

Yarn import through land ports

I am not clear regarding all this fuss if yarn has to be brought in by sea and not through our land ports...

Most of the factories have some stock of yarn, which can be used until the sea-freighted portion arrives. In addition, local yarn can be used as a stop gap measure.

As it is these people are getting 25 per cent cash incentive from the taxpayers to be in effect, rich.

Although none of this negates the fact that smuggling is just arbitrage; reflecting inefficiencies natural or as in this case government imposed upon the market.

History Lesson No. 1: No government has ever won against the market.

Dorji Dhaka

Negative politics

I wholly agree with Mr AH's letter regarding negative politics in Bangladesh. I would also agree with his analogy, that the political parties are holding us, the people, hostage.

To extend the analogy, I would say that the nation suffers from a collective Stockholm Syndrome.

It has happened to concentration camp prisoners, civilians in Chinese Communist prisons, incest victims, physically and/or emotionally abused children, battered women, prisoners of war, victims of hijackings, and of course, hostages. Virtually anyone can get Stockholm Syndrome if the following conditions are met:

Perceived threat to survival and the belief that one's captor is willing to act on that threat

The captive's perception of small kindnesses from the captor within a context of terror

Isolation from perspectives other than those of the captor

Perceived inability to escape." (Kathleen Trigiani Societal Stockholm Syndrome)

We have all of the above.

By the way, Mr AH, I just started reading a book called "Señor Vivo and the Coca Lord" by Louis de Bernières, a black comedy about a society gone mad and a man named Dionisio who keeps writing letters to the editor. I am at the part where they are trying to kill him.

Bastiat Dhaka

"Victimizing the victims: Is media responsible?"

In response to Mr Qadri's opinions expressed in his article "Victimizing the victims: Is Media Responsible?" I have a few clarifications to make.

The media does not breach any journalistic ethics if it prints or telecasts images of the dead body. However, on the question of sensationalising and doing it for the sake of revenue is a different question; for that includes the images of a grieving family-- and that entails broadcasting private emotions in the public sphere.

Argument on sensationalisation, on the other hand, is deficient on two notes: one, if the news is sensational-- such as a gruesome murder (a day to day event)-- the news itself so sensational there is no need for sensationalisation. In such cases the news itself is so sensational that it may be perceived as an exaggeration to some readers and viewers. That is the state of affairs in the country, for the life itself is sensational, and if the author asks to deprive the public of such (in his words) "distasteful" life from the readers then the author is proposing the deprivation of the freedom to express.

On the second note of deficiency, the sensational nature of the news may offend some "tastes", but it is this very "taste" has to be obviated to bring about a greater awareness of the events occurring in Dhaka

"I represent the nation not any community"--Vajpayee

After all the carnage in Gujarat, Prime Minister Vajpayee realised that he did not belong to any community but to a nation. People do not have short memory. A few weeks ago he said that he could win elections in UP even without Muslim support.

During the riots the BJP, which rule Gujarat, did not take any steps to control the violence in the state. Even police got involved in killing. Therefore no one should take these politicians' words seriously. They only want to stay in power by fooling the masses.

Advani is the person who was very vocal about Ram temple in 1990s. His rathayatra brought him to power and bloodshed in India in 1992. After two or three days of rampage in Gujarat he broke his silence and asked to halt the carnage. But by that time more than enough damage was done.

We don't need any killer footbridges

Only a few days ago I was saying to my daughter, while we passed below the under-construction footbridge near the Science Laboratory, that I would take a picture of the thing and write a letter under the heading, "Are we waiting for another death?"

Enough time has passed since the previous 'accident' at Baridhara took place and nothing has been done so far to make the public safe from such a bad engineering design and workmanship. Just a small notice was put up for the passers-by to take care themselves. Is that all the authorities could do when such a huge and unstable thing above a road was erected under which thousands have to pass everyday? Some of the heavy beams weighing many tons were delicately balanced on small blocks of wood at both ends only. The action of any wood cutting insect or a bit of rain could unbalance the entire thing. Even a collision of a vehicle with one of the supporting pillars could bring the beams crushing down.

Sadly enough, before I could write, death indeed did occur. Can we term this as an 'accident' any more? It is nothing but 'murder' and legal actions should be taken accordingly. Meanwhile to prevent further 'murders' the authorities must immediately consult top engineers of the country to make these over-bridges safe. I can suggest a clamping arrangement of each parallel pair of beams using a good number of strong iron angles. This arrangement can be done in a very short time and will in effect make a stable and safe system till work is resumed to finish the bridge.

