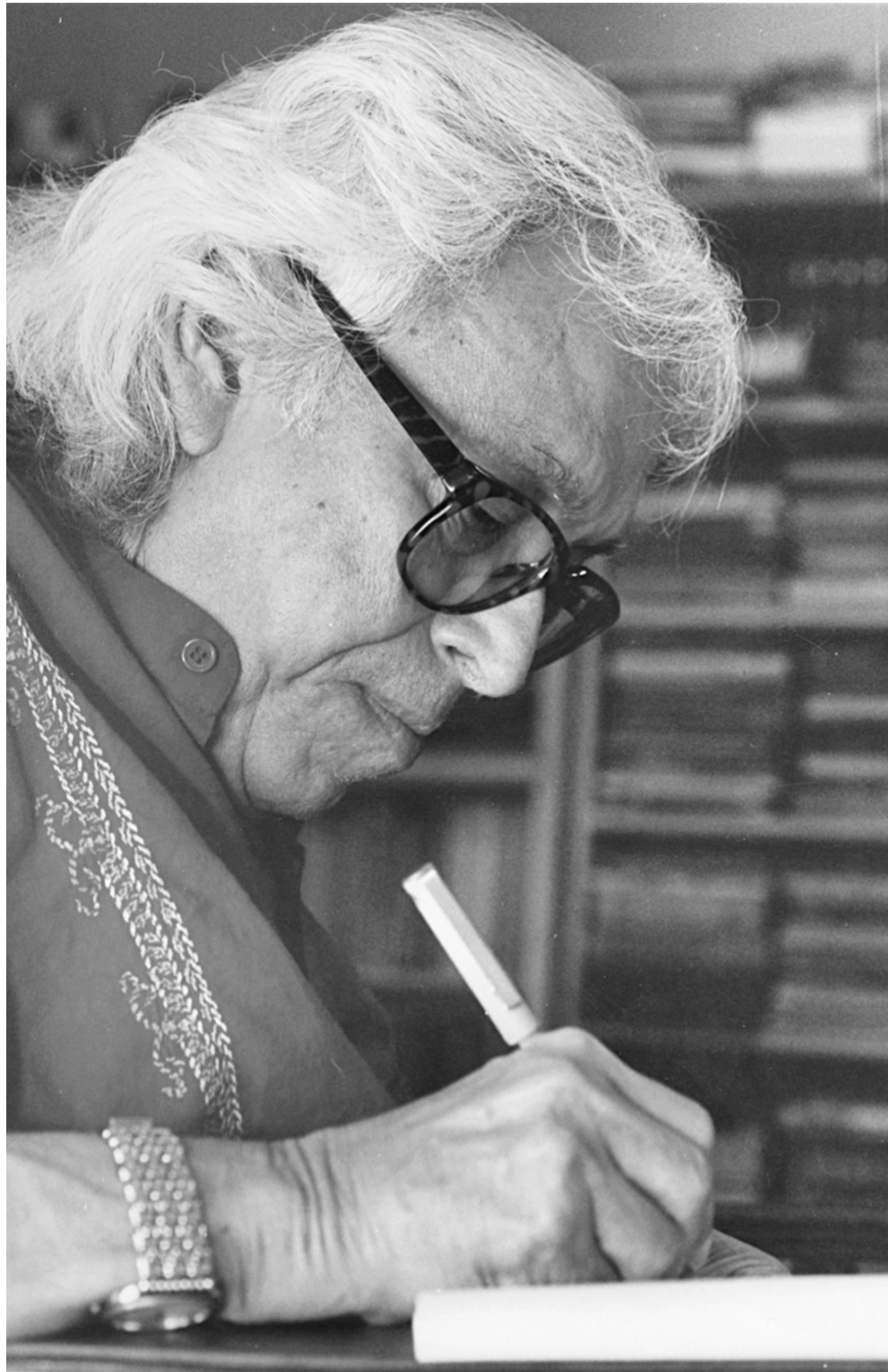


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# Poet Shamsur Rahman



Poet Shamsur Rahman passed away on 17 August 2006. Though he left us, he will live forever in our hearts. In order to show their respect, several thousand people, including poets, litterateurs, artists, cultural activities, academics, journalists, and politicians came to the central Shaheed Minar. His writing style attracted me. He talked about the rights of the common people. The major themes of his poetry are love, patriotism, individual freedom and democracy.

