

IMF and World Bank

The thought of free-floating currency in Bangladesh gives me the shiver. Especially, the undue pressure from IMF and World Bank will only bring misery to our god-forsaken country.

The Finance Minister is right by saying that Bangladesh has not achieved the economic comfort level to dive into the uncertain and unregulated foreign currency market. Take hard lesson from the Argentinean Foreign currency crisis. The devastating idea of pegging Argentinean pesos against US dollars was patronised and approved by the IMF and World Bank, and subsequently pushed a once vibrant nation over the cliff to a total economic disaster.

The current economy of Bangladesh will not sustain such drastic and futile measures. Do we have any kind of safeguard mechanism in place in order to tackle a financial catastrophe as we had seen during the stock market crash? Bangladesh economy is too poor and weak to go through the solutions given by IMF to mitigate our economic ills. I would urge the government to think twice before implementing the IMF prescription.

Nafes K USA

completed at half the cost in much lesser time. Besides, the WB Officials make frequent and unnecessary review not only locally but also by teams sent from Washington DC.

This is quite common in developing countries and as a result no country get due return or benefit from their borrowed money and their debt burden continuously increases without corresponding increase in GDP. I think the time has now come to make a study of World Bank credit and their benefit to the economy of Bangladesh.

AMujahid Panchalaish, Chittagong

Due to lack of space and our commitment to include as many topics as possible we have to reluctantly end the debate on two issues "Kemal Ataturk" and the "World Bank" though both have drawn a lot of attention. Thanks to the readers for making the debate so lively. -- Editor

Dr Shahidullah

I read Monisha's letter with a heavy heart. Dr Shahidullah's contribution to Bengali language is second to none. But I respect him more

The struggle he made to be a graduate in Sanskrit is salutary. I appreciate his greatness when I read that during the Language Movement the Pakistani government described him as "Indian agent standing at the main gate of Dhaka University."

He was a pious man without prejudice. His article on poet Nazrul has explained how the prejudiced religious people misunderstood his (Nazrul's)pantheon.

In spite of everything his collected works compiled by the Bangla academy is a treasure for the nation.

Waheed Nabi Sheffield, England

Test status-- a national pride?

This is in regards to Mr. S. H. Naquib's letter (July 26) about our Test status. I award full marks to him and I would like to add a few comments along with him.

It is not only our domestic competition that needs improvement but it is also our fault that we are not paying attention to the suggestions made by the coaches that came from abroad. I remember when Andy Roberts came to Bangladesh

and the final result is he's walking on crutches. Our sports administrators should know that they just destroyed a genuine fast bowler.

In Bangladesh we think that we know more than the coaches who come from abroad but what happens is nothing but a total failure at the international scene. It was a shame the way Coach Gordon Greenidge was turned down. The person who brought us something that we have never achieved before in any sport-- raise our flags in the World Cup. A living 'guru' is essential for any success and Gordon was the perfect man to be so. People should know that after Gordon Greenidge has left the country we have not seen a glimmer of hope of a single victory in both one-day internationals and Test matches. Now during this terrible situation I think our administrators should try to get Gordon Greenidge back just exactly what Sri Lanka did after their dismal '99 World Cup. They brought back Dave Whitmore.

Tarif Rahman Dhaka

UNDP Report 2002: I congratulate myself

I congratulate myself on the occa-

like to bear myself the due share of the credit. How have we been able to maintain so successfully our position in the lowest grade after 30 years of independence!

The answers to the following questions gave me the clue to this remarkable ability. The questions are as follows: Which is the most hartial prone country in the world? Which country has the most corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen? Which country's intellectuals are most sycophant? Where can you buy one's soul for money?

Faruque Hasan Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Double standards on helmets

I had to go on a quick errand on my bike from work and accidentally left my helmet behind. And as soon I was returning from Gulshan-II to my office at Gulshan-I, two police sergeants came behind me blaring their new siren on their new Chinese motorcycles. They asked me to pull over and wanted to check my papers and after finding all in order told me that I should have been wearing my helmet and so they

cycle. **Joey Gulshan, Dhaka**

Racing cars - Dhaka style

Dhanmondi residents are familiar with the fast cars blaring loud music and performing stunts in the narrow streets. They are seen turning corners at high speeds, spinning at a 180 degrees, or competing with each other. Driving at such high speeds is dangerous for the pedestrians, rickshaws, and the driver themselves. They are modifying the car engines and silencer pipes to make them sound like 16-wheeler trailers and also installing hydraulic horns. The level of noise is unbearable especially when one is studying or praying. The authorities should at least put some sort of restrictions in front of mosques so that one could pray properly.

