

How shall we pray for you?

Considering God made all mankind, surely all the people of the world should be praying for each other, trying to understand and respect the different races/people groups, and their cultures.

As a Christian priest I pray for all people. We need each other for no man is an island.

There is good and bad in every race and all it takes for evil to win is that good people do nothing, so let us decide right now to pray for every race and people group that God might be glorified universally, praise His lovely Name forever.

Reverend Betty Stephenson
England on e-mail.

'The South Asian Drama' and the reality

I really liked reading Kuldip Nayar's 'The South Asian Drama' (DS, December 15). He has pinpointed some issues and explored rightly the reality prevails in the South Asia. It is true that nowadays competence and merit are replaced by lust and muscle to grab power. Innovative and creative efforts to rebuilding an economy are overtaken by the art of trickery and disintegrity of people in power to deceive hard-working poor people not in power. Nevertheless, according to Mr. Nayar, people change a set of rulers and bring another to ventilate their anger, though, I think a catharsis happens thereby and for which never such changes in true sense address people's needs and aspiration. This is the same picture in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and other south Asian Countries. Then where is the solution? No, it was of course not Mr. Nayar's part to give any solution, but he guided us in saying that the process towards hard work, increasing the productivity of the nation and equitable distribution of its products is the only way. My question is, if a total change doesn't take place in adoption of either socialist or free economy according to Mr. Nayar, then what will make us hardworking? How the productivity of a nation will be increased (are we at all prepared to increase our productivity?) and how equitable distribution of products can happen in a materialist society.

I am a bit confused. I think, whatever economy is adopted, it must be the integrity and commitment of leadership which can eventually translate those dreams. And this is the only thing the South Asian people like to see in their leaders. Mr. Nayar's conclusion seems to me more sensible than common people of the South Asia tends to favour consensus of different views of political parties so that an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance prevail.

G.F.Hamim
Zigatala
Dhaka

India's woes

The audacious attack on India's Parliament House on Dec 13, has helped India to finally and

Discuss, don't deny

I am disturbed by implications of the comment that as long as prosperity, peace and happiness is brought we should overlook certain things. One could have said the same thing about Hitler, the Taliban, the Khmer Rouge, Stalin and other assorted "lovelies" that have graced our world in recent times. It is indeed fortunate for Bangladesh, that people are indeed talking about these sort of things. If indeed the two gentlemen in question have changed their minds about Bangladesh then they should prove it by their actions not by mere words.

In the recent past we have tended to sweep things under the rug. During the rule of military dictators we heard nothing about Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as though he never existed. Similarly, in the last 5 years it appeared that no one else had any role in the freedom movement of the country and it was all Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

I believe we need to talk about these issues and bring things out in the open. Openness is the class-room of democracy and that where we learn democratic discourse. If people such as these two gentlemen are embarrassed or upset by these questions, it is incumbent upon them to refute them democratically.

Robin Khundkar



location for a medical care facilities more demanding. In addition, people of the village are eager to provide land, labour and all other possible and available resources for this noble cause. In the light of the situation, I on behalf of the people of Nardas urge the relevant authorities public/private/NGOs jointly or individually to come forward to help establish a modern medical services center at Nardas.

On behalf of the people of Nardas
Hossain
Hossain
Chartered Town Planner
Canada.

No to Vigarunnesa University

In response to Mr. Samir Mainuddin's letter (December 14), I would like to say that I do agree with him and appreciate the fact that Vigarunnesa School and College have produced confident and competent women who have excelled in both male and female dominated spheres.

However, I still must say that there's yet no justification for opening a university for females only. Mr. Mainuddin gives example of some US colleges, but how many of such colleges are there among the total number of co-ed colleges? On the other hand, I can say that co-ed Harvard Business School still produces one of the best business graduates. But I know that example is no justification for opening up male or female colleges. There must be substantial rationale behind such decisions. The poet Kazi Nazrul Islam hardly attended school and college and yet he brought for our nation something worth boasting.

But how many parents are ready to take this as an example and let their children decide for themselves whether or not to attend school? Finally, I must still say that opening up a university exclusively for women is not a good idea at all.

Md. Naved Ferdous Iqbal
The University of Asia Pacific

Ominious Ator?

Of all the descriptions one has heard for *attar*, made from the essence of the most fragrant flowers such as rose or jasmine, sandalwood, and musk; the caption under the photograph of page

Denying responsibility



This in reference to a news item in Daily Star on 'Martyred Intellectual Day' published on 15th December. Another news item said that the people became agitated at the scene and even brought out protest processions and held meetings.

The questions are:
- How could an independent country's National Flag flying atop the pole full mast although it was the Martyred Intellectuals Day?

- Who is responsible for this? Whether our government, opposition parties and our civil society have anything to say how could it happen in front of everybody's eye? How could we deny our responsibility to come forward to investigate the matter?

- Or to avoid it we will again say that this is not a serious issue, as our goal is to better Bangladesh and will not spend so much time on such a petty matter and rather our focus will be to work together for a better Bangladesh? If we don't want to investigate to get the answer of these questions and fail to do right justice against such acts, then time will come one day to ask to our selves: 'E Lojia amra rakho kothai? Emon Joggo Shamadhi Kai?' (Where shall we preserve such shame? Where is that proper grave?)