Anybody who lives nearby the over-bridge knows that the construction process has been going on for more than a year. Hardly a few workers work at a time, which is not at all fitting for such a large construction project. They are seen to fabricate a small section over a few days, and then are not seen for many days. Again you see another couple working leisurely for a few days, and so on. Since a good number of similar footbridges are being constructed in the city, how can a single contracting firm, without having adequate logistics and facilities, is given the contract for building all of these footbridges, and that with a small team working in rotation on all the projects? At the pace they are working the footbridges will take years more to complete.

and around the country. These so-called "tastes" are the same perspectives that are alienated from the daily occurrences of such harsh episodes in civic and rural life in Bangladesh.

"Axis of evil?"



Images of terror

Mr Mohammad Sohail's letter (March 16) illustrates all too well the intellectual vacuum many otherwise erudite gentlemen find themselves in. In the letter he castigates the United States for holding al-Qaeda members before they have been judged guilty, but then goes on to state with emphasis that Bush/Blair/Sharon are committing crimes. Which court judged those three leaders guilty? For that matter, since Mr. Sohail is so concerned about imprisonment prior to a verdict, will he be kind enough to remind his government that three out of four inmates in Bangladesh jails have not been convicted of any crime? Or is it wrong only for the Christian Americans and Hindu Indians to do that but all right if the Jamaat-supported government does it?

America's treatment of the al-Qaeda prisoners may be questionable. What is not in doubt, however, is Mr. Sohail's backhanded attempt to cover up for the most brutal terrorist attack in recent history. He, like many others, seems to have reduced his faith to a knee-jerk hostility to the United States, the home of over a million of his own compatriots.

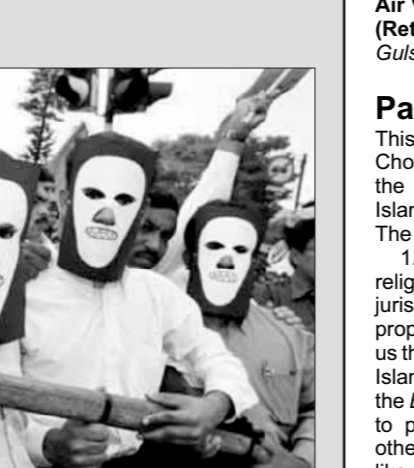
What a pity for a nation that is the world's biggest Muslim democracy!

ES Missouri, USA

The expressions of the visionary medium is imperative for a nation such as Bangladesh, for the majority of the population are not well disposed in reading the elaborate write-ups and follow-ups of the crime in question.

I feel that publishing such photographs is definitely not violation of anyone's rights or immoral. The brutality of the crime is brought forward and people are informed as accurately as possible about "what really happened". Yes, living in a society, the victim does face the

"I represent the nation not any community"--Vajpayee



Gujarat: Faces of hate

People should urge the world body that VHP, Bajrang Dal and RSS, linked to the BJP, should be banned and termed as the parties involved in terrorism against minorities in India. All these organisations in USA and other countries that are collecting charities should be banned and their offices should be sealed. This is the time when all the

peace loving nations should unite and ban the activities of all terrorist organisations. All those countries that allow these terrorist organisations to grow and further their political agenda should be blacklisted and termed as terrorist country.

Shah Affan, Ontario, Canada

Meanwhile, for how long would we be under death threat? I'd like to urge the authorities concerned, please, give the responsibility to a firm, which knows its job, or dismantle the whole thing. We do not need such killer footbridges.

KS Rabbani Dhaka University

So who owns Surma International and what are their political connections? How much was the tender worth? Since their negligence and the criminal stupidity of DCC is killing so many people, at least I'd like to know if Surma Int.'s owner managed a Lexus out of this.

MA Dhaka

I have carefully gone through your recent reports on the high-rise



Footsteps to death?

of criminals and bring forward the urgency to punish them.

The media plays a vital role in publishing unbiased news for the public. The printing of photographs does not violate a victim's rights. It is just an expression of 'facts' that must accompany a report. By not printing the photos, the extent of the crime is at the stake of being undermined and I doubt if Mr Qadri would want that.

We all live in a democratic society and have a right to know 'everything'.

Labonno Ray, on e-mail

"Major cabinet shake-up"

I refer to Mr. Asfaque Chowdhury's letter of 15th March, supporting the Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury.

So what he was a former fighter pilot? Does that make him more able than others? Let's not make excuses, five months is certainly enough time to show at least a trend towards improving the law and order situation. Face the facts, things have got worse not better. Therefore the politicians should be judged on their performance. Either get the job done or leave! It's as simple as that.

L. Rabbany UAE

Can those values be our norms?

I read your report on the Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) meet (March 14), with great interest. The following statement by Ms. Miekko Nishimizu, Vice President of the World Bank drew my attention.

"We identified corruption as a systematic problem- those with power stealing from the weak, drawing and forcing honest people honest citizens into their game and entrapping the society with their values as the norm of everyday Bangladeshi life."

It is tremendously perturbing to know that the high moral values once existing in our society face the threat of extinction. I apprehend their complete replacement by corruption and greed can be disastrous for our nation.

