

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Save the cops



Protection for police?

Recently the police personnel's have become vulnerable to criminal attacks. Number of lives are lost in the hands of lawbreakers. Routinely Home Minister and high ups of police department line up in Rajarbagh police lines wearing a visible sad look, utter a few words of consolation coupled with muffled warnings which fail to make any impact on the situation. Though our police force does not command much respect among the common people, such cowardly attacks and killings must be condemned by people of all walks of life. Needless to say if such acts go unabated, the already damaged moral of our law enforcers will go down permanently.

If we analyse the killings we shall find two definite patterns of happenings. In the south western part of the country, police are targeted on the basis of their past actions against the outlaws. This is definitely a very bad indication. No police officer will dare to take action against the so-called underground political parties, if their life cannot be protected. On the other hand police in the big cities appear ill armed as well as ill trained to cope with the better-equipped and organised criminals. The criminals simply outsmart our cops. Some incidents also indicate lack of coordination on the part of the police organs. The residential hotel operation could be better tackled by the RATS who are specifically trained for such job.

The government and leaders of country should realise the gravity of the situation before it worsens further. There should be a jump start for reform in the police, ensuring better training, modern equipment, reasonable compensation and of course freedom from all political strings. We want a Police force capable enough to protect themselves as well as the society from the evil clutches of offenders.

Sonia
Uttara, Dhaka

"Exam hazard"

I completely agree with Arani Siddique's letter. It is woeful that the British Council selected places like the University of Bengal and HURDCO International for examinations. The University is situated right beside the construction site of the Mohakhali fly-over and traffic jams are imminent every ten minutes. Add to that, the dust and soot all over Mohakhali is utterly deplorable for the guardians waiting for the candidates. There is not even place to stand properly in that place, let alone sit somewhere. There is no parking place, so most of the cars are stationed on the street, creating more traffic jam.

I have to use that road for three days a week, ever since 2002 so I know what it is like. My mother thanked The Almighty because I do not have any exams in HURDCO International. I feel sorry for the candidates having to travel all the way to Baridhara for giving an exam. It is ideal to go some place near and sit for the exam. Anyone can make a mistake of the venue and if one does something like that, it is almost impossible in this Dhaka traffic to get back to the correct destination in time to sit for the exam.

The British Council at Fuller Road has more security than most other public place in Dhaka but they have stopped hosting exams because of safety fears. But I would think it's easier to detonate a bomb in the University of Bengal rather than at Fuller Road.

Haji Mohammad Isam
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

This is in reference to Arani Siddiqui's letter 'Exam hazard' (May 19). My heartfelt gratitude to the writer, for stating the predicament of the O and A Level candidates and their guardians too!

I, myself, am appearing for my A Level exam this May and it would be an understatement to say how horrifying it has been so far. As if the exams aren't stressful enough, simply reaching the examination centres are a great inconvenience (mine are all held in University of Bengal).

However, my misery lies on the day when I had a 'clash' -- which, in other words, means somehow my

allowed to step out of the room, not use our mobile phones, and have no contact with our parents and were under strict watch. After sitting for a mind numbing, tire-some exam in the morning, then sitting in one room for so long, when the time for the next exam came, we were fatigued and were barely able to concentrate at all to write a 50 marks answer. The reason for this arrangement apparently being so that we don't leak out the question to other students without this 'clash' problem and would be sitting for the exam in the evening.

I want to point out at the unfairness of this whole arrangement British Council worked out for us. Won't EDEXCEL be informed of the horrendous situation under which we took the English Literature exam? I doubt it. And if they did know, would they even care?

Anami Kabir
Dhaka

A grim picture

On the dawn of the millennium day, we all thought that from now on people of this world would live side by side in peace and harmony. They would also cooperate with each other for the betterment and welfare of the people of this planet. But it was not to be. What are we witnessing in reality? Terrorist activities and war on one pretext or another taking place in different parts of the world. Thousands of people irrespective of age, caste, colour, creed or religion are being killed or injured or maimed for life. For how long will we helplessly watch these ghastly occurrences?

The answer is simple. Until and unless the Middle East crisis is peacefully solved and the Palestinians get their homeland back this will continue. Until and unless the Frankenstein of the world Osama bin Laden, Butcher of the ME Ariel Sharon and George W Bush are thrown out of power this will continue. Until and unless ethnic cleansing or targeting people of a particular religion is stopped this will continue.

We do not want to see anymore hatred and jealousy. We do not want to see anymore destruction and bloodshed. We do not want to see and hear anymore pain, agony sufferings and cries of the people. We want PEACE.

Iqbal Ahmed
Dhaka

Honesty

When we were young, our parents and schoolteachers used to tell us to become an honest citizen. They were themselves 'honest' in all respect and we followed their steps. In those days people used to lead a simple life and were happy. There was 'law and order' in the country and people could move anywhere without fear. In the villages, people used to live keeping their doors open and even in cities people could lock their homes and go out for pilgrimage/tours for months without fear of any theft of their properties.

