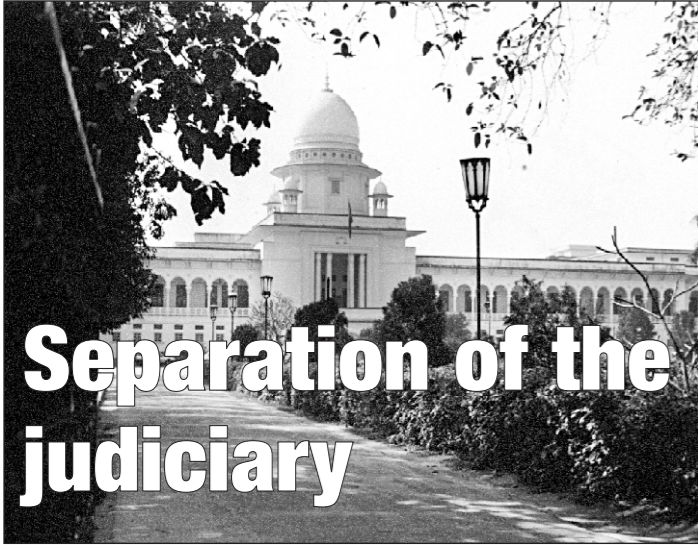


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Separation of the judiciary

Despite the repeated appeal by the Supreme Court the present government declined to separate the judiciary from the executive. Now the government is bringing HM Ershad to

its side by dismissing the criminal cases filed against him one after another. Moreover, the government has appointed judges according to its will and not even listening to the chief

justice. Such kind of intervention in the judicial system by the government is a shame for the whole nation and also making one thing clear that the government did not separate the judiciary during the last five years just to play some dirty game with the help of some of its sycophants.

Every government forgets that the court is being run by the money of the people and it should be allowed to serve the people. Court is not and should not be an organisation to free the political criminals and to fulfil the ill motives of the government.

Dr. Mahboob Hossain
Associate Professor
The University of
Asia Pacific
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

CPD-Bol

After watching the TV footage of the allegations of so-called defamatory remarks made by two members of the CPD against the Bol chief, it is clear that it is the CPD which should have filed the suit against the Bol chief for calling it liars and even questioning the patriotism of its Executive Director who happens to be a very knowledgeable and articulate person. In fact, all the five persons against whom the suit was filed are very respectable and well established in the society.

Issuance of warrant of arrest hurriedly against such people only because the complainant is a top official of the government is highly deplorable when there is no prima facie case.

Such cases should be handled more judiciously considering the status and social position of both the parties. One wonders, if there is any ulterior motive behind this case, such as, making CPD members controversial for appointment as Advisors to the next caretaker government (one of them is a former Advisor), by the way!

Abul Mohsin
Siddheswari Circular Road, Dhaka.

Writing from Baluchistan

I am from Pakistan and I am reading your newspaper The Daily Star. It is great to read news about Baluchistan.

I have friends there in Bangladesh. Through your newspaper I would like to pay my regards to them with good wishes.

Sher Muhammad Gondal
Mandi Bahauddin, Pakistan

Bangladeshi peacekeepers

Whenever there is any conflict between two nations or any internal problem, Bangladesh has extended its helping hand by deploying peacekeepers. For this Bangladeshi peacekeepers are now rated highly by the UN. Our peacekeepers have brightened our image in the international arena. This glorious image has not come without any cost. Our soldiers had to sacrifice their lives. Our six peacekeepers were killed in a road accident in Ivory Coast. This is not the first time that Bangladeshi peacekeepers in African countries have lost their lives under most unfortunate circumstances. Our peacekeepers have won the hearts of people for their commitment and dedication.

Md. Johirul Islam
522/Sir, A. F. Rahman Hall
University of Dhaka

Suranjit's comment

Recently, Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta said that the Awami league would ban all the Islamic parties if they go to power. I

think the comment is harmful for Awami League politics as it will be used against the party before the elections.

Sagar Ahmed
Dhaka University

Frozen hilsha and iron nails!

I was visiting a Bangladeshi grocery store in Houston, Texas to buy some deshi items. We live in Corpus Christi, Texas, a small city on the Gulf Coast and drive about 800 kilometres (roundtrip) to get these items once in every two-three months. Stores like the one I was visiting predominantly cater to the grocery needs of the people from the subcontinent.

I ordered for hilsha fish. Our national favourite comes here frozen. I was watching the store server slicing the frozen hilsha with small electric saws. Suddenly, I heard a "clink" metallic sound. The chainsaw throttled. To my surprise, I noticed a few iron nails in the stomach of the hilsha. Apparently, the long nails (or nail-like iron bars) were planted in the stomach to increase the weight of the fish. I could not believe that people could go this far to "increase their export earning." The server threw away the fish and informed me that he had experienced this before. He also told me that he had complained about this to the distributors/importers, but nothing has happened. Importers feel that they are being cheated but have no control over the system.

If we recall, not too long ago export of frozen food from Bangladesh was banned in the United States, mainly because of salmonella. Growth of salmonella or other bacteria is quite common in frozen foods and the exporters are aware of this. Issues like this fall under the category of "product standards" in exporting. There are international as well as national product standard laws. A good quality control system should be able to take care of product-related issues. European Union, United States and other developed countries require that exporters from developing countries take specific measures to control the quality of exports. Sometimes the importing nations employ their own agents in the factory to check the quality. Quality is also checked by international inspection agents (e.g., SGS or other inspection agents). The inspection agents abide by the destination country's product safety and standards before shipping it out.

