Great Army

Finally someone from the military has replied with his comments on the ongoing debate and for that I am grateful. I would like to pose some questions and comments for him.

1. The issue of the army asking the identity of civilians entering the cantonment was never disputed. This officer is trying to skew the argument to one of ungrateful civilians demanding access all over the cantonment. That was never the cause of this debate. The issue was twofold

First why are civilian cars not permitted to enter the cantonment

🔊 block 🛕 Fort 👺 Famoticons

BangSee 2.0 by BDCOM Softwar

Bangla or negotiating deals in non-Bangla.

in the privacy of their homes.

deafening noise pollution.

garbage heaped up on spaces.

allowed entry through the Banani

gate, then why not this one? No one

has given an argument against this.

sites should be secure. All people

are asking is that light civilian vehi-

cles be allowed to enter and exit

from the three main gates, the Staff

Road, the Banani Gate and the

time between defending the country

and turning away civilian cars,

browse the Internet. There are

many sites including

www.janes.com that give informa-

tion on our military purchases and

equipment. Funny enough the

military's own sites have nothing of

interest. Anyway with a bit of persis-

tence you will find that Tejgaon

Airport hosts the 9th and the 31st

Helicopter squadrons. The C-130

and the Cessna's can be spotted at

any time if you work anywhere near

the IDB Bhaban. In case you're

curious, the jets flying over residen-

tial areas can be spotted anywhere

from Baridhara, Gulshan and

letters properly, what the writers

were suggesting was to convert the

airport into a park but keeping the

airfield for our annual parades

Although one writer did point out

that the international norm is to hold

such parades in public avenues and

not destroy valuable tarmac with

Regarding the MIG-21's flying

tank treads, but that's a moot point.

overhead, as the letter writer clearly

pointed out, the plane that crashed

was an A-5 which is derived from

the Q-5 which in turn was derived

from the MIG-19. But I think you are

correct, the planes flying over

Gulshan and Banani, taking off

from, Bashar Airbase are probably

of the 21st Sq.'s FT-6's another

vintage aircraft. I am surprised that

the writer claims that no trainer

flights take off from Bashar AB, as

the FT-6 is a trainer jet. Would

someone refresh my memory about

No one is disparaging the profes-

sionalism of BAF pilots but I think

most would agree that the probabil-

ity of crashes are the highest during

landing and take off. Think about

navy bosses did make public corpo-

rations honest, not only would

DMCH or the Jails be such messes

but we frigate and MIG scams

wouldn't have happened either.

On a final note, if having army or

that crash last year?

b. If you had read some of the

Banani.

2.a. Please, when you find the

Jahangir Gate. That is all.

No one is disputing that some

out fear of lewd remarks and unwanted ogling.

E The rights of children to play outdoors.

সামার ভাইএর রক্তে রাঙ্কানো <u>2</u>1 February আমি কি ভূলিতে পারি

mar bhaier rokte raManO /// 21 Februar 7// Imi ki bhulite pari.

I welcome your argu-Shabyashachi

For the last couple of days I am really enjoying the debate on our armed forces. Actually it's a great opportunity to decrease the distance between our civil society and armed forces. And both sides should be caring and neutral before deciding this issue.

At first I am going to refer to the letter from 'A Military Person' posted on 28 Aug. Here somehow this gentleman tried to tell us that tax

