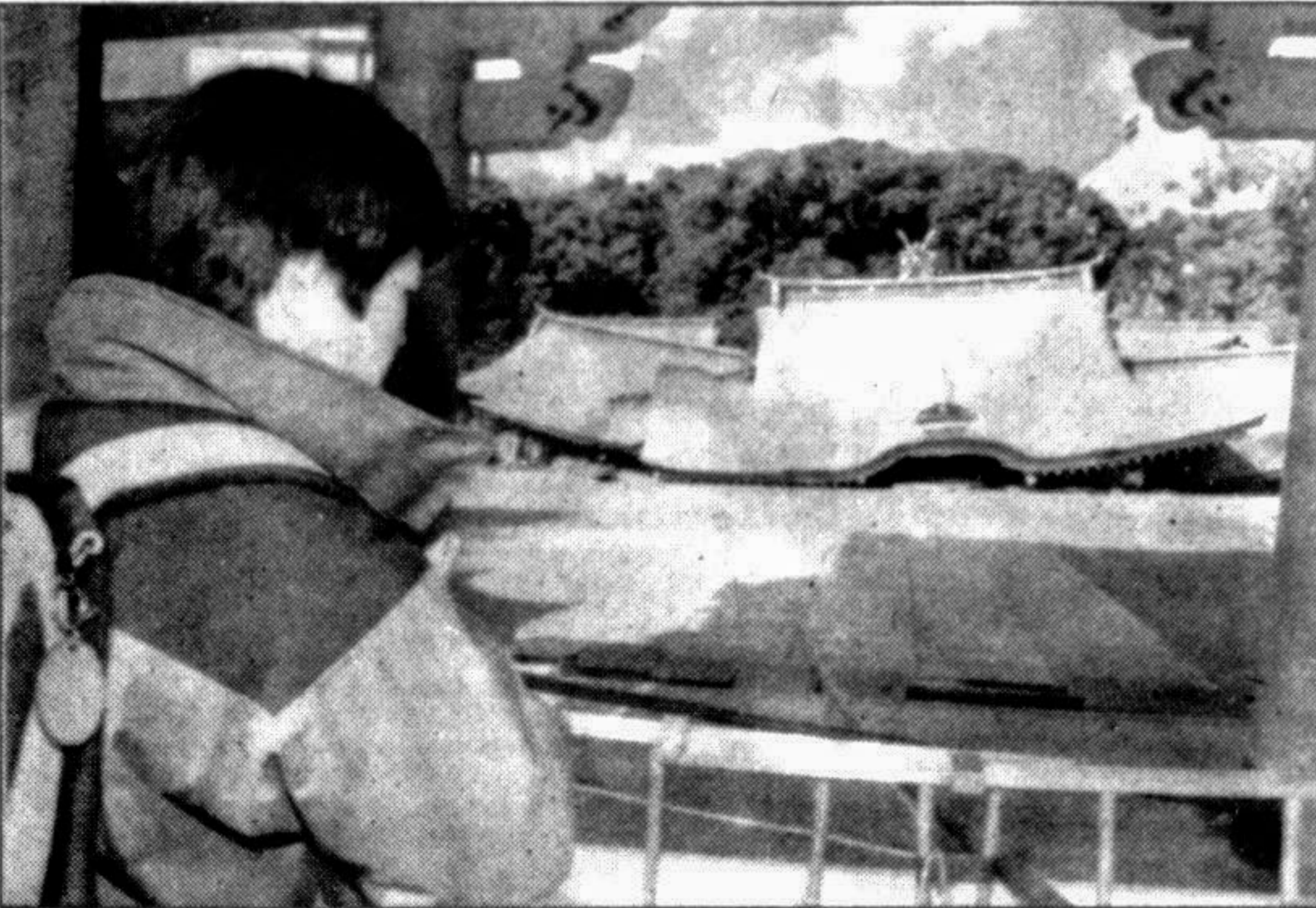


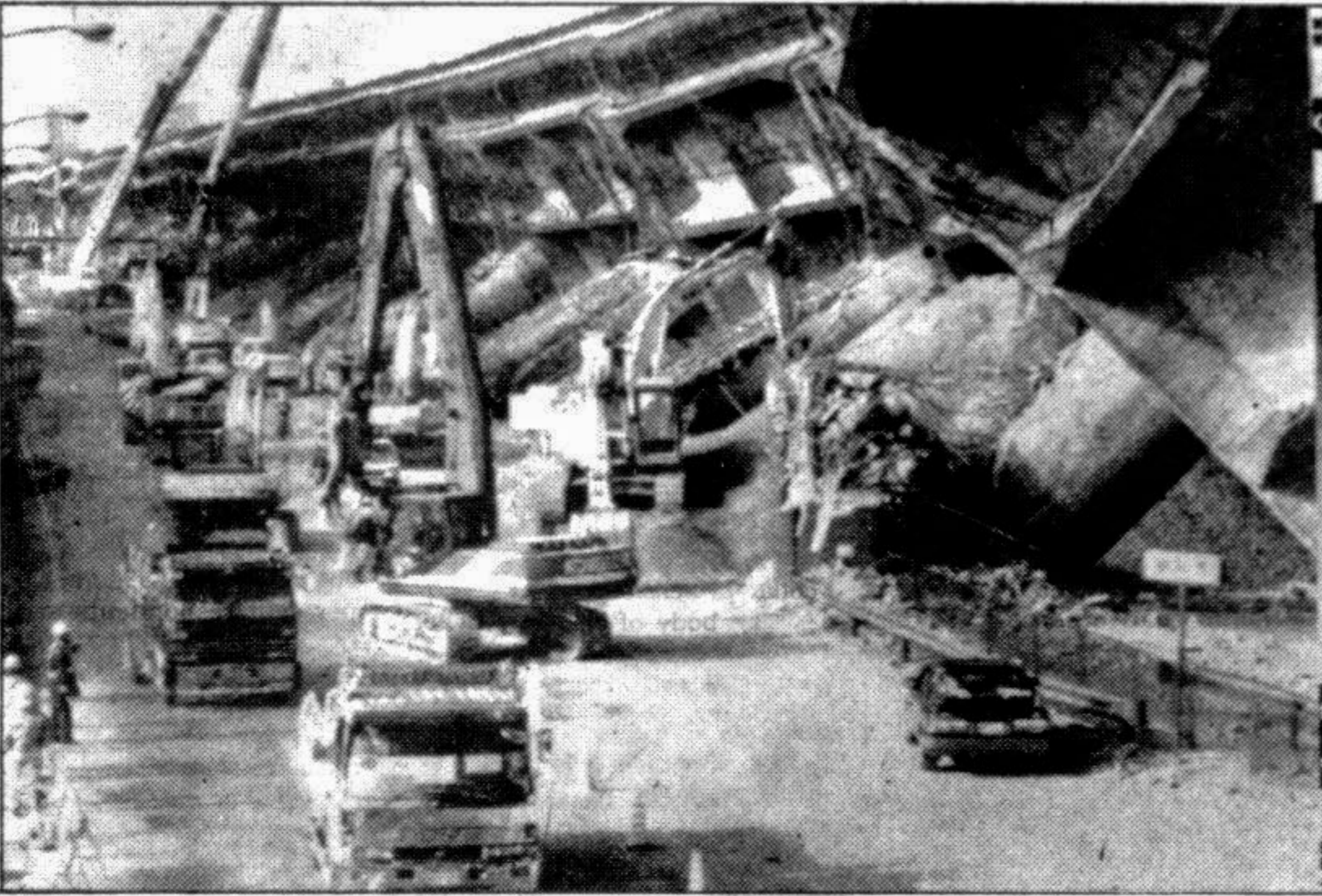
Earthquake: You Witness Resorts Turn into Rubble in Moments

A Lucky Survivor Narrates Her Trance and Trauma

"I've never been so scared in my life... Nobody knew what to do. We all rushed out of the building, then ran back in. And then we were just immobilised, too scared to move..."



KOBE: A man looks at the remains of the Ikuta Shrine 19 January which collapsed during the 17 January earthquake.



NISHINOMIYA: Restoration begins beside a crumpled highway 20 January, four days after the earthquake, measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale.

WHAT would it be like to be woken up in the early hours of the morning by a major earthquake throwing you from your bed?

Ulla Parkkali discovered exactly what it was like, at quarter to six in the morning of January 17th, as one of the biggest recorded tremors to hit Japan tossed her to the floor of the four-storey apartment building where she was staying in Akashi, Osaka.

