

TEENS and TWENTIES

Death Penalty: Why the Policy Should be Strengthened!

THE word "crime" is quite closely associated with our lives. It may not directly involve itself with people like you and me but there are certainly many helpless and vulnerable people out there in the open world who are the victims of various crimes.

A totally different class of people engage themselves in criminal activities, that particular class having acquired a permanent, stable and convenient position in our society. In the breakfast table, the morning newspaper glares up at us with disturbing pieces of information such as murder, lootings, husbands beating up wives and leaving them mortally wounded, suspicious child deaths, illegal use of weapons in killings etc etc.

Just as "crime" have become a part of our lives, unnerving us with unknown fears and unwanted tensions, "punishment" should be closely linked with it to add some comfort and re-assurance to us. Not only that but its prime intention and utmost effort must be to cripple the confidence and evil plans of precisely those people in our society who commit deadly crimes and get away fairly easily.

In other words, punishments, and I mean strong and tough punishment, should be prepared as medicines to cure the killers of any further such diseases. The law re-enforcement agencies should take an active role in trying to abolish crime by... means of hard and inescapable punishments. And what exactly do I have in mind when I talk of tough punishments?

All of us, as I am sure are familiar with the term "death penalty". It is, in fact, that mode of punishment that precisely provides satisfaction to not only the victim's soul it gives us tremendous relief, serves all purposes and justifies justice. Yes, I strongly believe that death penalty is the only way closer to justice in the complicated path of our lives.

Watching the killers roaming freely and heedlessly in society is like sitting back and watching justice going crazy bit by bit. And letting them browse away so easily can only mean one thing and that is supporting them in what they're doing. How else you possibly explain the increasing number of murders everyday? What do you have say to all the newspaper headlines screaming out of

the pages demanding instant attention?

There are so many out there who are against death penalties. They think it's a hasty decision to come to a conclusion of death penalty or that it's too harsh a punishment to bestow on someone who only murders 'on the spur of the moment'. Some believe, sentencing them to death only brings about a lot of unwanted publicity, creates havoc but serves no purpose. These ideas are totally wrong and in actual fact has absolutely no relevance about creating publicity.

For no victim and no one would prefer publicity to the value of their lives. Some human right observers are so concerned that they are even thinking of totally uprooting the death penalty policy. But then you'll hardly find them when the criminals kill innocent people and hamper the victim's basic human rights. Does this mean the criminals only have human rights?

by Farhana Yusuf

So it would seem when one takes a look at what's happening at Bosnia where the Serbs are killing, raping and torturing the Muslims. They are helpless as the weight of the arms embargo hangs upon their heads. Where are all those human rights observers now? And why don't they talk about human rights now? Can they at all produce any other substantial arguments? These human rights observers do not understand that if the death penalty had hung upon the heads of the killers, then the killings would have stopped long ago.

When a man cold-bloodedly kills an innocent victim by stabbing or raping or throwing acid over him/her and leaving him/her to die, does he stop to think for one moment whether he's doing justice to the victim? Does he pause to reflect how that person is feeling, what he/she is going through when tortured brutally and mercilessly by the killer? Does he ever put himself in the same situation and imagine for one minute what it may feel like to be in the victim's place?

Last of all, can he foresee the consequences of his unnecessary and savage action? Letting these brutal men slip away easily from our fingers gives them free access to the foresight that there'll be

hardly any consequences for them.

Is that what the country wants, the law would prefer everyone to believe? Is that what justice and judgement is all about? Imagine the situation when the family of the victims suffer, more so if they have to live with the knowledge that the killer of their near and dear one is very much alive and living freely in society. What is justice for if it cannot be applied for men who break into a house in broad daylight, kills innocent residents, destroys and demolishes their property and takes all valuables away?

What is punishment all about if it is not for hijackers who stab men and women in a rickshaw when they can't find any money or ornaments with them? When men belonging to the lower class beat up their wives cruelly and leaving them hanging from the ceiling when the girl's parents fail to provide the promised dowry? How in heavens name can justice be served when a man gets away after killing a small child just so that he can take out the child's kidneys and sell them off with a good profit?

The way to all these questions find answer in nothing other than straight away death penalties without any questions asked. A couple of verdicts like this, in all the courts of this country, and you'll hardly see the faces of such crimes. If it can't be washed out completely it can certainly be decreased to the extent that people can again start to breathe normally.

We'll at least know that the law makes an effort for the people of this country. If nothing else, we'll derive satisfaction out of the fact that fifty out of the hundreds of victims saw justice served. If those who do not support death penalties can come up with some new arguments, some new mode of punishment that's just as tough as death penalties, it's well and good. But I strongly and sincerely doubt that.

The faces of these men need to be brought out publicly for everyone to see. The masks that they wear need to be stripped off for everyone to be recognized. For they are those who are low and fickle-minded, belong to the worst class, are liars and hypocrites.

