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Bangladeshi troops in Iraq



Should we join?

Supporting Sirajul Islam's opinion (June, 23) that the idea of getting some perks by sending Bangladeshi troops to Iraq may be suicidal. And undoubtedly it will be a great folly that would add insult to the injury of the Iraqi people. It is obvious from the beginning of the war that the Iraqi people along with the international community, except a few stooges of America, did not really like the idea of liberating Iraq.

It is America that backs Israel ejecting the Palestinians from their own land. As this war was imposed on Iraqi people (who had already suffered long) only for oil and without the approval of the United Nations, the whole war had been considered as unjust all over the world.

For the same reason it was very rational for Bangladesh not to support it. We hope our government will not be deceived in this regard. Otherwise there is a great possibility that the image of the ruling party, as well as the country's, would be mortified.

Azizul Hoq, Cox's Bazar

The UN secretary general has mentioned that there is no mandate for sending in troops from any country to Iraq at this time. Now, if we as a nation want to send in our young men to rebuild the war-ravaged Iraq that's just fine. But surely these B'deshi soldiers won't be riding the hi-tech armoured vehicles. So it will be easier for the blighted Iraqis to take pot shots at these (softer targets) B'deshi soldiers.

If we go there as construction workers and assist them in revitalising their infrastructure, that would be splendid and good, but if we send our soldiers; I'm afraid we would appear more like deputised mercenaries. We should know how much are the soldiers from Australia, Poland, Japan, Germany, UK and the US are getting from their tour duty in Iraq? How will our soldiers receive for facing the same kind of risks?

I Rahman
Shayesta Khan Ave, Uttara, Dhaka

KViqar Moinuddin, Dhaka
Separation of Judiciary: A case study

The past Caretaker Government wanted to separate the Judiciary from the Executive by issuing an ordinance. Every thing was ready to take place in October 2001 before the taking over of the present BNP Government. And Khaleda Zia intervened and promised to separate the same as per election manifesto of the BNP. Now as per statement of Law Minister Moudud Ahmed published in Daily Star on the 24th May 2003, the separation process may take more than six years. The key issue is the replacement of 600 administrative staff carrying out judicial responsibilities. The calculation is very simple, the Law Ministry is planning to replace 100 such staff per year for which minimum 6 years will be required (The general public may take consolation that it is not going to take 100 years i.e. six replacement per year).

The present government closed down Adamjee Jute Mill on 1-7-2002 by a stroke of pen for which 25,000 people lost their livelihood, 5,000 students living in the mill area lost their careers. Adamjee mill on average earned 110-150 crore of foreign exchange per year by exporting jute goods, used to purchase 18 lakh mounds of raw jute and there by stabilised the jute price. Even the pretext of loss of taka 1200 crores by the mill in a period of 30/32 years was presented in a misleading way, as 75% of these losses occurred in recent years following the prescription of the World Bank by closing 3500 units of tat of the mill.

The Government was found to be very bold, brave and anxious to handle the lives of 30,000 (25,000+5,000) people of Adamjee area by terminating their services, career etc. but could not tackle the issue of 600 Administrative staff. Perhaps the lives of Adamjee people are insignificant in national context. The replacement, transfer or absorption of these 600 privileged administrative staffs should not pose any problem to any sensible government provided they have a political will to do so.

The process that was going to take place during the period of Caretaker Government in a period of three months might take six years now under the present democratic government. So naturally the question arises what type of government is more efficient for Bangladesh?

Let us make some more case studies.
Abdul Bari Chowdhury
Uttara, Dhaka

Iraq: Free or occupied

This is in reference to Mahmood Elahi's "Free Iraqis are speaking at last" (June 30).

What the eminent poet Awad Nasir wrote or what the eminent journalist Hamid Ali Alkifaey says is not signs of freedom. How the people of Iraq take this so-called freedom is the main question and that will tell us what type of liberation US have brought for the Iraqis.

It is the people of Iraq who should decide what type of rule there would be. It cannot a duty of the outsiders. Democracy that the Westerns mean "the rule of the people, for the people and by the people", is never "the rule of outsider, for the people and by the outsider."

So, I request Mr. Mahmood Elahi to realise first what is invasion or occupation, what is freedom and what is democracy, and not to side lark the actual matter.