"I've never been so scared in my life," says Ulla, a young Finlander who had been living in Akashi for four months, studying Japanese. "Nobody knew what to do. We all rushed out of the building, then ran back in. And then we were just immobilised, too scared to move. All the things you're supposed to do in an earthquake just fly out of your head, or don't make sense. I considered getting under a table, but then thought, no way, it doesn't look so safe!"

by Rashida Ahmad

Although Akashi is nearer to Awajishima Island — the epicentre of the earthquake — than Kobe, the inhabitants there were luckier than those of Kobe because Akashi thankfully did not lie on the fault line disturbed by the quake.

The horrific scenes witnessed in Kobe, of whole sections of highway flipping over, and cars plunging into crevices, of buildings thought to be earthquake-proof crashing down in their dozens, and the more than fifteen thousand casualties, were far worse than those witnessed in Akashi.

"We were lucky. Not many of the houses in Akashi are wooden or tiled, like the many that were destroyed in Kobe. There are not as many large multi-storied buildings either. Our building was affected mainly because it was situated on a hill and there was a landslide underneath it. It is now tilted, but still standing."

After the quake ended, the residents of Akashi were left without electricity, water or gas for heating and cooking. "We had no way of knowing what the situation was around us and in the rest of the country," explains Ulla. "We had no

crutches for the past two weeks. Looks a little embarrassed when asked how her injury occurred. "Of course, everyone assumes it happened in the earthquake, but actually it happened afterwards when a friend and I were on our way to collect fresh water from the centre of town and I tripped and fell, spraining my ankle quite badly. But I didn't want to go to a doctor. They were all busy with real earthquake victims, and my injury was not that serious."

She did decide to leave the country, though, and come to Bangladesh where her parents are resident. However, she had to wait two days before she could leave Akashi, as transport was not readily available in the aftermath of the earthquake, and then another day in Kyoto before she finally left Japan. "It felt like a long time," recalls Ulla. It was only when she arrived in Bangladesh, four days after the earthquake, that she received treatment for her ankle, which by that time had swollen to twice its normal size.

Those of us who were able to leave were very lucky," says Ulla. "Many of my friends, and professors, were affected badly and now are homeless. Or else they are not sure if their homes are safe to return to, because they fear they may still collapse. But the problem is, there is nowhere for them to go."

Japan is a country of extremes — extremely primitive and rural, or extremely high-tech and urban. The 120,000 or so displaced urban dwellers have no place to retreat. The cities and towns that were unaffected by the quake are highly populated already.

Thousands of homeless were sheltered in schools, boats and temporary housing. But, with no proper water supplies, there were serious sanitation problems. There was also the constant fear of another tremor with no warning.

"People were shocked. It was all so unexpected. There hadn't been an earthquake in Osaka for over a century. And it was the biggest earthquake in Japan for decades. There had been predictions but they were so vague as to be useless — nobody knew exactly when or where the quake was going to be," recounted Ulla. "And they're still not sure if and when there will be another one..."

Religious Attitudes and Religiosity Among the Dhakaites

A Survey by Monirul I Khan and Rezaul Karim

RELIGIOUS issues are now often found to circumscribe the parleys on our social and political life in a multitude of ways. The range of its topical importance spans from the issue of rights of women in the society to the determination of the nature of constitution or state. For a long period religion influenced the course of our country's historical development and, of course, still continues to influence. Themes and matters pertaining to religion, directly or indirectly, came to generate much heat when we did deliberate on morality, politics or human rights in our society. The recent controversy over the writings and utterances of Taslima Nasrin is an off-hand illustration of the potential that religion has to fan dispute.

Religion crept into the activities geared to socio-economic development of the country. One does not need to dig very deep to make it out. If the recent incident of uprooting mulberry trees or setting ablaze informal schools in rural areas are recalled, the relevance is understood. We came to know that there are people enjoying moral and religious authority in rural areas who considered the tree plantation by the destitute women as inimical to the prevailing morality of the society, however beneficial it may be to their struggle for subsistence or the protection of environment. Millions of illiterate children reach the threshold of learning how to write or read through the informal schools of a few development organizations. It is portrayed as disservice to religious values. This is the control a group of people enjoying religious authority in rural areas. Therefore, it takes little effort to conceive the dominance of religion to influence even the remotest possible events or issues of our social life. Perhaps for such reasons the societies of the Orient still could not shed off the stigma of religious zealotry.