His writings will always inspire us.  
**Rubia Khatun**  
 Student of BUBT (Bangladesh University of Business & Technology)

## Our mountaineers

A refutation published in your newspaper of a news item has drawn my attention. The news and the refutation were about the first summit on any mountain peak by Bangladeshis. Musa Ibrahim and Sajal Khaled, member of Bangla Mountaineering and Trekking Club (BMTC), reached the Frey Peak of Sikkim Himalayas in May last. Then they arranged a press conference on 23 June to make the news public. After the news was published in The Daily Star, Mr. Shafiqat from the USA wrote that Mr. Intesar Haidar was the first Bangladeshi to summit a peak of that height. Being a Bangladeshi mountaineer and having intimacy with Musa, Sajal and Haidar, I want to make the point clear.

Mountaineering was started in Bangladesh in 2003 by a few young men like us. We are moving forward with the aim to summit the Mt Everest. The mem-

bers of BMTC did various expeditions and trekking also. The summit to Frey Peak by Musa and Sajal was part of that campaign.

It is true that Musa and Sajal are not the first Bangladeshis to climb a peak and this is also true that Intesar Haidar did a summit to a peak before them. Rifat Hasan, a member of BMTC, also climbed a peak higher than Frey Peak. Although Haidar and Rifat achieved this honour, Musa and Sajal are the first Bangladeshis team to summit any peak. The cause behind this fact is that Intesar Haidar, born in Dhaka in 1969, now a citizen of the USA, did a rock climbing course in 1979 and a special advance course in 1985 of Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling, India. After that he went to the USA for studies and scaled the peaks Mt Rainier (14,411 ft) and Mt Washington. He also climbed the Mt Vinson (16,076 ft), the

highest peak of Antarctica along with Robert M Anderson, Chris Heintz, Bob Guthrie and Peggey Foster on January 6, 2003. He also reached the Mt Forbes of Greenland in 2005. He did all this as a member of an American expedition team.

Rifat climbed the Stoke Kangri (20,181 ft) of Karakoram Himalayas on October 26, 2004 as a Bangladeshi citizen. But he did not inform the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF). So, there is no official recognition of this summit. On the other hand, Musa and Sajal climbed the Frey Peak (19,125 ft) on 22 May. I personally brought their certificate to Bangladesh. So, Musa and Sajal are the first Bangladeshis to summit a peak as a team. But Intesar Haidar, Rifat Hasan and Sumon Sampad Bonik are their predecessors in this field.

**Mir Shamsul Alam Baboo**  
 Kalabagan, Dhaka

## Power crisis

At present we are passing through a critical situation. Our country is facing many problems, such as unfavourable political situation, movement of garment workers, power crisis, water crisis, corruption, spiralling prices of daily necessities and so on.

Power crisis is one of the most talked about topics. It is a major and acute problem that has to be addressed with a sense of urgency.

**Monirul Islam**  
 English Department  
 International Islamic University,  
 Chittagong

## Muslim ummah

I am writing with reference to the letter: "Muslim umma," by Beduin (August 29).

Beduin asks: "What does the Muslim ummah need to do for surviving?" My answer to this question is that Muslims should stop killing fellow Muslims in their own countries.

As Prof. Istiaq Ahmed, professor of political science at Stockholm University (himself of Pakistani origin) recently wrote: "Pseudo-radicalism of the left and half-baked liberalism cannot explain logically or morally why the greatest slaughters of Muslims in recent times have always been the work of Muslims. The Iran-Iraq war resulted from the uncontrollable ambition of Ayatollah Khomeini to spread his Islamic (read Shia) revolution throughout the world clashing with Saddam Hussein's equally unflinching resolve to crush Shiite and Kurdish threats to his power. In the process, 1.5 to 2 million Muslims were killed." Sunnis and Shias must stop killing each other before they can talk about Muslim ummah. Shia-Sunni hatred makes a mockery of the ummah.

**Mahmood Elahi**  
 2240 Iris Street, Ottawa, Canada

## Multiculturalism and Britain

Thanks to Mr. M.Zamir for his article on British Multiculturalism. Since Britain is a purely democratic society every British citizen has a right to protest its wrong policies. In this context what should be the role of the British citizens of Muslim descent? Are they not supposed to adhere to the established democratic principles of protest or behave as aliens and enemies to harm their own country through death and destruction? This question is asked by the mainstream British society and an answer to this question is simple. If you are a British citizen you ought to behave in a civilised way or you are an enemy of your own nation and committing treason. Now what's wrong with those British Muslims and Muslims in general in Britain who adhere to their religion more than their own nation? In moral standard how far they are right? In a recent survey conducted in Britain there was a sensational discovery. It has been found that more than half of the Muslims in Britain do not have a total dedication to their adopted homeland. There are some Muslims in Britain who would love to see their children fight against their own homeland.