And finally we need to bear in mind that if we let things go happen such a way, one day time will come that our future generation will not forgive us for our escapist attitude.

Tahera, On e-mail

unabashedly jump on the U.S. bandwagon of a putative "war on terror". A country that perennially punches so feebly and inconsequentially in international affairs, now cavalierly champions a cause (war against terrorism) for which America has set its own self-serving agenda.

Publicly, India courageously avers that it needs no one else to fight its battles. Indeed, it has ratcheted up the rhetoric by intimating possible armed conflict with Pakistan. Yet in the current, well-orchestrated global hysteria about international "terrorism",

ground on a politically loaded issue as "terrorism".

India's uncannily resemble its alter ego, Israel and present overlord, America. It talks the same tough, self-righteous language; of its cherished security; of an international coalition and will etc.... One crucial difference in contexts, though. A superpower like America mostly gets its way with an internationally (but unjustly) ostracised Iraq and a poor, starving, strife-torn Afghanistan; a recalcitrant Israel wages an unequal battle against out-gunned Palestinians. But a

responsibility of the incumbent government to ensure rights of all citizens. While there is no doubt there has some been violence, but it has to be established whether it is political or communal. The distinction is important because they have different implications. Obviously, the Awami League is trying hard to make it a communal issues that tarnish the image of the government as well as the country.

Definitely the Awami League stalwarts, including Hasina Wazed, are unhappy with the corruption cases filed against them and being dubbed as political conspiracy by the Awami Leaguers. But nobody is above law. The criminal must be brought to justice who plundered scarce resources of one of the poorest countries in the world. If necessary, the necessary laws relating to corruption should be amended so as to cripple corrupt elements permanently. However, these should not apply to the Awami Leaguers only; BNP criminals should equally face the music.

If the state fails to provide these justice, time will come when 'janata' will try these corrupt people the way muggers are being beaten to death in recent days. Although, this is reflective of the extremely bad governing situation, but this is the eventual-ity that may happen.

Jubair Ahmed
Sharjah
UAE

Banning student politics

The unseemly spec table of armed cadres and thugs running loose in the campus is really a matter of serious concern to the nation. This is prompting Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to think about bringing a bill in the next session of parliament to ban student politics. This should be welcome to all right thinking people of the country. But it is very unfortunate that leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina is reacting very sharply to the proposal just for the sake of cheap popularity. The vast majority of the students are fed up with the present nature of student politics and in fact many of them even hate it. But this group is not vocal. Hence, I suggest that an opinion poll may be held in our universities and some big colleges to ascertain the opinion of the students. It is almost certain that students will both against student politics. If that happens govt. can go ahead with the bill safely. That will take the wind out of the sail of the opposition leader and her party. It may be pertinent to mention here that former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher controlled Trade Unions by playing the laborers against the Trade Unions.

However total ban on students politics may not be legally fool proof. So what can be done is that a moratorium for 5 years or so may be imposed. That will serve the purpose at least for the time being.

Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury
Mohakhali D.O.H.S
Dhaka

TV channels ignoring Islam?

Bangladesh predominantly is a Muslim country where Islam is the state religion. But it seems a group of our so called intelligentsia is trying to undermine all this by introducing secular culture.

During the Holy Month of Ramadan lady news caster of both the "E.T.V" and "Channel I" not only do not cover their head as a mark of respect to the Holy Month, they also put Bindis on their foreheads. As Muslims we

have our distinct identity and culture. It must also reflect in our day to day life. At least we must honour the Holy Month and show our utmost respect. But these two TV channels are deliberately defying Islamic tradition. Our Government has a clear role to play in this regard. I would also like to add my personal view that today's ladies hardly realise that by covering their head partly their beauty glows and radiates in the eyes of the men and they appear more glamorous and attractive. Don't they know that our incumbent Prime Minister looks so graceful in her partly covered head.

A.B.M. Zakaria
On e-mail

Saifur's promise and NGOs

Many of us were happy when Saifur Rahman promised prior to the elections, that the BNP government would curb business activities of the NGOs's. So far nothing seems to have been done.

I fail to see the rationale where private sector companies like BOL and Gononet are providing good service, why would NGO's like BRAC and Proshika, with their free and unaccountable money be allowed to set up ISP's as well.

This is not only in the ISP market, NGO's with their foreign funds and private agenda, are also active in banking, fisheries and

"Women in purdah"



I am writing in response to the letter of Mr. Ziaul Huda on women in parliament. John Stuart Mill in his essay 'On Liberty' wrote, "Over his own body and soul every man is sovereign." Freedom is being endangered by the power of public opinion. Society has a right to make laws for that part of one's conduct which may damage the interests of others, but in the private sphere the question of whether to regulate is an improper one.

Any laws or customs that violate that violates ones liberty. That includes purdah, ghumta and any strictures of any religion.

Regards,
MA

poultry businesses.

Why should private entrepreneurs be squeezed out by these NGOs?