However, this write-up is not devoted to prepare an account of what interfaces are there among religion and other institutions in our society, rather it compiles the findings of a recent survey conducted on religious attitudes of a group of people from different backgrounds and socio-economic characteristics. As a matter of fact, it is not always clearly understood how do religious attitudes take a

shape or undergo changes. The process of formation of the religious attitudes and beliefs in individuals' life seems to be a puzzle sometimes. A ready-made answer could be the phenomenon of socialization or the religious background of the family, but it may not always be explanatory enough when among the members of the same family one notices divergence in religious attitude or the pattern of belief.

Greater societal environment, cultural interactions, intellectual maturity or one's proneness to critical thinking could be accountable to have range of religious attitude in the same community or family. Even one may need to look into historical event(s) to appreciate the fact how religious beliefs change. Take the role of enlightened reasoning in Europe to account for the change that took place in the conservative fold of Christianity. Or that of urbanization, industrialization and universal franchise to enfeeble the caste barrier particularly in the Indian cities. Likewise, it is sensed that education or occupation come to mould individuals' religious attitudes or, for that matter, across different age cohorts or gender groups discernable difference will be distinct. In the social science jargons they are often labelled 'causal factors' in the making of different attitudes and inclination to certain rituals.

Brief Background

It registers the opinion of more than 200 people residing in different parts of the city. The samples of respondents were chosen rather purposively. Necessary time, resource or manpower to follow a random sampling method were not there. However, care was taken to prevent bias while choosing respondents. A set of structured questionnaire were administered to obtain opinion. A range of quantitative analysis has been undertaken to interpret data. Given the variables are mostly qualitative and measured in nominal and ordinal scale statistics like chi, lambda and gamma are estimated to examine causal relations.

The array of 211 respondents selected for this study display differences in terms of age, sex, education and occupation.

Hundred-thirtyeight were male and 70 female, 99 from the age cohort 15 to 29, 35

from the cohort 30 to 44 and 41 from the cohort 45 plus. 154 were educated upto matric or below, 17 higher secondary or below and 34 upto degree level or above. The categories of occupation included professionals, salaried people and businessmen, students, housewives, workers and preachers — 80 professionals and businessmen, 72 students, 18 housewives, 25 workers and 16 preachers. (On account of missing value aggregate in different categories may not be 211). It is noteworthy that all respondents were Muslims. Therefore issues and topics related to rituals, morals, politics and beliefs pertain to Islam.

Highlights of the Findings

The belief in eternal life marks all major religions. Islam is not an exception. Rewards and punishments in the eternal life for one's deeds on earth provides important control mechanisms to effect religious morality. This survey finds that 78 per cent respondents submit their belief in eternal life. In terms of respondents' age, sex, education and occupation it does vary in a statistically significant way.

It is popularly believed that Islam is liberal in allowing men to enjoy the privilege of polygamy. This particular aspect often invite criticism from the human rights activists for causing women's distress. Respondents of this survey were asked about their inclination towards polygamy. Interestingly, more than 80 per cent oppose it while happily married. Irrespective of educational and occupational differences the response is significant.

Another widely known criticism against Islam goes this way: that it renders the woman enjoin vulnerable by allowing men to invoke verbal divorce — popularly known as *Tin Taluk*. However, there is distinct difference in reality. Only 27 per cent respondents subscribed to it. The nature of occupation has influenced the response, being statistically significant. Those pursuing white collar occupation or business distance from it while fairly preferred by the respondents from working class and preaching background.

Whether the women should have divorce right, the response to such question was found interesting. Likewise

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How Much is a Word Worth?

by Salahuddin Akbar

Thomas Jefferson who was very much in favour of cutting lazy words and trite phrases remarked: *The most valuable of all talents is never using two words when one will do.*

ONCE my teacher reprimanded me — "Mind it — you're writing! You can't write like you talk." Instead of formal language may be he found some colloquial tone and conversational style in my letter to a friend telling him what I would like to do after my SSC exams (which was of course a home task).