But whatever else they may be, their only identity is that, they're murderers and there should be no mercy, in such cases.

Mary Shelly's Jurassic Park

by Nameer Rahman

MARY Shelly was quite possibly the first science fiction writer. At the height of the Romantic movement and the middle of the age known as the Industrial Revolution she wrote a novel that told of more than the monster depicted in it. It tells of man's scientific obsession. It tells of man's scientific legacy.

To this day Frankenstein is a classic. Not only because it is the first science fiction book ever written but also because it speaks of much more than a fictional monster and the technology used to create it. Today the word Frankenstein would most probably conjure up a of a seven feet tall Boris Karloffish creature with nuts and bolts sticking out of his neck and cranium in the minds of most people. Yet very few people know that Frankenstein is the name of the doctor, not the creature and very few people know of the message being conveyed in the book.

Frankenstein was written during the time known as the Industrial Revolution. It was a time of learning and advancement, when science and industry changed the face of Europe. During this the secrets of nature were being unlocked and that frightened a lot of people. They felt that we were trying to delve into the unknown, seeking knowledge that we shouldn't have, that we were trying to control nature but didn't have any hope of succeeding. It was against this backlash that the book was written.

Mary Shelly's message is simple: total dominance over nature was impossible. The good doctor Frankenstein epitomized man and his quest for knowledge. Victor being an energetic young doctor eager and thirsting for knowledge, obsessed with idea of creating life yet refusing to take moral responsibility for his creations and the following consequences.

The monster representing the achievement of man and the fact that he like nature cannot be controlled. The point being made with stunning simplicity. Along the course of the book one might also ask who is the true monster, the creature of man, for in the book the creature is an intelligent, articulate being capable of emotion and understanding, knowledgeable and well read yet driven to hate and anger because of the refusal of people to see beneath that beneath his skin deep ugliness. He finds himself in an utterly human situation; rejection by society.

Mary Shelly was truly ahead of her times. A testimony to the fact being that more than a hundred and fifty years after her book was published another modern author wrote a book which bears a message similar to that of hers concerning the progress of knowledge the moral responsibility that goes with creations and inventions as well the consequences of unbridled advancements. Michael Crichton wrote Jurassic Park painting a picture of the exploitation of science by corporate greed. The creator of Jurassic park was not a villain yet he (like Victor Frankenstein) refused or was unable to fathom the consequences of his actions and ambitions. In both novels the creations go out of control and in both novels the creators and orchestrators of this bizarre reincarnation die at the hands of their creations.

There may be a grain of truth in what they are saying. In today's world breakthrough discoveries are being made every day. Genetics have progressed with fantastic speed. Even though we don't realize it but we are close to fulfilling the Nazi dream of creating a genetically pure race. In a few years time people can choose what type of babies they would like and customize them according to their taste. In certain places governments are providing incentives for people to marry within their own race, to keep them racially pure. In China laws have been passed to prevent people with genetic effects from marrying to "increase their population quality".

Books like "The Bell Curve" come close to proving that some people like the Blacks have low IQ's because they are genetically so. Its ideas like the one suggested by Nobel prize winner William Shokely for the sterilization of people with low IQ's that are truly frightening. There is no moral responsibility for what goes on nowadays.

Maybe, man can't take responsibility because mankind is currently the child's equivalent of an advanced species that isn't mature enough to handle its discoveries and inventions. It is a child that possesses a gun. It's in times like these one comes to fully understand and appreciate the meaning of the saying: "A little knowledge is dangerous."

A Country Called Bangladesh

by Fyaz Shahnoor



Look into her eyes you'll see Bangladesh!

— Photo A K M Mohsin

AN interesting letter in Bichitra caught my eye the other day. The title "A country called Bangladesh" was quite unassuming yet the content was truly disturbing.

The writer, clearly a disgruntled fellow countryman, sketched in a few words what Bangladesh meant to him. "Look at the man trapped in a traffic jam — you will see Bangladesh. Look at the tortured outcry of a patient in the midst of a doctor's strike — you will see Bangladesh. Look into the eyes of a farmer devastated by the floods and drought — you will see Bangladesh."

Occasionally, on a rare moment, a few little words, a few raw sentences strike sharply into your innermost being. You are forced to delve deep into your soul in search of an answer to a query. Yet you know that the mystery is unattractable. Call me a patriotic fool but that specific letter threw me into such a predicament. I asked myself what Bangladesh meant to me, a 24 year old boy studying in one of the premier institutes in Bangladesh with a comfortable future to look forward to. I was lost. A deluge of memories engulfed. I still don't know the answer.