Safety is the last thing on these drivers' mind. There had been a number of accidents in the last few months. Thankfully, none of them were fatal. Most of these drivers easily get away by paying something to the patrolling police if they had been involved in an accident. Moreover, they drive mostly in the evenings when young children are either walking in the streets or playing in front of their house. Once I witnessed an F1-style competition in front of my house the night before Eid. It was amusing at the manner in which they lined up and raced.

Michael Schumacher and Juan Pablo Montoya, eat your hearts out! **Haji Mohammad Isam Dhaka**

Difficulties in credit transfer in private universities

I am an expatriate; I came to Dhaka in 1996. Before setting off for Dhaka I went to the USA to study in Computer Science. Unfortunately, I could not finish my degree there. I only completed 88 credit hours at Winona State University, Minnesota.

So, I went to North South University to get a transfer of my credits and complete my degree there. I had a vision that I will get a University Degree from a local University. I started it nice with good grades at the beginning, hoping that I would get a right evaluation of my credits earned in Minnesota, USA. But to my dismay, North South University granted only 8 credits as transferable. I desperately tried to convince the NSU faculty that since I had C or better grades in all my courses, I should get a full transfer of my credits. The NSU authority was deaf ears to my request. As a result of my credits did not get transferred, I lost two valuable years.

I think it is justice that has been denied here. I had the opportunity to study abroad but I did not do that because I love my country.

The government should intervene in these private universities' rules and regulations so that justice prevails.

Md. Mahmudur Rahman Student, Bhuiyan Academy, Dhaka

Relocation of Hazaribagh tanneries

The Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury told a discussion that since there was no timeframe, the relocation of the factories is getting delayed (July 25).

It was observed that the authorities have been planning to shift the leather factories outside the capital

President Pervez Musharraf's visit to Bangladesh

The visit of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to Bangladesh is very important for various reasons.

A wide range of issues are likely to be discussed, emphasising the repatriation issue of the 250,000 (two lakh fifty thousand) *Biharis*, the community of stranded Pakistanis, who have been languishing in various camps in Bangladesh for over three decades. And it is absolutely necessary to settle the issue without further delay because with each passing day their suffering is multiplying. Hopefully the President Musharraf will take proper initiative to help these people passing their days in distress. It may be mentioned that the repatriation process was stopped without reasons in 1974. The people in the pre-shipment camp at the airport had to stay back during Bhutto's reign.

Repatriation is necessary. But it can be phased out-- giving preferences to the ones in extreme distress followed by the rest. So a comprehensive repatriation plan will do. Accommodation in Pakistan won't be a problem because a large number of houses were built earlier under a similar kind of plan. Probably a suitable fund for these people also can be managed. The thing that has been lacking till date is political will.

Abu Imran, Dhaka

President Pervez Musharraf's visit to Bangladesh is indeed a significant event. My humble suggestion to our President and the Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at this climactic scenario in the region shall therefore be to convert this opportunity into hope and goodwill through magnanimity and statesmanship without wandering into the prickly past and wasting energy in cooking the *bitter rice* all over again.

Commerce can play a pivotal role in cementing the fraternal bond and so both sides should focus on goods that can be bartered without hassle. Bangladesh can import electrical, surgical, sports goods, domestic appliances and in lieu, Pakistan can liberalise import of Pharmaceuticals of high quality at low cost, besides jute goods, tea and Rajshahi/Tangail silk. During my short tour in Bangladesh this year, I visited a few pharmaceutical companies and was impressed to see the high-tech equipment and their fulsome commitment to CGMP. A dozen of high speed Tablet Coaters installed from Dhaka to Jessore was imported from Karachi, as also a match factory built and commissioned in Faridpur by way of technology transfer from Pakistan.

So Madam Prime Minister feel the pulse and perform well in league with President Musharraf to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and enhance synergic prosperity of 270 million people.

MM RAB, Karachi, Pakistan

for long. But no decisive steps have so far been taken. It was further added that the country could earn Tk four to five thousand crore in foreign exchange through exporting leather goods provided necessary development and expansion measures are taken.

On the other hand, since the closure of Adamjee Jute Mills, ideas of establishing various export industries, set up of an EPZ etc. on the land are being considered.