type /// to start and to stop

typing in English

Much has been written recently about English Medium schools. I

do not wish to enter the debate about the strengths, virtues or righ-

teousness of being literate in one's mother tongue. Certainly, being

proficient in Bangla is important to a buoyant sense of oneself (if

Bangladeshi) but, more important, of entry into the world of the

creative genius and vision of Bengali thinkers, poets, authors, and

composers. However, it is also true that simple mastery over

Bangla is not enough. Most of the people involved in giving and

taking bribes, exacting "tolls" and lifting the reputation of Bangla-

desh to the giddy heights of being Numero Uno in the world for

corruption can never be accused of having turned their backs on

What I do want to address is the equation made by several writ-

ers between English medium education and SUC-

CESS...GETTING AHEAD. This has led to a massive degradation

of education into a raw, money-hungry industry that brooks no

designed to ensure child safety, and a host of zoning laws designed

to protect residential areas from crowding and traffic congestion: In

L'The rights of people in residential areas to live in peace and quiet

E The rights of such people to breathe clean air, and to be from

 ${\bf E}$ The right of such people to healthy surroundings free the stench

of urine and excreta deposited along boundary walls, and piles of

L The rights of women to use roads in their neighbourhoods with-

through the Staff Road (Heroes Live paying first class citizenship of the

 ${
m E}$ The rights of a community to cohere, provide safety, security and ${
m Tariq\, Abd'allah}$, ${
m \it USA}$

enter into the cantonment area.

Well, here you should consider one

thing, one of the main reasons

behind the traffic jam of Dhaka city

is the current position of Dhaka

Cantonment and Dhaka University

Campus as both of them are in the

middle of the city. All sorts of light-

weight transports are permitted to

enter into DU area and only for this

reason normally people of that area

don't face that much problem

regarding traffic jam.

evading such laws, the new school industry effectively denies:

Such "obstacles" include permits required to run schools and

<u>S</u>end

<u>S</u>end

"English medium students in trouble"

Now about Dhaka Cantonment. We all know that cantonment is a restricted area. That's why you should maintain little bit different restriction standard than that of civil establishment. Well, it's not the problem. The problem is that residing in the middle of the city you are creating obstacle to the civil people. And obviously civil people are the heart of the country as well as the main taxpayers. And the civilians are not trying to acquire your properties, they are not trying to enter your office establishment. The only thing they want to use is the road of the cantonment area.

places to play for its young.

 ${\bf E}$ The consequence of this mentality is a Wild West invasion of

residential areas like Dhanmondi. Once a serene and scenic

residential area, it has been reduced to ruin by the invasion of Eng-

lish medium schools and their counterparts in "higher education",

i.e., -"universities" "colleges" and " institutes" that peddle entry into

law schools in England and IT firms abroad. To be sure, for every

"educational" enterprise out to make a fast buck there is an equally

money-hungry homeowner willing barter away the welfare of neigh-

bours. The rents offered by schools and colleges exceed the going

descent of education and responsibility to neighbours to such

lows? What kind of education do parents think they are buying for

their children, anyway? After all, the bottom line is that when

schools and colleges short-circuit the law, their most significant

message to students is: "It's OK to violate laws and your neigh-

logos of the colleges to which entry is so enthusiastically sought. Like,

There has been a lot of debate going on regarding English medium

students. As a product of an English medium school, I think I need

Why is it that people in Dhaka are so quick to judge students from

English medium schools as people who "live in the fast lane"? I do

not think that children's behaviour outside of school has anything to

do with whether the medium of instruction in school is English or

Bengali. How they behave outside of school is a reflection of the

values that they are brought up with at home. I do not think that my

parents would ever let me get away with dressing in a manner that

s inappropriate or talking to people in a manner that is not accept-

able. I was taught that in order to gain respect from people in other

lands I must first respect my own identity and that my own identity

aging immoral behaviour, please look at where this immoral behav-

It is interesting to follow the current debate regarding English

medium schools. I do agree with the readers who expressed con-

cern at the standard of Bangla among English medium students.

May be the authority of these school should take note of this. But

the fact of matter is that when it comes to English we perform very

poorly. Just look at our neighbours-- India, Sri Lanka, and even

We have to be realistic that the English is the language of the

The most funny thing of Dhaka society and armed forces should be

towards each other. We should

realise that as a developing nation

we must work together and utilise

every single amount of our proper-

ties properly to become a

self-dependant nation, which

will definitely glorify the image

I believe that the monorail can be a

of our country in the outside

North South University,

The monorail

Shaheen Reza

Dhaka

time and we can not ignore it. We must know English well and be

able to speak fluently in order to be competitive. Let's learn Bangla

So, please, before attacking English Medium schools for encour-

say for example, Oxford, Cambridge, MIT, or Harvard.