There was a time, believe it or not, when I couldn't tell a lie keeping a straight face. Fortunately time and experience changed all that. I remember facing the methodically corrupt customs officials at Benapole when I was going to India to study for the first time. "Do you have any extra money you can spare," the customs officer wined at me as if I was some ugly looking centipede who had just crawled out of the bowels of the earth.

My hesitant 'no' gave me away. I had to pay. But now, I bear no grudge towards them. They were good teachers, they taught me that lying was something one had to do if one were to survive. They taught me that to survive in the harsh and unfair Bangladesh wilderness one had no other alternative but to lie, and to lie with conviction. My little untruths I used to call them, until one day they matured into full fledged lies. And now I'm trapped. Of course I don't feel any remorse, after all in Bangladesh lies are a dime a dozen.

Other than lies and deception what I see in Bangladesh is hope. Sometimes from this dark void that we call life a flicker of hope shines through. And that is what keeps us going. Sometimes we nurture it but most of

the time it is left to fend for itself. I saw hope the other day. Weeks ago some friends of mine were hanging out at Dhaka University. It was after dark and one friend bought a pack of cigarettes from a small boy. Thinking it was a hundred taka note he gave the boy a five hundred taka note. It was dark and nobody realised what has happened. After the transaction the boy went away. An hour later, however he had returned. It turned out that after he had returned home he found out that the taka that was given to him was a five hundred taka note. He had come all this way to return it. It is hard to establish what prevailed in this situation, the luck of my friend or the honesty of that boy. I would like to think it was honesty.

Hope had scored yet again. I pray to God that this young child does not get enmeshed in the ruthless dishonesty of Dhaka life. I pray that we are able to learn from his rather than learn from our corrupt ways.

"What do you want to be when you grow up little boy?" my father inquired looking down at his five-year old son. "I want to be the president of Bangladesh so that I can feed all my people." I had boldly replied with all the innocence of a child. Understandably my five-year old mind couldn't comprehend the full implications of that answer. I hope my father doesn't ask me that same question no what I'm a mature, rational adult. He might not like what I've got to say.

Growing up in a third world country has made me practical. No, lets not fool around with words, it has made me selfish. I've learned not to think in terms of we — as in me and my countrymen, but rather me — as in me and myself. I'm not ashamed of this blatant confession. I am what I am. And after all I'm a Bangladeshi. I can always blame it on society.

Where did I go wrong? So where does all this soul searching leave me. Still more confused than I was when I started. I don't know deep inside what the word Bangladesh means to me. But then the journey has just started. Maybe as I move along with life I will find out. Maybe I never will. I've never seen the tortured face of a patient in the midst of a doctors strike. I've never looked into the eyes of a farmer devastated by the floods. Maybe if I did I would have found Bangladesh?

A Technological Milestone at JU

by Siraj-us-Saleheen Lovell

A technological milestone was made in human history, when the machine named 'computer' was invented in the early 1900. Since then, this machine has become an essential aspect of our life and slowly has grown up to be an extraordinary scientific breakthrough. But have no fear, because I'm not going to bore you guys by starting to explain about the computer. Rather, I'll try and bring spotlight to those unique departments, as well as universities which provide proper lessons about such a technology. One such university is the Jahangirnagar University, which has a department named 'Electronics and Computer Science'.

In the center of this university stands a massive building known as the 'Physics Building' guarding its surrounding area. In the third floor of this building, with only a handful of rooms, is situated the Department of Electronics and Computer Science (and you thought only the BUET had such subjects). This department was formed in 1985 under the auspices of the late Vice Chancellor Prof. A F M Kamaluddin and as a result, in 1992 started its journey with only 5 teachers and 24 1st year (honors) students. Dr Imamuddin of the Physics department was the then founder Chair-person. Now, there are a total of 8 teachers and near about 80 students in the three years. Among those eight teachers, two of them have Ph.D. degrees, two of them have MS degrees, six

have Engineering degrees and two have Physics (higher) degrees.

The syllabus of the department comprises of Basic, Analogous and Digital Electronics, Communications Engineering and other Electronics subjects. The syllabus of Computer Science comprises of Computer Software and Hardware. The degree achieved after a four year long course study is equivalent to BSc in Engineering.

There are a total of 50 Publications of which 17 are internationally renowned. The departments Computer sector is one of the richest and obviously enviable to any University. It has a total of eight computers, each of which are highly sophisticated. 3 more of these machines are arriving around September this year. Besides these there are a good number of scientific and electronic equipments and devices in the laboratories which suffice to the need of the students.

But still, with respect to the growing interest of students and the forth-coming new recruit of additional students, these are not enough," says the present Chair-person Professor H S Farooq. He informed that only two tiny class-rooms and two crummy laboratory rooms (both situated on the top floor of the Physics building) are not enough to tackle the growing need of students as well as teachers. But he reassured by informing that in the near future, a complex building as well as the extension of

rooms and labs is going to be completed. That definitely is a good news.