"Better late than never"- I hope our politicians, professionals and the civic society will give due thought to the statement and employ appropriate remedial measures.

Needless to say, "when wealth is lost, something is lost, when character is lost, everything is lost."

I'm sure, we Bangladeshis won't like to lose everything.

Air Vice Marshal A.G. Mahmud (Retd.) Gulshan, Dhaka

Page on Islam

This is a response to Mr. Samsher Chowdhury's letter, who opposed the idea of publishing a page on Islam. I do not agree with his views. The followings are my arguments:

- 1. Mr Samsher suggested that religion should be kept within ones jurisdiction. But the truth is that prophet Muhammad (Sm) has given us the duty of preaching the religion, Islam to others. In his sermon during the Bidaye Hajj, he told his followers to preach even a word of his to others provided they know it. Media, like newspaper, is a means of disseminating Islam. And a popular daily like The Daily Star can be very helpful in this regard. 2. If the daily embarks on this issue, then many Bengali Muslim expatriates, living in the West, will get to know about Islam, which they may not be aware about. 3. I agree that there are a very few genuine Islamic scholars in our country. But if the authority can get the services of a quality Islamic scholar, then just reckon how helpful it is going to be. Islam would be able to reach people in its purest form.

buildings and the collapse of a footbridge near Newmarket. To begin with both the news items have created a depression in me. I am sad and angry. Nothing seems to be in order in this country. The cheapest commodity in this country seems to be human lives.

The criminals within Rajuk and the DCC should be taken to task without any delay. The government should create summary courts to try and impart speedy and harsh justice to these premeditated murderers.

People responsible should be hauled up immediately. We do not wish to hear that so and so could not be found since the culprits have gone into hiding. Hunt them down. If not found attach their properties. Print their photographs in the dailies.

In the meantime, the government should declare adequate compensation for the families of the deceased. We could take the lead from the recent deaths caused by a similar collapse of a Sewerage box- bridge in Lucknow in India.

The matter of the High-rise buildings is however of a different dimension yet of no lesser consequence. People will continue to suffer until they slowly and painfully meet their end due to environmental degradation or natural disasters like earthquakes etc. I believe the officials who are instrumental to these anti-people ventures should be severely dealt with.

If the ruling party can sack officials due to their association with the Janatar Mancha, sacking of officials on this count should be whole lot easier. I can assure you that the people irrespective of their party affiliations will stand firmly behind the government. On the other hand as a post-facto measure the owners of all such buildings should be asked to find alternate adequate parking space or pay adequate fines into the government exchequer.

Of relevance to the context is the diminishing site of city water bodies including the Gulshan Lake. Greed and greed for more money. Greed for more land. I wonder how can these people have even a single night's peaceful sleep?

Shamsher Chowdhury Dhanamondi, Dhaka

In contrast to the Bangla Academy (BA), what is the role of the National Book Centre (NBC)? Both of these institutions are supposed to complement each other's efforts, without too much overlapping. Noting much is known about the co-operation and co-ordination between these two agencies. The specific role of the NBC has to be re-focused for necessary output.

How are these two organisations adapting to changing global conditions every decade? The projection of Bangladesh abroad through various media is also a key issue; but the information about the actual progress and evaluation are not available. We have lost a lot of time chasing local issues at the emotional and sentimental levels. Can cultural issues be resolved without political consensus?

BA and NBC must not compete, and there should be no rivalry to demote each other's defined activities. It is time the halo around the BA is brought down to normal level. International marketing and global public relations do not get much publicity in the working fields of these two institutions. How many publications are there which the foreigners can read in popular foreign languages? There should not be any stepmotherly treatment of the wider use of English, for example, as it does not

National publication policy

The insipid Ekusey Book Fair continue to lack dynamism and sense of direction, even after 30 years of experimentation. The Bangla Academy, it appears, cannot get out of the first phase of the project. What are the successive phases in the 5-year plans or the 20-year perspective plan? The pattern each year is more or less the same. Why this lack of motivation?

Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya replies

Frankly speaking, Rabindra Sangeet, to me, sometimes are monotonous but honestly speaking the debate was not.

For many readers politics and the shameless political arguments of both the Awami League and BNP may be quite attractive but not the one began by Mr. Nazmul Karim (February 6) on a wrong wording in a Rabindra Sangeet. But to many readers it appealed immensely and they have been sending their opinion ever since.

I cannot visualise how Mr. Karim has reacted to the singer's dispute that "Mr. Nazmul Karim and many others heard 'dhar gulay' in place of 'daar gulay'" due to "a mechanical fault that crept into a cassette" and because of the "result of making multiple copies from a master copy" and because "the songs in the cassette have become over-used and the sound quality deteriorated to a sub-standard level".

Sameena Haider Michigan, U.S.A.