Sultana Alam, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

included my mother tongue, Bengali,

to address these views.

iour arises from.

Mehnaz Mustafa, Canada

Pakistan are so ahead of us.

and English at the same time.

using public transport (like BRTC

bus, Emma, Maxi, Tempo) don't

have to face any obstacles from the

MPs at the Jahangir Gate but peo-

ple who come by private car, baby-

taxi are often obstructed and turned

time I fully oppose the people who

are in favour of curtailing defence

budget. I am an ex-cadet college

student and was in 42 GD(P) as a

Flight Cadet for about six months.

Now about defence budget. This

I can't read Latin or Greek. I doubt that such a message figures on the

Yet, two troubling questions arise: How does one explain the

market rate three to four-fold. The temptation is understandable.

The main thing that motivated me joining the Air Force is the honest and challenging life of the armed forces. In Bangladesh you know, almost 90 per cent of the govt officials are somehow involved in corruption. But think about the army guys who are posted in CHT or other rural areas like Rangpur without their parents, family and friends. Sometimes they don't even get weekly holidays due to their service requirement. So as a human being they must get some additi-onal benefit for their mental satisfaction.

Now my request is both the civil

"killer Application" as we say in the IT vernacular. The point that the earlier writers are missing is speed. Let us say that the monorail has a station on top of shapla chottor right in front of Bangladesh Bank. Let's say that the rail line goes all the way up to Uttara. When the services open the commuters of Uttara feels that they are just 25 minutes from Motijheel and not 20 miles. Pretty soon the commuter finds out that this 25 minutes is a constant and that s/he can expect to get on a train five minutes after getting to the station. Right then the reality of city life start to change. People living in the doldrums of inner city crowd starts to think of moving out. This can start the fuel of suburbia that Dhaka so badly needs. Real-estate developers would convince the monorail authority to take a line to Savar and billions are invested to develop real estate in Savar. This is

the reality monorail can give. There have been questions about how affordable this transport will be. I personally feel that the proposed monorail is not a Public Transport System. It is a Private Public Transport System. Which means that it does not have to serve the complete spectrum of citizens of Dhaka. It will be there to make a profit for themselves and will cater to the crowd it thinks can give them profit. It is not wrong but rather a necessity for any business to strive for profitability. The question then is whether such a venture can be profitable. I believe that the company planning to invest the money will do the due diligence.

If the proposition is Build to Operate and Transfer then this is a Godsend proposal. Some body else, not us the taxpayers of Bangladesh will pay for the project and soon we the citizens of Dhaka will get a fast and modern transportation system. On top of that ten years from now it is going to contribute to the Government coiffeurs.

The impressive thing about the proposed monorail system is its design. It has an amazingly small footprint, which makes it theoretically possible to implement the rail line along all the major roads of Dhaka City without constricting existing traffic flow. Our life in Dhaka can transform. People who prefer to ride the car will take to commute through the monorail and will not think it a lack of prestige. No one will miss the baby-taxi any more. We the Dhakaits will stand tall and be proud of hosting such a system. Our image will change dramatically and donor country will think twice before bullying us for their cause.