Now about 70 years later we find a great change in our country. We are now an independent nation and our own leaders are ruling the country. But we are undergoing a terrible period of lawlessness, corruption, extortion, indiscipline, dishonesty, cheating etc. There is no 'peace' in life and everyone is scared. Bangladesh has been adjudged as the 'most corrupt nation' in the world, not once but twice!

May I request our leaders of all the political parties to join hands and work out plans for removing all the 'ills' of our country. They should themselves set examples of 'honesty' first and then lead the country with utmost devotion. We can take an example of Singapore and start working.

We must remember that 'time' is running out and urgent action is required.

M H

"History in tunnel vision"

The fact that the current alliance government is willing to use the book, "Birth of Bangladesh" by General Rao Forman Ali, as an academic reference is truly disgusting. It seems that, it is not enough that the history of this country is being systematically distorted by ignoring the contributions of all except the members of the current ruling party in the Liberation War. Now our students actually have to read as a reference book the opinions and views of one of the architects of the genocide that killed millions of our fellow countrymen and women in 1971.

It is all very well to argue that, the Awami League started it first during their last tenure in office. But can anyone, except BNP hard-liners, deny that at least their leader in 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the supreme leader of the Bangladeshi Independence movement, not some war criminal responsible for butchering innocent civilians. It seems that it is not enough that- we have to ignore the Father of the Nation in our history books, now we have to patronise the books and writings of Enemies of the Nation. This latest incident is just another strong proof of the fact that, the current rulers of this country have a very jaundiced view of the Liberation War. Can anyone still argue that the Arabic sign at Zia was done simply for the benefit of globalisation?

Anyone looking for evidence of all that is wrong with Bangladesh really need not look much further than this latest Rao Forman Ali book scandal that, *The Daily Star* has thankfully revealed. A nation that cannot learn to honour its hard won independence even after 30 years is one that is rotten to the core.

S. Khan, Banani, Dhaka

Dhaka

British job market for Bangladeshi doctors

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is suffering from shortage of doctors. They are recruiting doctors from India and other countries. I think our Bangladeshi doctors should also try taking the opportunity.

For information they can search by the Internet. British High Commission and British Council could also be helpful for this purpose. Bangladeshi doctors should take IELTS exams and language courses to improve their language. Most Bangladeshis do not get suitable jobs for their poor language skill.

Sumit
Gulshan, Dhaka

BB scenario

Your editorial of May 17th about the Bangladesh Bank scenario highlighting "Rationalisation of manpower [as] an integral part of modern management..." needs to make a clear distinction between justice and discipline. Yes, "It is quite normal for the bank to review the manpower situation from time to time..." But modern management *does not* look at its human resources as "excess baggage" to be discarded at whim. If the employees have served the organisation well, there must be justice in the process of letting them go.

On the justice issue, if there is excess manpower, management must first determine what led to the excess in the first place; if faults are found, it must own up and accept the blame. Tales of nepotism, favouritism, preferential treatment, political pressure, etc., are quite prevalent, and owning up to these faults would be a first courageous step by management to minimise such brazen practices. Next, management must try to find alternative employment for those targeted to be axed, either within the organisation or in some related organisation where their skills can continue to be utilised.

It is only fair that they are not cut off from their means of sustenance one fine morning without any attempt by management to look out for their welfare. If relocation is not a possibility, management must create a resource pool to retrain them, partly as a reward for the services they have rendered in the past. The same resource pool could also be used to provide a severance package so that the employees are not left to fend for themselves from the day they are out of a job. The severance package must be able to sustain them for a reasonable duration until they can find a comparable job. Finally, management may also devise the possibility that the employees could be re-hired at some future date either in the same position or elsewhere that matches his/her capabilities. That is the essence of justice.

Syed Saad Andaleeb
Professor and Program Chair,
Marketing
Pennsylvania State University, USA

"Not insulted enough"

In his letter "not insulted enough, we need more" (May 7), Yahya states, "Israel was formed under the charter of the UN in 1948. Nothing illegal or imperial about that. The UN also mandated another country called Palestine." I hope the bigotry and misinformation intertwined in the lines quoted, are a momentary lapse of reason on the part of Yahya and not on Yahya's perennial ignorance.

Firstly, the UN resolution of 1947 that gave the Jews the State of Israel, was crafted and coerced onto the UN general assembly by the US and UK, the tag team with whom we are all now quite familiar. The vote was "recommended" by the British and was railroaded through by the US. Resolution 181

Saudi Arabia, Riyadh and Casablanca bombings

Just before the US-led storming of Iraq, President Hosnie Mubarak of Egypt envisaged that the wanton invasion would produce a hundred Bin Laden throughout the world. If his prediction is correct, the fall out has just set in and one would not be surprised if more and more suicide bomb attacks jeopardise innumerable innocent lives in many other parts of the globe, after Riyadh, Casablanca, and Jerusalem. Hate begets hate and there is no escape from that.

