fight corruption. My question is if Ershad is acquitted of all corruption cases, what is the necessity of having the ACC? If Ershad gets this treatment, then other people charged with corruption should be acquitted from those cases.

**Malik Akram Hossain**  
On e-mail

# Alarming drug abuse

According to a newspaper report (DS, 26/7/06) addiction to 'Yaba', a drug containing morphine and amphetamine, is alarmingly rising among the youngsters of the city. As per the report, Yaba started gaining popularity among the addicts and younger generation when its price was reduced to Tk 300 per pill from Tk. 1,500 a few years back. Yaba can easily be purchased from any point of the city. It is sold without any restriction.

Yaba can damage brain and liver. Intake of Yaba can lead to mental confusion and memory loss. It is also responsible for proliferation of crime in the city.

It is expected that the relevant departments of the govt

would take drastic measures to stop entry, sale and intake of Yaba in Bangladesh. If necessary, a new law may be enacted to save our younger generation from the curse of this harmful drug!

**Prof. M. Zahidul Haque**  
Chairman, Dept. of Language  
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Drug addiction is now a great problem in our country. It means taking heroine, opium, marijuana, cocaine etc. Drug addiction has grasped the young generation of our country. Drug addiction can have terrible effects on the human body. In most cases addiction is fatal. It damages the brain

and affects functioning of all vital organs.

Most youths become addicted out of frustration. And they embark on a self-destructive course as most drugs are very expensive. When young boys can't afford to buy drugs, they have to commit crimes.

The drug problem has become so acute in our country. Thousands of families in cities, towns and even rural areas are directly or indirectly affected by it. The illegal drug business is a punishable offence and the highest punishment is death sentence in Bangladesh.

Parents must be careful about their children. Religious



and social values must be inculcated in them from early childhood. We must get rid of this problem at any cost by highlighting its dangerous

effect on human body and society.  
We have to face this menace collectively.  
**Jannat Tun Nesa**

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Bangladesh Bank gives licence to an Islamic bank, they add one more condition: the bank should follow Islamic shariah.

However, this cannot be an adequate substitute for a specific clause to allow interest-free and profit/loss sharing banking. Shariah law on Islamic banking was not and is not codified in our laws. A simple condition added to banking licence to do banking under Islamic shariah law could not have legalised interest-free banking.

The Banking Companies Ordinance 1962 provided for interest-charging system of banking only. On the other hand, the Islamic shariah-based interest-free profit/loss sharing banking concept is clearly and directly opposite to the interest-based banking provided for in the Banking Companies Ordinance 1962. The difference is fundamental.

Since Banking Companies Ordinance 1962 provided for interest-charging banking only, the Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd in its Memorandum & Articles Clause 2(xiii)(b) at p. 10 provided as follows:

"The Company is a Public Limited Company within the meaning of section 2(1)(13A) of the Act, and it shall carry out all or any of the objects enunciated in the Memorandum and Articles of Association and will operate within the framework of the Banking Companies Ordinance 1962 and existing banking laws, rules and regulations subject to such minor adjustments as may be considered essential for an Islamic Bank to function and also the directives of Bangladesh Bank from time to time issued."

Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd started its interest-free and profit/loss sharing banking business in 1983 when they started receiving investment proposals from Muslim entrepreneurs attracted by interest-free finance.

However, no amendment to incorporate "interest-free and profit/loss sharing banking business" to give legal foundation to this type of banking in Bangladesh was arranged in the Bank Company Act 1991 or until now, calling into question the legality of such operations.

A simple clause added to the format of the banking licence to the effect that the bank concerned shall follow Islamic shariah is not enough in place of the specific need to codify interest-free banking.

**Altaf Ahmed Choudhury**  
One e-mail

### Smoking hero

An interesting letter on Shahrukh Khan was published in DS on August 21. The writer criticised a scene from the recently released trailer of Shahrukh's upcoming movie 'Don' where we see him smoking in a conspicuously stylish manner. I agree with the view that certain acts of celebrities influence their admirers who are ever eager to emulate their heroes.

Nevertheless, here one should understand that every actor is professionally obliged to act in accordance with the characteristics of the role that he plays in a particular movie. Actors are supposed to do whatever their roles and scripts demand of them. In the movie Shahrukh plays the role of an infamous terrorist (Don). If the Don chewed chocolates instead of smoking and drank milk instead of drinking alcohol then the whole movie would turn into a mockery. The actor and the moviemaker

their performance skills. Handling of diverse roles convincingly makes them even more powerful to us. Interestingly, celebrities often show reluctance to take up the responsibility of social reformers or pedagogues. Instead, they claim themselves to be the providers of authentic entertainment.