Sir, the things seem to have changed now. Along with other maxims are equally twisting these days. A man is known by the company he keeps away (replacing A man is known by the company he keeps). Fast and steady wins the race (overtaking slow and steady wins the race). Now the modern teacher says: One simple change can greatly improve your writing. Just remember this... "Write more like you talk."

Many find this a difficult switch to make, because in our formative years, like me many of us were taught that writing is supposed to be different. Fancier. Utilising (instead of using) longer French-derivative words instead of short Anglo-Saxon words. Structured in a different way — in long sentences and paragraphs, allowing few changes of pace such as we put into our speech. Avoiding personal pronouns — you talking to me in favour of impersonal references and passive voice.

The teacher now reprimands — "forget it man! People don't talk in a stiff, stilted way anymore, and you shouldn't write as they did in the nineteenth century." He further adds: "you talk to yourself silently before you begin to write and while you're writing." And he finally gives us a 4-point programme he hopes we'll retain:

- ★ Use the right words.
 - ★ Keep it brief.
 - ★ Be specific and accurate.
 - ★ Add some interest.
- A one-minute TV commercial usually may contain 100

words. To put that 100 words on the telecast, if during the BTN newscast, costs Tk 21,400+15 per cent VAT. That's Tk 214+15 per cent VAT per word.

NBC's Jessica Savinch (I'm if the spelling is correct) conducted once most highly paid news programme till she suddenly died in 1978. And it was a one-minute show, 10 seconds were allotted for commercial, 2 seconds for logo — then only 48 seconds Jessica had to reveal her excellence at words and presentation.

In contrast, we watched BTN news taking four minutes to show how HM Ershad reach a Dinajpur village by helicopter and jeep before showing his public address for another eight minutes. The show must go on and it must end too (as with a cataclysm in 1990!).

But we're still afraid to use the direct, shorter words in any writing matter, aren't we? It's mostly because of what we were taught in the composition classes, usually taught by our seniors in the offices and by our writers of books and journals. Probably the most widely quoted phrase in English language is Shakespeare's "To be, or not to be, that is the question." The Bard of Avon used only 30 letters in that memorable 10 word phrase. The other day a friend of mine who teaches English at a government college discovered a surprise for me while talking about the narrative style of great writers. He drew Ernest Hemingway's The old man and the Sea from the shelf in his living room and opened the page describing the lonely battle of the tired old fisherman who had just hooked his last and biggest marlin, while the sharks hone in on the catch lashed to the side of his small skiff.

Short words? I was amazed at how much more concise a writing becomes. Almost every

word in that passage has only one or two syllables in it.

Specifically, in the entire 273-word passage there are only four words of more than two syllables. They are "shovelnose, fascinated, afternoon," and "quartering," each having three syllables; not exactly long or complicated.

Well, I took American Literature in the fourth year of my MA but I never noticed it this way — I told my friend. "Neither did our teacher," wittily he answered. "I discovered it only long after I passed MA!" So if it's good enough for Hemingway to convey his thoughts and images powerfully, why should we hesitate to use short words?

Trimming our writing down to the lean hard core causes us to think. We sharpen our ideas as we sharpen our prose.

At the start of World War II, Winston Churchill was one of the busiest men in the world. He had no time for nonsense or verbosity. He sent this directive to the First Lord of the Admiralty: Pray state this day, on one side of a sheet of paper, how the Royal Navy is being adapted to meet the conditions of modern warfare.

Can we imagine the consternation such a directive would cause in our navy, and the reaction it would get?

Thomas Jefferson who was very much in favour of cutting lazy words and trite phrases remarked: The most valuable of all talents is never using two words when one will do.

It may be the exact opposite of what our national news agency BSS and BTN newsmen most of the time did for the presidential coverage (when they were wanted most to avoid pompous, evasive or redundant words and phrases — not to take 17 words to say what they could in — and cut short lengthy sentences) it turns the show look like — people talking without speaking. Continued on page 9

access to news. I was even wondering whether I should attend my classes that day. We were completely cut off. Ulla, who has had to use

AFP announces that... According to AFP sources... Not a day, not an hour goes by in the world, without a daily newspaper, a radio or a television issuing a piece of AFP news. Its thousands of correspondents weave a vast network around the world in which, like butterflies in a spider's web, news gets trapped.