Syed Hussain Atlanta, USA

What is the BDR Doing on the border? Thanks to Asif for his critical analy-

sis on the subject that deserve intricate attention, though most of us are not aware of it. I, being an exmember of Bangladesh Rifles, happy to see his concern on this

I served long 37 years in the BDR during most of those days I remained away from my family and was posted on the border protecting our country. It agonises me if some one questions about the role and performance of BDR on the border. "Protection of borders, persons and property in border areas" is the prime role of Bangladesh Rifles. History stands as the testimony of what BDR Jawans did in our War of Liberation, in 1984 forcing India to

Bye bye autorickshaw

I have been interviewing the autorickshaw drivers over the last couple of weeks regarding what they will do after Sept. 01, when most of these autos will be off the city roads. One became philosophical and found a deep-rooted conspiracy to take the food away from the poor's mouth. Some were optimistic that they can now drive taxicabs and upgrade their status. While one opined that crime would spiral in the capital as young people would go back to criminal activity due to lack of employment oppor-For most commuters, it will

be a nightmare as taxicabs simply refuse to go to different areas of the city and especially

if they are short-distance. Their fare is already high and simply there isn't adequate number of taxicabs in the city. There are routes in the city like Mirour to Gulshan which are without bus service. The conditions of the city buses are



Right direction, but a right decision?

very poor and most of them except for the Uttara-Motijheel route are non-A.C. and "nongatelock".

Auto-rickshaws must go-no argument against that, but the alternatives to autos need to be in place before going for such drastic change. A threephase solution taking 5,000 autos off at each stage and putting the replacement buses, CNG-run autos and taxicabs in places would have been a better solution. I would request the decision makers up their governto give ment cars and try to go to their offices through public transportation on Sept. 01. Only then they would get the real picture.

Parvez Murshed Mirpur, Dhaka

shift the border fences 150 yards away from the zero line and in 1998 establishing the right of raising our National Flag at HILLI ICP. Late in January 2001, BDR Jawans successfully safeguarded the interest of Bangladesh on river NAFF along the Myanmar border, in April 2001 the supreme sacrifice and heroic action of BDR Jawans at PADUA and Baraibari along the Indian border is widely recognised both at home and abroad. I am sure that my countrymen will always pay homage to more than 900 Shaheed BDR Jawans and proud to be with more than 400 injured BDR Jawans, who sacrificed their lives and blood while serving the nation since inception.

Mohiuddin Ahmed Hazaribagh, Dhaka

Scholastica

I am pleased to see that Scholastica has gotten a syndicated loan of Tk. 16.5 corores.

So how much of that are they going to spend in building a parking lot for the thousands of cars that totally block the highway everyday? Kim Dhaka

Teacherstudent politics under fire

have gone though the article of Professor Abdul Mannan and I can not accept his view regarding the present trend in student politics. He pointed that the participation of our students in the Liberation War is a glorious episode of student politics. But my point is that their participation in the Liberation War was motivated from a different aspect -as conscious citizens, not as cadres of some political party. They played one of the most important roles in the Liberation War because it was the need of time. But the mode of present student politics' can no way be considered as the way to establish the students' rights as well as people's rights. Because it has

become a violent politics of earning

money and gaining power.

The student fronts backed by the political parties are not concerned about the need of congenial atmosphere in the educational institutions. They are busy capturing hall and collecting toll. If this continues. it will paralyse the educational as well as national progress. The general students should unite and raise their voice against this violent politics. There is no need of such politics. There is no way to establish proper atmosphere in our educational institutions without imposing a ban on student and teacher poli-Kamal Kishore Das

Rampura, Dhaka

Name sign inside the office and towel in the chair

It is a practice and common feature in almost all the government, semigovernment, autonomous and other governmental organisations in Bangladesh that a towel is placed on the chair of an executive (smallmedium to the highest) which is not only ugly looking but an unique practise.

Same applies to the wooden sign board with curved design behind the executive (including the Ministers) showing the name of the incumbent and his predecessors with job start and end date. This list even goes up to the birth of the organisation. This is also another weird tradition that Bangladesh bureaucracy loves to rare with

Mohammed Ashraf Ali

"Zakaat system"

This is in response to Mr. Golam Ashraf's letter "zakaat system"(August 27). I would like to thank Mr. Ashraf for his unique observations on the implications of zakaat, one of the five pillars of Islam.