Syeda Mushfiqa Munira
Ajimpur, Dhaka
Test status of

Bangladesh

Former BCB President Mr. Saber Hossain's remarks about the current BCB leadership have attracted our attention. I would like to tell Mr. Chowdhury that the problem with our cricket is not with the BCB leadership at present. The problem with our cricket is that we entered the test arena not on our ability but on the ability of our cricket administrators of the time.

We were just playing one-day cricket and had won an ICC trophy. Further, not that we just did not have the ability to play test cricket, we had no system of playing the longer version of the game in domestic cricket. With such weak foundations it was not a wise decision to move for Bangladesh's test status.

Instead of criticizing the current BCB administrators, Mr. Chowdhury should better tell us what inspired him to seek test status for Bangladesh. The argument has been made that all teams that were given test status did not fair well in the initial years. That argument is now not holding at all anymore as no country has ever been humiliated like this in the initial days of its test status as we are being humiliated now.

Take it from me: planning or changing coaches, or the administration nothing -- would serve Bangladesh any good. Our test status has now become a noose round our necks and a cause for national embarrassment.

I suggest that an independent inquiry be undertaken to identify the people who were responsible for putting this noose round our necks and meanwhile keep our test playing status on hold till we are first able to lay the foundations of cricket in the country and become matured. We need at least a handful of cricketers of

international cricket playing ability before we venture to play test cricket.

Mr. Chowdhury has attacked the current BCB Chairman for problems that he had created. He should show some moral courage to take responsibility for his actions rather than passing the buck to his successor.

Shahjahan Ahmed, Dhaka

High rising house rent

I wish to thank Ms Shimu Rani Das for her write-up on the above subject on 25th June 2003, in your esteemed daily drawing the attention of the house owners and the tenants in respect of house rent.

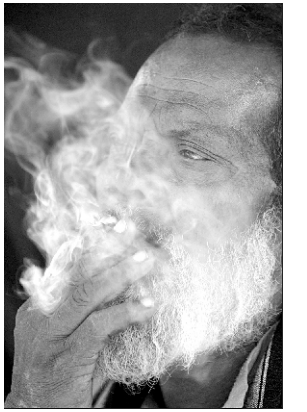
Because of my financial limitations, after retirement from service as a Cadet College Principle in 1996, I had to rent a flat at Uttara on monthly rent basis. Now I pay much higher than I used to. I wonder, the owner of the house has increased the rent as per the House Rent Control Ordinance 1991's article 16(2) or not.

Professor Abul Ashraf Noor
Utara, Dhaka

A hopeless nation

Syed Rashed Zaman (July 03) thinks 'it won't take too long for the entire society to collapse' because of corruption. I do agree with him and I would like to add that our society's foundation is already shaken. The symptoms are already quite visible -- such random and indiscriminate killings were never seen before. Drugs, rape and murder have become regular and we have become quite insensitive about the whole situation.

In my opinion the root cause of every crime is corruption. It has engulfed the entire society like wildfire, and it's spreading



Why cigarettes

Cigarettes now are a leading cause of death. The number of the smokers in our country is increasing. The smokers make other smokers. For an example, a teen-age boy who smokes will inevitably insist, pursue and inspire his batch mates to smoke. Some smokers for smartness. But they forget that smartness is something different. It is the spirit and intelligence within that makes you smart, not a cigarette.

Himadri Subrdi Saha
Jalampur

every moment with geometric progression. In the past an honest officer of any department, if not honoured at least was never mistreated. But today they are punished and that is shameful for any nation.

Jkobir
Dhaka

Improving relation between India and China: Hope for peace

The world scenario is totally changed in the post-cold war era. It is transferred from bipolar to uni-polar. And USA is the only superpower in present time. Instability, regional conflict, civil war, ethnic cleansing has become the part of our everyday life. From 1990 to 1994, there were countries undergoing serious, social and political violence. And more than half the ongoing wars in 1994 had lasted more than a decade.

It is generally accepted that in wars, around the turn of this century, from 85 to 90 percent of casualties took place in the armed forces, from which only a small minority were civilians who got caught in the crossfire or killed in atrocities.

But, it is fact now that about three-quarters of war deaths are civilian. If we include refugees and the wounded, this puts the proportion of civilian casualties more than 90 percent, USA being the only superpower conduct her foreign policies for the purpose of own national interest, for which the crisis in the world politics is increasing day by day.