**Kh. Asef Safa Kabir (Upal)**  
Lalmatia, Dhaka

### Misplaced priorities

In spite of being a small country, Bangladesh has a huge cabinet, but are we developed enough compared to other developed countries? In 1971, we got liberation after a long struggle and it was a dreadful year in the history of our nation, but did we really preserve the pride of our independence? We have been liberated for about 35 years, but we have not really achieved much in those 35 years of our existence as an independent nation. It is the government of

our priorities right, before we can really make any progress.

**Mahia Nowreen**  
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### The rise of institutional racism in UK

Many of your readers may have heard about the latest racist incident orchestrated by a bunch of ignorant, hysterical, cheap British bigots vacationing in the south of Spain. On August 19, a monarch flight from Malaga to Manchester was delayed when these racists demanded that two 'Asian looking' men, who they thought were speaking Arabic be taken off the aircraft. To quell the growing issue, the men were taken off the flight by airport security at the pilot's request. The two men in question had gone through security procedures twice at

could have concealed a bomb, and walked calmly through the station, even stopping to collect a free newspaper. In effect, British police held down and shot an unarmed, innocent man who happened to look foreign, and lied about what happened.

If the Prime Minister of Britain can lie to commit war crimes, if the British police can lie to cover up the illegal execution of an innocent "foreign looking" man, then it is little wonder that the tabloid reading "little" people of Britain don't care to think twice before victimising "Asian Looking" fellow passengers. This is not the multi-cultural Britain that one used to be proud of only a decade ago.

We are seeing the sad yet systematic disintegration of a hitherto racially integrated Britain into an ugly monster under the leadership of the greatest liar of our times, Tony Blair. What a shame!

Holiday, Comments & Analysis/July 28). Among others, Yitzhak Rabin, Ariel Sharon and Moshe Dayan were also members of this Haganah gang.

Before the birth of Israel, another Zionist underground gang was formed by the name of Irgun, which was later led by Menachem Begin (also PM of illegal Israel from 1977-1981) who was in the wanted list of the British authorities for his criminal activities. In 1947, when Israel was not even born Menachem Begin explicitly said, "Eretz (greater) Israel will be restored to the people of Israel, all of it and forever."

Israelis very strongly believe in the "use of terror, assassination, intimidation, land confiscation and cutting of all social services to rid the Galilee of its Arab population" until "eretz (greater) Israel is restored to them, all of it and forever". And that is why Israel is the world's number one and a hundred

### Lebanon crisis

The Lebanese were crying and the big powers were watching their plight without taking any effective steps to put an end to their sufferings. The USA is always blind to Israel's activities. What Israel does is always right to President Bush. The civilians were dying, displaced from their own land, they didn't know about their fate or how long this strife would continue! Their pains never touch the hawkish President Bush or his allies. Certainly, Israel was not committing the atrocities without the consent of the USA. The USA must change its policy to make sure that peace returns to the Middle East on a durable basis. If it continues to support Israel unconditionally, then Lebanon will become another Iraq.

There is reason to believe that the ceasefire that is in place now may not last long as Israel has already violated it through carrying out commando operations in South Lebanon.  
**Uma Das**  
Jahangir Nagar University

### Plight of garment industries

Like me, many were stunned by the violent demonstrations of the garment workers which were unprecedented in the history of any industry in Bangladesh. In the past, many industries, especially jute industry, experienced workers' agitation in the industrial areas, but the workers never resorted to burning and looting. Naturally, one

has to think whether it was for better wages only or there was a conspiracy behind the movement. One fails to understand why females, who constitute 80 per cent of the work force, didn't take part in the movement.

I believe the conspiracy is deep-rooted. How in Dhaka, Gazipur, Savar and Konabari such agitation could be organised at the same time? Who were behind it?

**GMJ Abdur Rab**  
Baridhara, Dhaka

### Islamic banking

This is in response to Mr. Shah Abdul Hannan's article on the above subject, printed on the first page of the supplement of Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited in your daily on August 12.

First, Mr. Hannan's article identified him as a former government secretary instead of revealing his immediate past designation as the ex-chief of the said bank, which would have been more relevant.

Mr. Hannan was one of those associated with the formation of the bank and for this apparent reason he was made the chief of the bank after he retired from government service.

In order to justify operation of Islamic shariah-based banking under Banking Companies Ordinance 1962, he commented that the Bank Company Act 1991 is not for conventional banks only, but for all banks.

He further said that the only difference is that when the



endeavoured to make the character as convincing as possible. Perhaps, the director thought that the smoking scene would make the character even more charismatic. Perhaps, those 'emanating smokes' represent the enigma related to the character, suggesting that he is a mysterious man hidden behind the curtain of foggy smokes.

Celebrities should be aware of the fact that their idiosyncrasies can affect the society. Similarly, it's the responsibility of their admirers to avoid emulating anything unpleasant in real life, which their favourite stars do in fictitious movies. For example, if Tom Cruise kills a person in a movie that doesn't anyhow mean that his fans should try to imitate him by slaughtering someone. We admire actors for

a country that must try to attain the development goals. The sad truth is that successive governments have done nothing for the advancement of our society.