The important question is why this paranoia?  
**Akbar Hussain**  
 Toronto, Canada

## Attitude towards politics

Now it's a fashion to hate politics, so the politicians take the chance. We send Razakaars, criminals etc to the parliament. It's a national shame. Now it's time to change the attitude towards politics and save the country from an impending disaster.

**Solaiman Palash**  
 Address: 514 East Jurain,  
 Dhaka-1204

## Gender discrimination

Thanks both to Rahela Yasmeen (28th July-) and Shayera Moula (3rd August) for their write-ups on gender discrimination. Raising the same voice with them, I want to add some factors which not only are holding back our development but at the same time are playing a vital role in gender discrimination as they are deep rooted in our society and culture. These factors are silently playing their roles in different stages and are very difficult to uproot. I do agree that we have to train all towards gender equality and make them aware. We also must ensure that the knowledge of the training is practiced and translated into action, otherwise the training will go in vain. The most worrying issue is the traditional belief that people have and is prevailing in our country for long. If we cannot change it we cannot change the attitude of the people and ensure development. Let's see how women are discriminated through our traditional beliefs in different stages. Some of these are traditional beliefs and some are practiced unconsciously. When a child is born to a family it brings joy to the family. As per our religious system or belief we welcome the girl child by saying "Azan" silently to her ear, whereas we welcome the boy child by saying it loudly! What happens then? A brother of that girl automatically feels his importance and weighs himself high in the family irrespective of the parents treating them equally later on. We have a tendency to admit a boy to the so-called English medium schools or private school in the hope of providing better schooling keeping in mind the cost involved. Whereas daughters or girls are sent to comparatively less expensive schools or government schools. This situation differs again from rural to urban or from rich to poor. The poor prefers to keep the girl child at home or send her as domestic help if they cannot afford to send her to school or provide necessary educational support like private tutor, guide book etc. Even when we send the children for private coaching or higher studies, the same thing happens. We send our son abroad for higher studies even though the son is comparatively less brilliant than the daughter.

We spend more on sons than daughters thinking that the investments in boys are returnable, as they will be staying with us.

**Romina Dewan Kabir**  
 Free Lance Consultant



## Open air schools

The column "open air schools for street children" by Imrul Hasan published on August 2 drew my attention. Thank you Imrul Hassan for presenting such good news. Really, when street children should go to school, they collect rubbish. But they have their right to be educated, they have the right to enjoy life.

When will society respond to their needs?  
**Senjuti Shuvo Ahmed**  
 North Hall, Dhaka College,  
 Dhaka



## Why this double standard?

I would like to bring to the Notice of the Nation that Awami League some years back had very closely worked with Jamaat-e-Islami. Now they and their allies call the party an anti-liberation force. In the past they worked with the Jamaat shoulder to shoulder for pulling down the BNP government. When the goal was attained the Jamaat became untouchable to them. At present, Jamaat is part of the government. The BNP needs Jamaat's support. If the BNP extend its hand towards the Awami League, would it be possible for the party to become an ally of the BNP leaving behind its own outlook on religion and nationalism? Certainly not.

Now when a vital issue of national interest has arisen creating a situation for a dialogue among the major parties, the AL and the 14-party alliance have come up with

an excuse not to sit with the Jamaat. If the AL could sit with the Jamaat in the parliament, why they cannot sit with it outside the parliament?

I hope and earnestly request the AL and the 14-party alliance to come up with an open heart leaving their lame excuse behind and join the constructive process of serving the nation. People have witnessed enough hostility and want an end to it. Politics should be constructive. It is a nice game where four players are ousted with the "red card" shown by the people--the real referees. The parties must realise this truth.

**Mohammad Faruque**  
 1403, Sk Mujib Road  
 Chittagong

## Bill Gates



Bill Gates ("microsoft heart") has shifted (not changed) his philosophy of life (DS June 30). Now (in an interview) he has expressed his desire to spend more time on philanthropic activities (running his Foundation with his wife); and devote less time as Chairman of Microsoft. Opening more

Windows in life! Another countryman, also a billionaire, desires to donate 30 billion dollars to this Foundation. It is \$60 billion for four billion poor--the Lord is merciful!