April has been the end of one year war in west Asia and we see little hope for peace in south-east Asia as the Indian Prime minister visited Beijing. This visit opens a new path for peace in Asia as well as for the rest of the world. What is required right now is open dialogue between the neighbouring countries. Now is the time for all of us in Asia to take an honest approach to resolve the differences. This is the plea of all the peaceful people in this planet.

Khaleda Nasrin
International Relations,
Dhaka University

Dhaka University and its lost glory

As a regular reader of Daily Star I notice many news that questions the value of Dhaka University in recent times. But as I was reading Rifat Mahbub's Letter (June 24, 2003) under the title "Dhaka University and its lost glory", I can't help but agree with her view. In fact, I am a student of Dhaka University and quite familiar with the environment.

Dhaka University opens up many avenues in life but is also blocked by barriers that our society has created by itself. Here we have reputed teachers with brilliant track record, under whose guidance the University has produced many successful people in the country. Our central library is also very resourceful. Cultural programmes, conferences and seminars take place all the time in the University which is very helpful for the students.

But outside these many good things we face many obstacles here that make the educational atmosphere very unhealthy. Many letters published in The Daily Star acknowledged the problems in the past. In this age of hi tech the University need to keep up with rest of the world and introduce computers in every field of the education system. Accommodations, communication, limitation of classrooms, lack of books, journals, and mostly the students involved in politics create problems for common students.

In fact students are more or less passively responsible for this institution's lost glory. For a regular student the main target is to collect notes from the senior students. We waste our time and energy to collect notes. The standard educational system in the country is not good enough comparing with the system in other countries.

The English language should be made compulsory for the students for future benefits. Some faculty has already started the practice but not all of them. We all pray that the Dhaka University that was known as the Oxford in Asia regain its lost glory.

Khaleda Nasrin, Dhaka University

Communicative English: A failure

In last few years the curriculum of Secondary School Certificate has undergone a massive change. The rationale for this change was to modernise our education system. Modernisation is the demand of time and there is no fault with it. But the curriculum of Secondary English is a complete flop.

What ever is the motive of introducing communicative method in Secondary Schools, it is clear that it was just a "experimental project" of project-hungry-English-teachers of universities and colleges. Their chief concern was the "project money" of the Donors. Communicative method of English Teaching is an innovation only for students whose mother tongue is English and for countries where such favourable environment exists. Naturally it is bound to fail in our country.

Although those who introduced the course emphasised that grammar is there, practically students are not at all eager to learn grammatical rules. As a result though they pass a communicative English test, they can neither write few sentences in correct English nor can converse.

One fact is that most of the teachers are doubtful about teaching English in the communicative method as students and guardians, both are quite uncomfortable with the method. But people who designed the course are quite hopeful.

Anyway, I strongly urge the government to go back to old time-tested method with the addition of audio-visual and speaking tests. No more Guinea Pig model test should be carried out with the students.

Dr Q.M. Ohidul Alam
MBBS, Ph. D.
Panclash, Chittagong

Other side of the Iraq war

Some days have passed after the Iraq war. USA and UK are already in control of the country, except for few occasional resistances by Saddam loyalists. There is no real need to harp on the issue politically. Now it is important look into the other side of this US led war on Iraq.

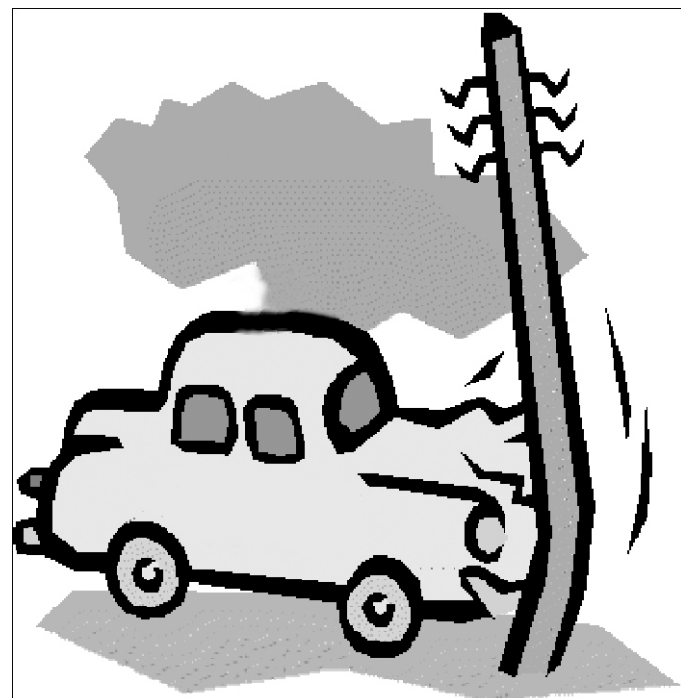
During the war in Iraq, Muslims in millions all over the world were united and prayed for a peaceful solution. We expected some miracle would stop the killing and destruction.