Some rich people are investing their money in shopping malls, hotels, towers, but is there really any shortage of those things in our country? Nobody thinks about the real problems like load-shedding, shortage of water, transport or communication problem, lack of job opportunities etc. Those problems are increasing day by day, but who will come forward to eliminate these problems? The money that has been invested in unproductive sectors should have been spent for improving the quality of life in general.

The decision makers should set

the airport, but the bigots effectively did their own profiling and caused them to be removed.

Recall that following the London underground bombings last year, British police illegally executed an innocent Brazilian man with five bullets to his head at point blank range (using bullets that were banned in warfare under international convention) because they suspected he was carrying a bomb inside his heavy winter jacket. Initial police reports said the Brazilian was dressed suspiciously in a heavy coat, had fled armed officers, vaulted over ticket barriers and run onto a train. But leaked documents obtained by ITV News said CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts showed he was not wearing a padded jacket which

**Shabbir A. Bashir, PhD**  
Vancouver, Washington, USA

### Who is spreading hatred?

In fact, spreading hatred (Letters page, The Daily Star/Aug21), religious intolerance, and spitting of venom were started by the Zionists back in 1948, when David Ben-Gurion, a terrorist and a member of Haganah gang (one of the earliest underground Zionists gangs) and also the first & third PM of the illegal State of Zionist Israel said: "We must use terror, assassination, intimidation, land confiscation and cutting of all social services to rid the Galilee of its Arab population" (Ref: Ben-Gurion, a Biography by Michael Ben-Zohar, also Weekly

percent terrorist state. These are hard facts.

Referring to facts like above does not make one guilty of spreading hatred. As a matter of fact it makes one an abettor of crime when he or she deliberately manipulates historical facts.

**Syed Husain, Old DOHS, Dhaka**

### Teachers' rights

Primary and secondary education is vital for the survival of our education system. The government has increased salaries of its employees but is silent about the teachers' rights.

Teachers should get what they deserve.

**Kohinur Akter, Dhaka University**

### Bol-CPD

Your commentary "Hail the Super Patriot" on Mahmudur Rahman's remarks against the five eminent citizens of this country and his filing of a defamation case against them appeared to be too mild as compared with your earlier ones on much less important issues. Like the previous commentary of yours, I hoped that your pen would make nice meat of the person who showed unpardonable arrogance by taking upon himself the right to question the citizenship right of a person whose standing in society is much higher than those who are questioning his patriotism. But more perplexing is the mysterious silence maintained by the biggest opposition party and its leaders.

Silence of the opposition on this issue will further strengthen the view that there is no prospect for any change in the political scene of this country in near future.

**Rezul Karim**  
Malibagh, Dhaka

# Israel's war crime

After the ceasefire Israel again attacked some targets in South Lebanon. Which is a flagrant violation of the UN resolution. The international community should try to rein Israel in and put an end to killing of innocent people. Otherwise, the situation will further deteriorate.

Every time Israel goes on the offensive, it gets direct support from the United States.

The UN should impose sanctions against Israel and the country must compensate for the destruction of Lebanon.  
**Nasirullah Mridha Salim**  
Matuail, Dhaka

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After Christopher Columbus discovered America in the 15th century, a large number of Europeans Portuguese, Spanish, Italians, English, Dutch and French started arriving in the new

world in search of fortune. They occupied lands of the original people of America, the Red Indians, killed them, drove them away from their forefathers' homes and established European colonies in various parts of the American continent.

The European settlers/immigrants were very greedy, ambitious and aggressive people. They fought among themselves. With the passage of time, they formed and created several separate and independent countries like the USA, Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Peru etc.

Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish ships sighted Australia in the 17th century. In 1770 the British under Captain James Cook landed in New South Wales of Australia and claimed it as British territory. Gradually the

British took over control of the whole of Australian continent. Like the European settlers/immigrants in America the British settlers/immigrants unleashed a reign of terror on the aborigines of Australia and reduced them to a minority community of captives and slaves.

What about Palestine? Can't former US President Harry Truman be regarded as Christopher Columbus of Israel, the former British Prime Minister Clement Atlee as Captain Cook?

The USA and the UK invited, enticed, helped and assisted the Jews living in Europe and America to migrate and settle down in the Arab land of Palestine. The Jew settlers/immigrants in Palestine initiated violence and terrorism and at the instigation of the USA and the UK declared establishment of the state of Israel in

Palestinian territory in 1948. Washington and London Promptly accorded recognition to the illegal state of Israel in violation of all international conventions, rules and regulations.

Israel has gradually occupied and conquered the whole of Palestine including West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip.

Are not the Palestinians being made to suffer like Red Indians of America and aborigines of Australia and live like captives and slaves deprived of their human rights by the USA, the UK and Israel?

**OH Kabir**  
Wari, Dhaka