Islam has given detailed regulations for our economic life, which is balanced and fair. Muslims are to recognise that wealth, earnings and

material goods are the property of God, and we are merely His trustees. The principles of Islam aim at establishing a just society wherein everyone will behave responsibly and honestly. The system of zakaat instils in a man are a deep consciousness and urge to fulfil his obligations to fellow-men.

Contrary to popular perception, Zakaat, the annual levy payable on the wealth of Muslims, is not merely a charitable donation to the poor and needy-- rather it is fard (mandatory) on those who have been blessed with wealth and means, to spend out of their substance on those in deprivation and misery. Islam teaches people that the poor and the deprived have a "title" or a "right" in the wealth of the rich and constantly exhorts the rich to meet that obligation.

God said in the Quran: "They were enjoined only to worship God. sincere in their faith in Him alone and of upright religion - and to establish the Salat and the Zakat.

Such is the upright religion", (98:5) "O Prophet, accept propitiatory offerings from their possessions to

cleanse and purify thereby." (9:103) Thus the system of zakaat is a means of cleansing the society of stinginess, parsimony, malice, jealousy, hard-heartedness and exploitation of others and of inculcating and developing pure and noble feeling of love, sacrifice, goodness, sincerity, well-wishing cooperation and companionship. If strictly followed, zakaat could eliminate the possibility of accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few and would solve the basic economic problems, which have been troubling our society. However, the question is -- are our able Muslims

Monirul Haque

ready to give it a fair trial?

With due respect, none of the G8 countries have zakaat system. What they have is a good planning, better taxation and utilisation system and less corruption. I personally do not think any amount of money would make any difference in a country like Bangladesh where system loss is possibly one of the worst in the world

I am currently living in Canada and paying close to 35% of my gross earnings as income taxes and 15% as sales taxes to federal and provincial government. The government is supposed to use all the tax money it receives in a way so that it can provide everybody in the country. What we really need in Bangladesh is a good taxation and utilisation system and a little less corruption in every level of our society, which would undoubtedly free up a lot of resources for the less fortu-

Shuja Shabbeedur Canada

Weapons of mass destruction, whose rights?

Everyone is worried about the potential scenario of Saddam using weapons of mass destruction. Let's examine the track record of the US. It has used atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Then it also used chemical weapons in Vietnam and N. Korea. It then dropped weapons like daisy cutter bombs and low grade Uranium based weapons over Iraq, Yugoslavia and else where. Weapons that can be categorised in almost in the same league as weapons of mass destruction. The US is also continuously helping to arm its allies like Israel, with weapons of mass destruction, who continue to terrorise Palestinian children, and occupy lands (in violation of UN resolutions)

Is the right to posses and use

weapons of mass destruction,

solely the prerogative of the Anglo Saxon civilisation? Yamin Zakaria UK, London

Biman: The saga continues

Forever gate)? All civilian cars are country is not enough criteria to cantonment is here any citizen respectful, caring and friendly

They are at it again! Foreign currencies valued at crores recovered from a Biman flight yet again! Not only they are failing to serve their esteemed customers with any useful purpose, they are smuggling out our hard earned foreign currencies unabated. I thought enough had been written about Biman to wake up the concerned authorities. But we were definitely proved wrong.

It's amazing to witness how an organisation with international to buy your own employment why bother about serving others!

We will at least save some foreign currency.