When asked about its future prospect Prof. Farooq said, "Nowadays nothing can go on without the help of computer technology, be it a bank job, or an NGO, a governmental or even a non-governmental organization. I have total confidence that none of our students would have to face the harsh facts of unemployment after passing out even in such a competitive world. They may jobs at various governmental organizations where computer knowledge is a must, or at the T&T, the BT, at the AEC, the BSCIC, at various banks, electronic industries. In the future they will even get a chance to be in the teaching line if they want, as more and more universities are thinking of opening computer courses."

What reassuring words! Why don't you try once, and who knows, you might meet your lucky stars! It's no big deal you know? You only need 50% of your HSC marks in both Mathematics and Physics. So why not buy a form and appear the admission test. Don't miss the chance of reading in the most newest and one of the finest departments in the country.

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Life

by Tadib Muqtada

*God is like a blanket of energy
He is the ultimate, the end.
He surrounds us, He's everywhere.
But has no control over his children
Atleast not in this world, not in our life.
Not during life.
He is the king of the dead, He owns us after death.
But this is life
Here we are free
Here we are who we want to be
The time and place where we go wrong
The most crucial point of life and death
Now is the time when we prove ourselves
For God settles our fate of the Hereafter.
Be gentle to His angels, honesty always is the key
Reject 'iblis,
For his second name is dishonesty.
And his powers though are weak, are enough,
Enough to ruin our existence, our whole fate.
You have to choose right from wrong,
It's always your choice
It's always been that way
Everything is in your hands.*

*Sometimes darkness may seem like the only light
Sometimes the light may be dark
But there is always hope.
There is always love
Love cleanses your mind, your body, your soul
Immaculate
Everything might perish one day, everything might go wrong
But there is always something to hold on to,
HOPE!
Life seems like the end of everything,
But it's only the beginning.
Life is always hard and it always brings pain
You can always run away from it
But that's wrong, you must suffer
Suffering may kill you, but that's still a reason
Suffering will atleast bring you peace
And death will bring a whole lot more*

Being Human

by Md Atiquzzaman

ARIF is my cousin and has also been a very good friend. An unusual thing about him is that, he possesses a few views, utterly confusing to me. There are times when I just can't help supporting him. Consequently, I get baffled, as I try to sum up his actions.

It's been quite a few years since I crossed my teen years, and now my sense of reasoning is the only quality which could make me proud, (had I been left alone to evaluate myself). So, this sweet cousin of mine seems like an itch in the middle of my back. I can't reach him, though I very well know where he is.

The more I think of him, the more I get jealous. Jealousy creeps through my doors without knocking. Speculations make me realise. God has created three classes of people: those who have, those who do not and those like me, who lack!

would rather not waste time ... I fell in love the next moment. Incidentally I was trying hard to be critical of myself.

There were friends to daunt and also those to inspire (they still remain). Usually a younger sister helps the scene, and says, "Bhaiya can I make a call for you", and ultimately it's a bigger mess! There is still another kind. Who would be besieged by a queer feeling like, the beloved brother is bewitched! (I don't have a sister.)

However I proposed this girl directly, within a few days. She refused my love, directly within a few moments. To me, such a mere possibility was not significant until it actually happened. I would then walk the streets of Dhaka and sing to myself.

"But I still haven't found what I'm looking for". A little bit of hypocrisy saves a lot, whereas, I could have succumbed to my injuries. Still I walk and laugh and enjoy my life ... well it's my own life, right?

About my cousin, Arif. He spend most of his childhood in Chittagong. It had been nearly twelve years since he'd been there. Recently, I accompanied him to his old friends, his playground, and

his childhood memories.

Arif was particularly anxious for one reason. His friends won't be able to recognise him. And I was curious and eager to observe such a scene. We met Ahmed, one my cousin's (once upon a time) bosom friends, on the way to his home.

The old boys stood face to face, spent a few dramatic moments to recognise and then dived into each other's arms, sobbing and hugging vigorously. They were very happy nostalgic and absorbed. My existence was forgotten in no time. After an hour passed by. When Ahmed finally turned towards me, saying, "another of our best friends, Kallol, will be passing by, we can wait here." Ahmed instantly proposed a funny plan. We would introduce Arif to Kallol, with a different name.

Soon, Kallol reached the spot. "I and Arif were promptly introduced by director-actor Ahmed. Arif would then walk along unsuspected. "By any chance, have you ever met a guy named Arif?" I said.

Arif slowed his steps, while Kallol replied! "Yes, ... but that's history! Arif used to be ... my neighbour and a friend too. Are you related?" "Not exactly. You see I met him in Dhaka. Said he comes from Chittagong. He's actually a crooked type, gets on my nerve..."

[To be continued]