However, if the prediction of President Mubarak is not correct, the parallel conclusion is that the entire gamut of things are being cooked up to heighten a hidden agenda of further destabilising the world. This latter inference couldn't be ruled out due to the fact that so far no Al-Qaeda involvement in the recent bomb blasts has been established and that up till now, those blasts are confined to the Muslim populated countries only, which might explain that there is a possible ploy to subvert those countries in order to give a blank cheque to the Zionist expansionism.

We don't know who is correct or what is correct. We don't know either as to who are the real terrorists. Nonetheless, we come to learn with angst that the international terrorism is breeding fast and there is no indication that this internecine hate campaign will ever end up. It seems that owing to the hawkish attitude of a few evils, the world order is decidedly breaking down to a point of no return.

Hafeejul Alam
Dhaka

The terrorist bombings in Riyadh and Casablanca are presumed by many to be the work of Al-Qaeda. It is clear that failing to find the opportunities to cause mayhem in the West Al-Qaeda -- or for that matter radicals of any kind -- are attacking targets where the authorities have been less vigilant. There are two points to be made from this.

The first is a very sticky question of what is perception of the population at large -- and in this case the population of two Muslim countries -- feel about these acts? The targets seem not to be the general population but selected Western or Jewish interests. However, the acts themselves should bring home a message to the population at large that for now, the target may be just Western interests, but these heinous acts can easily cross over and targets of Muslim interests can be next. I would not be surprised that failing to find targets of Western interest, these radicals will try to blow up administrative premises belonging to governments of other Islamic countries in the future. And perhaps the attacks in Riyadh and Casablanca can be a wake up call to all Muslims that we have to step up and condemn such killings from our heart and not pay any lip service to satisfy the USA.

The second question that all Bangladeshis need to ask is that if the target has changed from the West to Muslim countries -- first Bali in Indonesia and now Saudi Arabia and Morocco -- what is Bangladesh doing to make sure that it does not become a target? Should we be on a heightened alert? Is the government taking adequate measures to ensure that radicals don't go about setting off bombs in our country? Can we afford to look vulnerable in such perilous economic times?

Wasim Choudhury
New York, USA

At least 200 people lost their lives in the recent spate of sui-

cide (homicide?) attacks in Casablanca, Saudi Arabia, Chechnya, and Jerusalem. And the number of letters published in *The Daily Star* deploring these despicable cowardly attacks is 'zero'! Lately any non-native reader browsing through *The Daily Star's* Letters Page, might think of the readers, by mistake, as mostly Arab speaking Muslims wailing for ruthless Saddam Hussein while whining against US and UK!

I assume, the Saddam sympathisers might insinuate these recent bombings as a form of "self-defence" rather than "terrorism". While Israel tightens curbs on Palestinians and the chance for peace in the Middle East seems impossible, our readers can take a sigh of relief thinking that their fiery writing against infidel allied forces (blaming them on all the Muslim misfortunes) and glorifying Bin Laden and Saddam will not cease!

Chanchal Mahmud
Manhattan, NY, USA



Bombing spree!

This is in reference to the letter "Bomb blasts in Saudi Arabia" of S Khan (May 19). The writer criticises the silence of other readers over the bomb blasts in Saudi Arabia.

I would like to point out that those killed were part of military infrastructure, supplying and training the US troops and armed forces of Saudi Arabia. When one is part of the military infrastructure then one must take the risks that come with it.

Abu, UK

others from their hearth and home. The British Nationalist Party is a club for Nazis, skinheads, Muslim bashers and xenophobes. Their disciples always have, and continue to, attack immigrants physically and through the press. Their racism have been responsible, covertly or overtly, for race riots in several towns in the UK. Yahya would do well not to try and mix apples and oranges to give credence to arguments that have too many disparate parts. Such arguments are destined to fall apart very quickly.

Shomit Chowdhury
Dhaka

"India-Bangladesh friendship"

I am a Bangladeshi and was school going adolescent in 1971. I clearly remember how each and everyone I knew, who did not cross to India for safety then, fought for liberation by providing moral support to freedom fighters and food and shelter to all those fleeing home, irrespective of religion and creed. We prayed and dreamt and did all we could to get freedom. We were so happy when at last India, our friend, decided to declare war with Pakistan. Our freedom fighters who were trained by India, helped them to achieve their end too. The Indians helped us to get rid of our common enemy quickly along with their belongings and more so that they could press Pakistan to exchange the Indian prisoners (outcome of two previous Indo-Pak war).