I was wondering where and at what point did the slack occur? How could a hilsha full of nails pass through the system? Apparently, the fishermen or wholesalers who sell the immediate catch at the open market do not benefit from the weight gain of the fish. Weighing is done at the cleaning and packaging level at the export processing

plants. It is possible that this is where the planting of nails occurred. The size and the thickness of the nails and the repetition of the incidents (as described by the server in the store) make me believe that this is not a sporadic incident. The hilsha exporters are aware of it and must have obtained the "inspection certificate for exports" through illegal means.

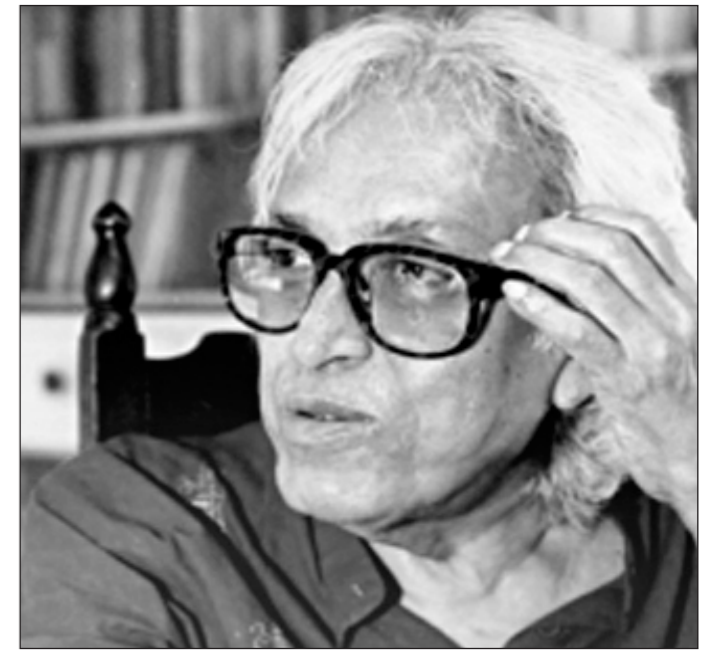
This is a dangerous practice. Iron in the stomach of hilsha can produce toxic secretions. Health and human life can be affected by that. The incident also hurts our reputation and export credibility. It must be checked. It is our joint responsibility to take action against the wrong-doers. All parties involved in the export process, viz., hilsha wholesalers/distributors, frozen food producers/exporters, export control agencies, inspection agents, and law enforcing agencies must come forward to check this. It is our combined responsibility to root out the crime.

The primary responsibility to check this crime should lie with the frozen food exporters. The members of the frozen food association, if one exists, must identify these wrong-doers and bar them from further export (and/or impose a stiff penalty). If the U.S. government bans (as it did before) total exports from Bangladesh then all exporters will suffer. Frozen food exporters must perfect the practice in their professional interest.

Apparently, the inspection agents did not do their job. They were either slack or were corrupt. If need be the frozen food exporters may jointly ask for independent international inspection. Globally known and reputable inspection agencies can be hired for the purpose. I understand that the services of these agencies are expensive but it will pay-off in the long run. The government may also take initiative to help the private sector in this regard. Finally, education and moral persuasion must follow. Punishment without proper moral training will get the job half done. Let us not forget that education is an important component in corrective behaviour.

A. N. M. Waheeduzzaman
Professor of Marketing and International Business at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Texas, USA.

Our poet



Poet Shamsur Rahman's sad demise shocked the hearts of Bengalees across the country and beyond. People mourned and paid due tribute to their poet. It was an overwhelming sight with people thronging around the poet's dead body in the last hours before burial. People's love for the poet was enormous.

Shamsur Rahman is one of the poets who defines his own country's literary heritage. His poetry evokes a strong sense of patriotism and love for the humanity. It reveals the urban alienation and the sense of helplessness of the modern man alienated in the crowd. His sophisticated diction and the vibrant portrayal of the modern man in the cobweb of calamities mark his position as a modern poet reminding us of T S Eliot.

His poems on the liberation war and the heroes that sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom are unique and they instil in us the sense of urgency in the time of crisis.

We as a nation find our very breaths in his unique exposition of the human psyche, we find ourselves wrapped in all pride and dignity that define our entity as proud nation.

Today after his demise, we are grief-stricken though we are aware of the fact that death is an inevitable phenomenon. We are aggrieved at the fact that such a phenomenal stature of poet Shamsur Rahman did not receive any national recognition after his death even though he enriched the Bengali entity in the field of its cultural heritage and the literary domain. We will be defining our time through his poetry and the bard of Bangladesh will be living through the people of his proud land. We will be upholding the spirit of patriotism, love and humanity in the way that is sophisticated and universal --- the saga of our poet Shamsur Rahman.

Rafiqul Islam Rime, Agrabad, Chittagong

Janata Bank

As I went into an office of Janata bank the other day, regretfully I found majority of the officials not present causing immeasurable inconvenience to the people, who were standing in a queue of line. The security guard said, "They have gone for lunch and will be back shortly, as they do everyday."

The clock on the wall showed that it was not lunch time yet!

The bank authorities should look into all such matters in the interest of their clients.

Syed Nazmul Alam
Gulshan-2, Dhaka

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8X2

8x3