AFP, which provides especially the media with news, is the result of an idea which came to light in 1835, at a time when cheap newspapers were getting off the ground. It was a stroke of genius by a former banker, Charles Havas. "I will collect news from all over the world for you. I will deliver it quickly and you will be able to use it in any way you like," he suggested to the heads of newspapers.

The idea of "Master Jacques of the Press" as Balzac called him became a success quite quickly. To begin with, it had limited means. In order to deliver his news, he first used carrier-pigeons, then the Chappé telegraph. Later on, the international phone. Today, a piece of news launched by satellites on the highways of space travels right round the world in a few seconds.

The Agence Havas became the Agence France Presse in 1944 when, with the liberation of the country, the press put on a new face. It was, at the time, an organisation which depended on the government. But, in the mid-50s, its managing director, Jean Marin, (who had been the commentator in London, during the war, on the free French radio, "Les Français parlent aux Français"), attempted to obtain a status comparable to that of a press co-operative, for AFP. After a vote in Parliament, in 1957, the status of freedom finally ensured it complete independence of any political, economic and ideological influence.

Since then, AFP has been run by a board of 15 directors, elected for 3 years, who choose the chairman and managing director: 8 heads of

Agence France Presse: 160 Years of Chasing after the News

by Pierre-Albert Lambert

In the heart of Paris, a seven storey glass facade, topped by antennae pointing skywards, houses the head-office of the oldest news agency in the world, AFP.



AFP Central Desk at the Paris bureau.

the French daily press, 2 representatives of the public radio and TV service, 2 people from the administration and 2 staff representatives, including one journalist. A higher council, consisting of independent personalities, makes sure that the prime objective of the Agency is respected: the diffusion to users, without interruption, of accurate, impartial, trustworthy news.

With its 2,000 permanent correspondents (1,100 journalists including 150 photographers) and its 2,000 freelance reporters in 165 countries, every day, AFP issues more than 2 million words in 6 languages (French, English, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese

and German). None of the big media could manage without it today. Finally, AFP manages more than 7 million archive photos.

Its turnover, which has increased by 40% in 5 years, amounted to 1.19 billion francs (0.2 billion dollars) in 1993. It comes from selling its services to the media, to businesses and to the state. The latter, which takes charge of subscriptions by its government offices, is its major client with nearly 50% of its total receipts.

More than Two Billion Readers
 Its 12,500 clients include 1,500 public institutions and

private firms, 650 newspapers and periodicals, 400 radio and television companies and 100 national press agencies. The latter, in turn, diffuse a service (which includes a large amount of AFP texts), to 7,600 newspapers, 2,500 radio stations and 400 TV companies. There is such a large number of users that, according to an estimate by UNESCO, AFP reaches more than 2 billion people all over the world, thanks to 6 geostationary satellites, 1,500 dish antennae and 2,000 micro-computers and terminals.

The Agency, which is forward-looking, is pursuing a policy of diversification. Around the trunk of its "General Service", specialized

branches have developed. These include Photo International; Audio, intended for radios; Infographic, which distributes maps and graphs related to topical events; Telematique, a large public and professional service available on the Minitel interactive teletext system, etc. Some of these new services were developed with partners or by AFP subsidiaries, including Polycom, specialized in transmitting data by satellite.

"In the face of competition from its two big rivals, the American 'Associated Press' agency and the British Reuters, AFP cultivates its difference of being a Latin agency" one of its directors explains. "It offers its users the image of a world in action, seen in French, and told in all the languages on earth."

The Agency is rightly proud of some fine victories that it has won over its competitors, "scoops" in professional jargon. One of these was that of announcing to the world the massacre of Israeli athletes by a Palestinian commando at the Olympic Games in Munich, in 1972, one hour ahead of the other media.

The profession of being a news agency journalist, demands permanent and rigorous gymnastics to be able to bring together objectivity, speed and the reliability of one's sources, 24 hours a day. A daily or weekly has moments of respite, but a press agency keeps going full swing from one end of the year to the next, without a break.

Jean Marin, who ran AFP for 21 years, compared the work of the Agency to a Rugby run, when the ball is passed from hand to hand. "It matters little who scores the try. From the special envoy to the permanent reporter and including the editor at the head-office, there is no author's vanity, only the feeling of a passionate race against time and of a match which keeps beginning again against the competitor"

— L'Actualité En France