His recent visit to Bangladesh moved him--watching the economically marginalised women of rural areas at sewing activities was a religious experience for him. Hand-made products are so costly in the industrialised rich countries--mass production has a dehumanising effect.

The micro world affects the macro world (of \$70 billion richness, compared to a salary of 20 dollars a month for our garment girls). It is not possible for a couple to spend this huge amount (a gift of the Supreme Creator) in one lifetime. It has to be shared--the human touch; not robotised automation. Serving one's fellowmen is a major part of ibadaat, a moral and spiritual test, and secret of peace and contentment.

It reminds of the story of another American billionaire, who was sick, mentally and physically, until he gave away his wealth and regained his health. (was it Rockefeller?).

It is the Cosmic law of shifting of the sine wave--to serve others is a great equalizer in this and the other world. Bangladesh today is passing through the toddler stage: grab, grab, and grab; in contrast to the timeless words of wisdom: the more you give (away), the more you get. In other words: plain living and high thinking (reminds us of Mahatma Gandhi, and others).

In the larger perspective, that is the problem with the UN agencies, controlled by the materialistic West--they can't get the pulse of the life styles in the poor countries. Now the sun has started to set in that golden world. So: exploit the densely populated third world countries (nobody mentions the second world!).

It reminds us of our golden garment girls, who cloth the West, with patience and background sacrifices. Henry Ford's (cars) vision was not to make profit, but to equip every middle class home with a car; and the wealth came as a side effect. If you worry about quick profits, you are in trouble (karma).

Bangladesh is a mixture of the good and the evil. The success of micro-credit has resulted in replication in many poor countries. First the base or foundation, then the structure and the superstructure. Money works in thin layers--note the design of the onion. Materialism is on the decline, but not in a planned way. It is the divine Law of Compensation nothing is free in life--it has to be paid for or compensated, directly or indirectly, in cash or kind.

It appears Bangladesh had a message for Bill Gates, who enjoys world-wide monopoly in computer services. Perhaps, for him, another success story is in the making. Good luck, Bill Gates--open the gates!

**A Mahasen**

On email

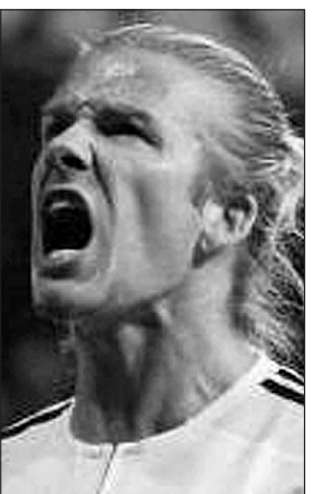
## David Beckham

This is a response to the letter written by Kh. Asef Safa Kabir, who expressed his discontent over some letters which were published in DS over the last few days on David Beckham. I was thoroughly disgusted to see my friend praising David Beckham more than he actually deserves. And his comparison between Zinedine Zidane and David Beckham was absurd. My fellow mate, let me remind you that Pele was supreme in his times, so was Maradona in his times, and that Zidane will be incomparable in his times.

Let me also remind you that Zidane played under immense pressure as he was the only hope of millions of French, while Beckham, being in a team full of stars, played with no such pressure.

Hence, I don't agree with people praising Beckham too much. Instead, I believe the British media is one reason why Beckham is always in the limelight. Moreover, because of Spice Girl Victoria, who he eventually managed to marry, Beckham got even more highlighted.

**Syed Nazmul Alam**  
 Gulshan-2, Dhaka



## Learning ENGLISH

There is no concealing the fact that the standard of English of our students is very low. Most of the students fail in English in the examinations. English is not our mother tongue. But we cannot do without English. Statistics show that about 350 million people speak in English in the world. It is the official or semi official language in more than 60 countries and of many international organisations. The teaching of English in our country is not effective. In school the traditional grammar-translation method is followed. So the pupils only develop reading and writing skills but they cannot speak in English. In order to improve the teaching of English, the students should be involved in the process.

In the classroom communicative approach should be employed. The teacher will ask questions and the students will answer them. The Audio-Lingual approach may be followed to improve the listening and speaking skills as well as pronunciations. Emphasis should be on group work and students.

**Alif Zabr**  
 Dhaka

**LEARNING ENGLISH PUZZLE 1**