He along with two of his colleagues told us that they would



Will Biman ever take off?

ing paying again for the travel tax. Imagine! However, the Thai Airlines people at Bangkok airport were very kind and, on our request, they located the bag and booked it through to our desti-

The attitude of those people at ZIA (I am not sure whether they were airlines people or were from civil aviation department), was not only uncooperative but an interruption just before boarding and was also deliberately providing wrong information to the passengers. The gentlemen, especially Mr. Mizan, were rather

I find the whole event to be an unnecessary harassment that could easily be avoided. Had the decision about the cabin baggage been taken in check-in counter, the passengers would not have to undergo such harassment, especially where the employees in the airport are so unfriendly and uncooperative in their

behaviour to general passengers. Mrs. K. Ahmed, Canada

To date I haven't yet discovered in my thinking processes, any reason(s) for Biman to be my favourite airline. Way back when I was a graduate student, I used to prefer Biman for a number of reasons. Those have evaporated long ago. My foremost consideration is airfare, especially when I have to consider my family

Of late, never found a better fare on Biman. Other airlines considerably beat out Biman in this arena. Add to that the 30+ year old rickety aircraft and the worst of all, need to know some high-ups in Biman to get return reconfirmation. Had to resort to that a few times way back then, but felt I should not have to avail such privileges, which I may not have or want. Schedule uncertainty further dwindles my interest.

I used to give loads of kudos to Biman flight crew and in-flight attendants. I considered Biman pilots to be great, especially flying smoothly, aircraft as old as a Boeing 707. Once, even was highly acclamatory of Biman being late. Why? The preceding segment flight was very late and I was worried when am I going to get to Dhaka, when Biman had only a few flights a week. Was I happy to see my connecting Biman 707 land way behind schedule! They even waited a bit longer to allow my baggage to be loaded into it. Felt at home long before I was home!

I still think the in-flight food served on Biman is one of the best I've tasted. And, I felt the in-flight attendants were really good, and did their best given some of the passenger crowd and their antics. But all this was eons ago.

I keep flying Gulf Air most of the time to Bangladesh. Not the best, but assentingly better than Biman. The in-flight crew have been particularly good with my kids. For reconfirmation, never had to resort of Biman style requirements of pulling strings. Trip to their Dhaka agency took care, though they are not as friendly and smiling as I'd like them to be. Once, flew Thai Int'l to Dhaka via Bangkok. With just a phone call in Dhaka, on our return flight, Thai celebrated my son's birthday somewhere over the Pacific. I doubt Biman would have responded likewise.

I still remain reasonless to try make Biman my favourite airline.

Khan Kabir, Rochester, New York, USA

exposure can promote corruption so openly. No wonder that one has to grease some one's palms to get employment in Biman. Tk.15 lakhs were going rate for recruitment as cadet pilot! And probably it will cost more to get employed as aeroplane cleaners! Some of the cleaners have been caught with millions trying to deposit in non-descript rural branches of banks. And if you have

We are being robbed of our hard-earned foreign currencies. We are unable to buy services from Biman even after paying their salaries! Someone up the top should be honest enough to own up the responsibility and sort out the mess. Otherwise shut it down.

Abeer Chowdhury, Jalan Tantaram, Ang Mo Kio, Singapore

My husband and I were travelling to North America from Dhaka by a Thai Airways flight on 19th of this month. As we were approaching the final waiting lounge after completing all our immigration, customs and security formalities, one gentleman came to us and told that we were not allowed to take our only hand luggage because he thought it was over-size. We tried to make him understand that the bag was bought according to the size provided by the airlines for a cabin bag and we already had couple of journeys across Europe and North America with that bag. The gentleman (his name was Mr. Mizan, as we came to know later) was very stubborn and did not want to listen to any argument. We told him that we were taking a longer route and it would take us about 36 hours to reach our destination with eight hours waiting in Bangkok and nearly six hours in London, and the cabin bag was containing our personal belongings and medicines that we would need on our way.

book it up to Bangkok and we would get our bag there. My husband was little sceptical and asked them how would we get the bag while we would be in the transit lounge. They told us that it happened almost in every flight and Thai Airlines people would do it for us once we ask them for assistance. In Bangkok, the Airlines people informed us that it did not work that way and collecting the bag meant our passing through the immigration for which we would need a visa, and checking-in once again mean-