My question is, why are we not relocating the leather industry from Hazaribagh to the Adamjee land after due upgrading of the infrastructure and necessary facilities required for the flourishing of the leather export industry? By doing so, we can save a great deal of time and effort since the land is available and in government hands. Are we really serious about solving the pollution problem of Hazaribagh and at the same time providing facility for the leather industry to realise their potential? If we are, we really have an opportunity in hand!

Q SAhmed Mirpur, Dhaka

A thinker Dhaka



Pervez Musharraf: A qualified welcome

DU incident: We want to know the whole truth

Everybody knows what is happening in Dhaka University and what happened in Shamsunnahar Hall. But I am sorry to learn that our VC is oblivious of it! According to him, some garment workers and some outsiders took over the University campus, leading processions, shouting slogans etc. These garment workers (!) and outsiders have put forward 6-point demands, which also include the VC's resignation. What a shame for the nation? The garment workers have gone beyond their limits. The garment factory owners should have stopped their workers from going to the campus without attending their works in the factories.



Dhaka University: It cannot go on this way anymore

The garment workers have become miscreants! We demand punishment for the garment workers. I'd also like to warn the University authority to be careful about these workers-cum-miscreants because who knows the entire nation may side with them regarding the DU episode! And I don't think the general people would be too unhappy if these garment workers (!) win and realise their demands in the end. **Shafiqul Islam, Savar**

I don't know whether it's legal for the Police of a democratic country to enter anyone's room in midnight, without permission, and without a proper cause. From my point of view it is a straight "NO". But this is exactly what happened in Shamsunnahar Hall.

What does the University authority and the government have to say about it? **S.M. Mosharraf, DU**

We are very concerned to see what is happening in Dhaka University. We are following your paper and other papers regularly to find out the truth. However, some of your news items raise concern because of the way they were written. It looks like some of them are aimed at creating maximum impact and to instigate general public.

While I was reading your July 27 issue, I was trying to figure out what your newspaper's role were in Vigarunnisa's incident. I went back to your archive and this is what I found: On July 14, your staff correspondent run a news item titled, "Vigarunnisa in political web, popular principal's job in line, BNP leader's wife waits in wings"-- a very sensational and smart headline.

The report mentions several times about some unknown sources. Nowhere your report mentioned that Hamida Ali was 65 (in fact your report said she was 56!) and according to the law of the land her tenure cannot be extended (which of course we learnt later). Instead you report says government has decided to remove her.

In the DU stories the reporter in similar fashion mentioned about sources time and again. We are sad to see that you are not giving space to DU authorities. It is learnt from other newspaper reports that four Assistant Proctors and many House Tutors were present during the incident and they have something to say.

We would like to know all the stories so that we can decide who is telling the truth. People must be given the choices to make up their mind. They should not be provided one-sided story. **Dr Saiful Khondaker, Texas, USA**

Student politics is a curse to our educational institutions. Most of the educational institutions of Bangladesh are in the clutches of student politics. Unlike the developed countries, campus violence, session jam, killing, clash among the political rivals even within the same party, supremacy over the hall, indecent competition for getting *chanda* hamper the academic activities immensely.

BUET has already banned student politics. Other universities and colleges should follow the example of BUET.

Mohammed Monirul Islam Jahangirnagar University Savar, Dhaka

because in addition to making intellectual contribution to his language he fought for his language with the heart of a lion. He discarded the pseudo religious arguments put forward by the then Pakistani government and their puppets. Dr. Shahidullah was the intellectual force behind the Language Movement. His article on the transformation of Bengali language from *Pali* to *Prakrit* and to the present form is a joy to read.

He has been always a fighter.

and he went to BKSP to give a few tips to our future fast bowlers and within those bowlers was a rising talent Mashrafe Bin Mortuza.

On the following day Andy Roberts made a press conference about these bowlers and said that these bowlers should bowl in short spells i.e. not more than 4 to 5 overs in order to prevent injuries and over straining. Then came Mashrafee in the international scene and what happened our sports administrators made him bowl 6 to 7 overs in a spell

sion that our country stood 8th, in the UNDP Report, 2002, among the 36 countries of the lowest grade!

To be in the lowest grade among the community of the nations of the world is not a matter of joke! The success is the fruit of our constant and tireless efforts during the last 30 years. Being an adult citizen of this country I don't want and do not have the opportunity to shift all the credit of this great achievement on the shoulders of our political leaders and political parties. Rather I would

gave me a ticket for it.