MA
on e-mail

Narda village needs health services

The people of village Nardas and its environs of Baghmara Upazila in the district of Rajshahi have been suffering from health service facilities for a long time. The nearest primary medical service facilities available is the Mohanpur Health Complex which is more than 20 miles away. Unfortunately the transportation network in the region is still in rudimentary stage. There is a need and demand for medical facilities. It meets all criteria viz. service area, population size, near-neighbour statistics of the location of existing health facilities etc. The establishment of a college, girls' high school, boy's high school, madrasa and daily bazaar in the village made the

17 of today's Daily Star takes the cake: "Ator, a locally-made strong-smelling perfume..." That does sound ominous. Surely, *attar* deserves better!
Dilkash Ahmed
Gulshan

Undisputed status of Bangabandhu

One does not have to be a historian or a political analyst in Bangladesh to deal with the fact that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman is the father of the nation. I fail to understand as to why BNP is struggling with it. Surely the party is not foolish enough to be aspiring to install Late President Ziaur Rahman into his seat.

While going through the Independence Day supplement in the Daily Star I was dismayed and shocked to find that it did not contain a single photograph of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman linking him with many a other vital exploits and aspects of

Stop this terrorism



How many more innocent lives Hamas need to bring peace in Middle East? To me, Hamas or Islamic Jihad doesn't seem to have any intention to settle their problem in a peaceful manner. Since Arafat cannot contain these terrorists, he should resign immediately and let someone else make an effort to end this violence. Ever since Israel began hunting down and killing leaders of extremist groups, Islamic terrorists killed scores of innocent civilians in Israel. If Palestinian people want to see the implementation of the OSLO accord, they must give up violence and settle their differences by peaceful negotiation. They should remember that killing innocent civilians for the sake of Jihad does not work in every place and they should realise this in this new world order.

T. Sengupta, On e-mail

most of the Indian leadership's posturing betray an undying Indian 'herd' mentality. To piggy-back a ride on America's campaign by pleading some similar 'victimhood' appears to be the most convenient, yet misguided, policy option that India's leaders can muster. India even demands (not yet an ultimatum though) that Pakistan renounce and dismantle "terrorist" activities and groups, ranged against India, emanating from its country. It's rich of a country like India that it attempts to claim some moral high

nuclear, dangerously unpredictable Pakistan poses India with far greater challenges, both militarily and politically. Surely, the dark memories of Kargil must still be alive in India's military minds.

I reckon, the Parliament fiasco should persuade the saner elements of India's leadership to confront its domestic policy failures. Enacting draconian, "anti-terror" legislation; renewing repressive, anti-public policies; launching some ill-conceived confrontation with Pakistan, are all wrong-headed, futile strategies that India ought to shun. It's time India acknowledged that to be recognized as a respectable, responsible, regional power, it has to begin behaving like one. That entails demonstrably redressing its truly inglorious record at home, before sermonising to others abroad.

Sajjad Husain
Dhaka.

Janata's justice and Bangladesh politics

In recent times, some significant events have taken place: the minority episode, arrest of Shahriar Kabir, corruption cases against Awami League stalwarts and so forth. The first two events are related. Shahriar Kabir, a self-proclaimed champion of the protection of minority rights, has been arrested on the charge of sedition. Many people including some self-proclaimed, half-educated intellectuals are demanding the release his release. My earnest request is: let the legal system work without any interference. If Shahriar is innocent, definitely he will be released. If he is found guilty, he must be punished. Participation in the liberation war does not imply that you are angel. It will also set an example for other traitors, who are so dear to the heart of the Indian establishment.

The minority issue is certainly a serious matter. And it is the

Terrorism's two sides



Taliban had challenge the Americans to fight on the ground several days after the bombardment. But is not the bombardment of the Taliban in the name of Attack on Terrorists also a form of terrorism? After all, the bombing hurt many civilians who had nothing to do with terrorism or terrorist activities. The question is: Did only the Taleban harbour terrorists? But who bears the original responsibility for allowing the Taleban to acquire power?

With these deaths the US will never be able to build the twin towers which have been leveled to the ground! So what is the purpose of such bombardment except the appeasing of the electorate? And do the innocent dead not cry out for justice here as much as there across the oceans?

Mujibul Haque
Sobhanbag, Dhaka

E-cash, bad taste and saving lives

We deeply regret if our ad for E-Cash ATM services hurt the sentiments of your reader Mr./Ms. MA. (Letters 20 December). Our intention was obviously not to welcome or attempt to profit from such a serious incident as a heart attack. Rather it was to depict a series of potential real-life situations in which the ability to draw upon cash from an ATM in an emergency could prove to be of great and vital benefit. We, and our Member Banks, are offering the E-Cash ATM facility in just this spirit of public service, which has been enthusiastically recognized in the many thousands of ATM transactions that are currently taking place through our system. We thank Mr./Ms. MA again for bringing his/her views to our attention and assure him/her that our motivation in placing the ad was purely to meet the needs, in good times or in bad, of our valued customers from all walks of life who are for the first time being able to use ATMs at all hours of the day or night. In this way we want to give life and meaning to the E-Cash Card's slogan which is "With you. Always."

Maruf Alam
(For) Electroways