It is simply shocking that Ms. Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya had to write a thesis on Rabindra Sangeet just to justify a single 'wrong' wording, pointed out by Mr. Nazmul Karim.

It is not only that her explanation is confusing but she seems to be perplexed as how to respond to the readers. I do not know, on whose advice, the singer has optioned to write this thesis on Rabindra Sangeet when the easiest alternative was wide open for her.

The easiest option for her was to say 'sorry' but still I wish she could get away with her 'replies'.

Dr. Fahmida Chowdhury Banani, Dhaka

I am referring to 'Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya Replies' (March 13). I have read her rejoinder a few times but frankly speaking I did not understand what she wanted to mean and what she wanted the readers to assume. Did she mean to say that it was the fault of the machine that recorded her song with a wrong wording and not her?

Did she mean to say that it is because of the fault of a machine that "Mr. Nazmul Karim and many others heard 'dhar gulay' in place of 'daar gulay'"? I never imagined that a machine is available to change a 'dar' (door) into a 'dhar' (edge)? Taslima Haque Dubai, U.A.E.

Rezawana Chowdhury Bannya, in her reply, has rightly said that "I, always tell my students to read the songs repeatedly so that one remembers the words, understands the central theme before learning the tune." May I request the singer that she herself should also read a song repeatedly so that she remembers the word and also to look at the book while recording her next song. This will not only set her free of being criticised by the listeners but will also liberate her from taking the asylum of fictitious stories to defend her 'wrong'.

According to Ms. Bannya "the song was sung in a duet. It is impossible to think that neither of us could detect the fault and commit the same mistake or miss-pronunciation." It is also impossible for me to think that how could the singer blame the poor recording system for her wrong? Moreover, in the duet the other singer did not sing these lines but she did and so the other singer



No respite did not commit the mistake but she did and it was not his responsibilities but Bannaya's.

Even if the readers accept her reply and is set free of singing a wrong word in the duet but how about the same 'wrong' in other two recordings of the same song? Why is she silent about those?

Sabreena Khan Texas, U.S.A.

My heartfelt felicitations to you for tracing out Ms. Bannya and for publishing her views on the readers' reaction that was set off immediately after Mr. Nazmul Karim claimed that the singer sang a wrong word in a Rabindra Sangeet.

I am really shocked as to why was it necessary for her to take refuge of these gibberish. Why has she triggered her jealous opponents to strike her? Why is she inviting her adversaries to challenge her status? Till date some Rabindra Sangeet lovers criticised her but now she has opened the doors for her opponents to condemn her not for singing a wrong word, not for her silence for last five weeks but for her mendacity.

Rezawan Ahmed Baridhara, Dhaka

Thank you for publishing the replies of Ms. Bannya.

I am surprised at the contents of her reply. What is she asking the readers to believe? That the word was 'heard' wrong because of a bad recording? Oh! No, no way her psychotherapy can be established.

Jesmine Ahmed Stewart Island, New Zealand

tation, global trading (WTO), capitalism and consumerism.

There are no solutions except the coming up of a new civilisation in a new world order. This is the generation (or century or millennium) of disintegration, when established man-made solutions will break down.

Afghanistan was an innocent victim of looking for human groups, instead of identifying the application of wrong principles, which led to terrorism. The economic disparity is increasing and the economists have no solution, except via gun barrels.

Abul MAhmad Dhaka

understanding the holy Quran

Reference to the letter "Arabic language" published in your daily. In the letter the writer Md. Hakim Ahsan Bulbul wrote that reading the Quran is a luxury and hence dispensable. He has probably bewilderer many people with his naive assumption, that God will forgive us if we do not read the Holy Quran, but He (God) will not forgive us if we fail to impart universal education.

True learning is only possible through a thorough understanding of the Holy Quran. We need to read the meaning of the Quran. For the poor and deprived, this religious teaching is being imparted voluntarily or for very nominal fees. Surprisingly, we have been practising for ages, through our faith, what the West has now realised. They have found from studies in psychology, that a child learns the most crucial lessons for life during the ages of 2 to 5. So they are financing at very high cost, Montessori schools, to teach the pre-school children. This care is given, by parents, relatives and 'maqtabs' in mosques of Bangladesh, voluntarily through the religious lessons (that also serves to fill the need for literacy). The Quran is a complete guide for the holistic development of man.

Arabic is a skilled language that most migrants, to the Middle East, strive to master before going. Many have learnt it within a short time after migration. So why deprive those unfortunate children who do not get a chance to enter formal education? Reading and understanding the Quran will make them better Muslims, better citizens and improve the statistics on literacy. Learning another language will allow them to interact in order to follow specific trades or livelihoods. Children have a tremendous capacity to grasp knowledge. The curriculum would be grossly incomplete without religious/moral science and social studies' classes.

Anwarul Begum Dhanamondi, Dhaka