My question to the police officer was why wasn't he wearing a helmet too, and he gave me a lame excuse about him being on duty for 8 hours and it's too hot to wear the helmet all the time. I found it pretty ironic that I receive a ticket for not wearing a helmet from a police officer who was not wearing a helmet himself and also riding a motorcycle with no registration number! Silly me! I thought that wearing a helmet is a safety requirement to ride a motor-

Kemal Ataturk and Turkey

I found the response the Charge d' Affaires of Turkey regarding Mustafa Kemal really interesting. It is true that Mustafa Kemal saved Turkey from total annihilation by the western powers after World War I. The victor of Gallipolis saved his people from colonisation but the question is at what price?

My encounter with a couple of Turkish friends was shocking. It seemed to me that almost all of them suffered from, as I would call it "Identity Crisis Syndrome (ICS)" i.e. a state of constant "self denial". No matter how liberal Europe became, it never gave up its Christian identity or responsibility and neither did Russia although they once embraced Communism wholeheartedly. But for Turkey it's a different story. It not only gave up its identity but also feels ashamed of it. I don't see why Turkish people can't embrace modernism and at the same time feel proud of their Muslim and Ottoman heritage.

The failure of Kemalism is manifold. A famous female politician Kavakci, who was elected in the parliament, was expelled from the parliament just because she wore a headscarf. Mr Charge d' Affaires must agree that no matter how much corrupt the "Sublime Porte (Ottoman Government)" were they considered it their sacred duty to protect the rights of the Muslims in the Caucasus and Balkan region. But just to get a membership in EU modern Turkey not only refuses to accept that responsibility but also literally denies that any such responsibility ever exists with it.

Turkey remained silent during the genocide in Bosnia. Till date it is totally silent against the atrocities committed by Russia against the people of Chechnya, Dagestan, Bashkorkostan and Tartarstan. I must remind our Turkish friend that, despite all their limitation Arab League for the last three decades spoke relentlessly to protect the rights of the Palestinians. Pakistan as a successor state of the Mughal Empire still considers it its sacred duty to protect the rights of Muslims in South Asia. So does Malaysia and Indonesia in South East Asia.

Until we try to change our own selves the misery of the Muslim world will never end. And Turkey like it's Ottoman predecessors can take the challenge in leading the Muslim world, this time to the path of modernisation and prosperity. If Turkey intends to stand up to this challenge, despite all its shortcomings the legacy of "Kemalism" will live on.

K. Wasimuddin Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A

This has reference to the letter from Mr. Antonio Antonopolous where the writer has made some controversial observations.

The barbarian invasion of the late Roman Empire found Greece reduced to a shadow of its former glory though culture and language survived in the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, known from the Third Century as Byzantine Empire. But the main land of Greece continued to experience repeated invasions. The severest came in the form of Fourth Crusade in 1204 A.D when the city of Constantinople was captured and subjected to indiscriminate looting by the so-called Crusaders. Mr. Antonio does not take this chapter in the development of Greece into consideration.

The period of Ottoman control of Greece dates from 1453. Some of the Ottoman Sultans including Suleman the Magnificent during whose rule the empire reached its greatest height were men of vast learning and knowledge and were reputed for their deep concern for the welfare of their multi-racial subjects. Greece though only a pip-squeak in this vast empire and its citizens though being outside the periphery of the religion of the ruling class were shown and treated with the same toleration as was done to other Christians in perfect accord with the Muslim principle. Mr. Antonio's vilification against the Turks for massacre of priests... and commitment of other crimes is also not vindicated by any historical method of investigation.

Turkish rule for the Greeks was no doubt harsh sometimes but not something like a dreaded memory, as Mr. Antonio would like us to believe. The Greeks in particular enjoyed freedom in two important spheres apart from the practice of their religion. One of them was freedom of trade and engagement in all kinds of commercial activity and the second one was that of education in the Greek language. The Greeks obligation under the Turkish rule to contribute male children (about one out of five on average) to the sultan's private service to be brought as *janizars* was no doubt a cruel practice and was abolished before end of the 17th century. Greece achieved independence from the Turkish rule in 1830.