After 1971, I am following the events in India -our closest neighbour and friend, very closely. There were riots and mass killing in Assam, Punjab, Hariana, Kashmir, Gujarat and almost everyday people are being killed at the border of Bangladesh by the BSF. However, we feel sorry for all those good Indians who never want to be a part of these heinous acts. We shouldn't blame a nation for the deeds of a few.

Fawzia Chowdhury
Uttara, Dhaka

This letter is in reference to Mr. Shyam Nediyanthag's (13 May) comments regarding the Indo-Bangladesh friendship and his implied misperception about the presence of Bangladeshis in India.

I must say that I am moved by his sincere desire to maintain cordial relation between the two nations,

and I appreciate his such tone of friendship with great delight. In order to save such cordiality; therefore, I believe that facts are required to be judged in historical context, so that misunderstandings are avoided.

First, sensitive Bangladeshis find it an objectionable view that India had "invaded and liberated" Bangladesh from the atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army. Although Mr. Nediyanchat never makes such a statement, however, as he describes his such thoughts, while he was an infant of ten years old, unfortunately, is shared by majority of adult Indians, which has caused a sense of irritation among Bangladeshis, since it was the sheer will force and the determination of the people of Bangladesh, which had earned them the pride to become the first a nation state in South Asia.

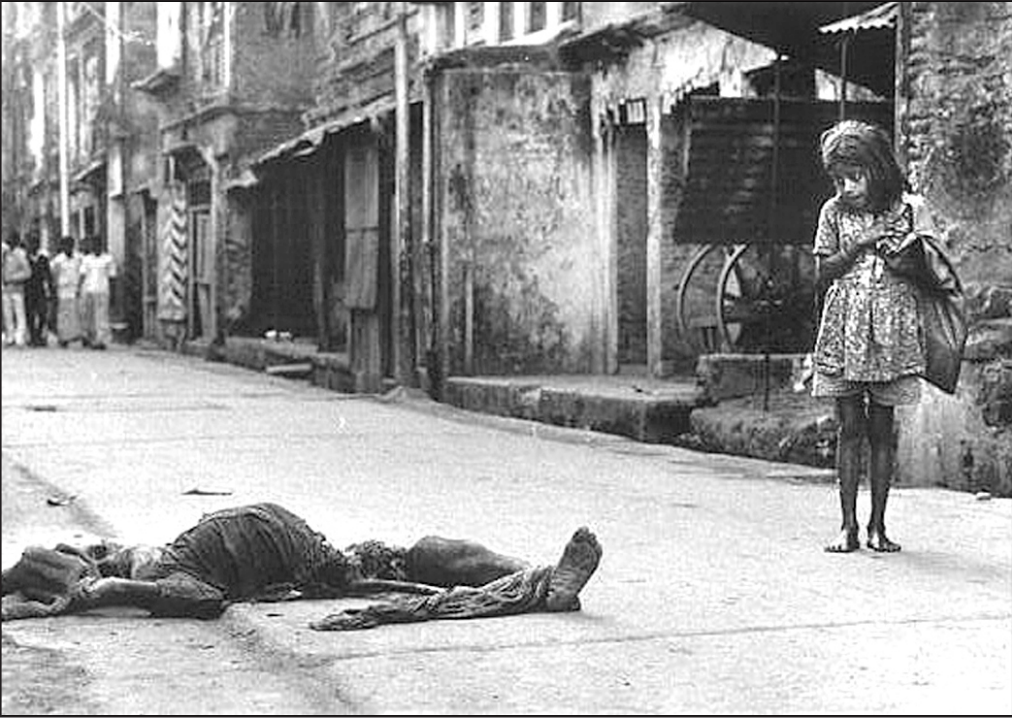
Second, regarding the concentration of Bengali speaking Muslims in major Indian cities, particularly, in Delhi, what Mr. Nediyanchat fails to recognise is the fact that including other parts of India, when they go abroad, irrespective of religion, Bengali speaking people of Bangladesh and West Bengal tend to identify themselves as Bangladeshi because historically, Bangladesh is the generic term for the region.

In addition, it is important to remember that after partition, people of erstwhile East Bengal, who had opted to live in India, although became an Indian citizen, also identify themselves as Bangladeshi, and such people include both Muslims and Hindus.

In the other hand, the Census of India indicates that in search of livelihood, due to intrastate migration, a good number of Muslims of below poverty line have moved to other Indian metropolises. In context of urban growth, data pertaining to trends in demographic shift in India proves the fact.

That is to say, around Delhi and other Indian cities, whom Mr. Nediyanchat saw, are certainly Indian citizens of Bengali ethnicity, who profess Islam as their creed, and may also claim of Bangladeshi origin, as a person from greater Bengal region identifies themselves such, but in no way, that makes them a citizen of the Republic of Bangladesh.

Shibly Azad
Columbia University



'Mutilating' history?