Regarding the 1922 Smyrna Massacre by the Turkish Army, let me quote from the "Glimpses Of World History" (Page 723 to 729) by Jawaharlal Nehru "Greek troops went across to Asia Minor..." started massacre and outrage on a tremendous scale.....a reign of terror shocked even the jaded conscience of the war-weary world..... behaving as if they were permanent masters of the country, and very barbarous masters. laid waste fertile valleys and drove thousands of homeless Turks."In August

1922 Turkish Army attacked the Greeks and simply swept them into the sea. In eight days they retired 160 miles, but even so as they retired they revenged themselves by killing every Turkish man, woman and child they came across. The Turks were equally merciless and few prisoners were taken. The greater part of the Greek Army escaped by sea from Smyrna but city of Smyrna itself was burnt down."

S. R. Shaheed Banani, Dhaka

I am quite dismayed by some of the writers' comments on Ataturk. In order to understand Kemal Ataturk, we must understand the situation his country was in just after World War I.

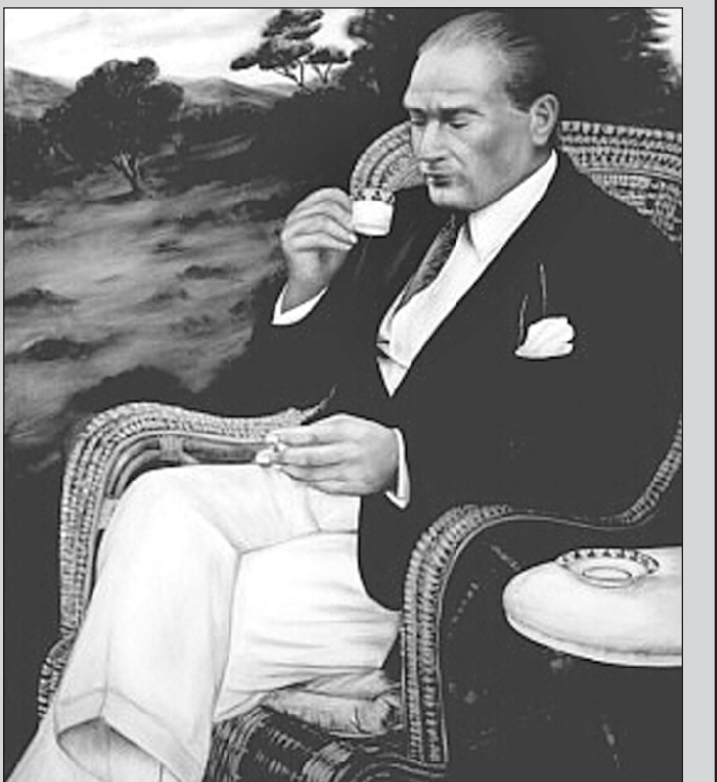
The Ottoman rulers had simply run into an ideological straightjacket that endangered the very identity of the Turkish state. He was not anti-Islamic but rather stressed the importance of avoiding the excesses that are sometimes committed (and was being committed in his country) in the name of religion. He may or may not have been an atheist, but did he try to suppress the religious aspiration of his people?

Nor should he be compared with the bloodthirsty generals of history like Alexander, Chengiz and Tamerlane. For his military ambitions were limited to recapturing the homeland of the Turkish people. True he was responsible for the eviction of more than a 1,00,000 Greeks from Smyrna/Izmir, but was it not true that the Greeks along with some other European nations was trying to carve up Turkey under the treaty of Sevres? True he took extreme measures to replace the Arabic script with the Latin one. But is it not true that the Arabic script is foreign to Turks as well.

Ataturk's dream was to restore the pride of the nation, and to make the Turks a progressive forward-looking nation. The fact that subsequent Turkish leaders failed to manage the economy is not surely Ataturk's fault. Of all the Turks I have met I have not found a single one who speaks ill of Ataturk, and I have not found a single one who speaks well of Turkey's politicians who claim to uphold his ideals. If the Turk's can accept him as the Father of the Nation, why should it be a problem with us?

Gloomy Gus Dhaka

Yes, Farah Islam--Think. Question. Learn. It was Kemal Ataturk for whom Turkey is a developed country now. He was the person



Kemal Ataturk: Debate on nationalism and religion

who really understood that 1500-year-old dogma of Islam couldn't be implemented in 20th century without interpretations. I'm not trying to say that we should not believe in Islam. But what applied 1500-year-ago can't apply wholesale now.

If so, you can't enjoy movies, photographs, and many more things. Religion is a secondary matter. The primary need of a nation is how developed they are--no matter they are religious or not. **MN, Chittagong**