But nothing wonderful happened. Has goodness and love left the human race forever?

Reckless driving vs iron bumpers

Both my parents being government officers I had the chance to ride on government car on numerous occasions. Unfortunately, I didn't find much difference between a roller coaster ride and most of rides in car driven by government drivers. They have the tendency to press accelerators as hard as possible without a proper reason and brake at the last moments with all their might -- when they are only just an inch away from the car-in-front.

There are countless occasions when they bump into other cars and initiate a nasty quarrel with the driver or flee making a huge dent on the car-in-front. This kind of recklessness is common in most of the illiterate drivers of our country and unfortunately they are quite large in number. Their careless driving result in accidents. Iron



Bumpers, drivers or traffic police?

bumpers save cars from these reckless drivers. It acts as shock absorber and lessens the impact of a strong push from the car behind. If they are removed the number of car accidents will increase.

The doctor died because of careless, reckless driving, here iron bumpers can hardly be blamed. Nothing can stop brutal car accidents unless it is made sure that only drivers with complete control will be allowed to drive. Also the traffic police has to be more alert while on duty.

Imran Choudhury
Mirpur, Dhaka

I fully agree with Ms Saquifa Islam's view. Taking off rail bumpers from cars won't stop improperly trained drivers from killing people nor would it make the traffic police take an attempt to catch the killer driver while fleeing away.

The death of the doctor was completely the fault of the driver and the traffic police who was too busy to notice the car dragging a man to death.

This incident wouldn't have taken place if the driver had proper knowledge of driving and had full control over the car. It is impossible for a good driver to drag a man for more than one kilometer without noticing. Moreover I can't help but wonder what the traffic police on duty at the Russell square, Panthapath intersection were doing?

Taking off rail bumpers would only increase the number of fatal accident as the drivers in our country have a tendency reach the destination as fast as possible without following the traffic rules and hitting whatever comes on their way. Because they are certain that there is no one to take stern action against

them. These drivers somehow manage to get licenses being completely ignorant of the use of all the mirrors and not even having proper control over the accelerator and the brake.

It is easy for the honourable minister to order the removal of rail bumpers who always rides in government cars and in the middle of a motorcade. I don't think he would have been tempted to take such a decision if he had to drive his own car in the streets of Dhaka.

Zahidul Karim
Kallanpur, Dhaka

Recent incidents have prompted the government to take iron bumpers off the cars but does that really address the root cause of the problem. Iron bumpers are there just to protect our cars from severe damage from other vehicles.

While it is true that the costs that will be incurred by the car owners will be far less than that of the life of an individual but does it really solve anything other than imposing greater costs on society. The point that I am trying to emphasize here is that the cause of road accidents are not iron bumpers or any such accessories. The major cause of road accidents are reckless driving, ignoring traffic rules, issuing driving licenses to unworthy drivers and the lack of law enforcement.

If these problems are not addressed, I really do not think that the recent measures taken by the government will ever meet its objectives of reducing road accidents.

Mohammad Arbaaz Nayeem
Dhaka

The communication minister has ordered removal of extra

bumpers from vehicles. I think this is not the correct solution. We do not cut our heads to get rid of headache. People use bumpers for some definite reasons. It protects cars from rikshaws and reckless drivers who cannot be caught by the police.

One valuable life has been taken away by a notorious driver. We mourn for the potential doctor. But can we assure that people will not face accidents on the roads after leaving those bumpers? I request the minister to form a committee to find proper and effective ways to reduce accidents. Mere removing the bumpers will not guarantee our lives on the streets. A driver or a car owner best knows how useful the iron bars are to save your vehicles on the congested streets of Dhaka.

Golam Qader
South Basaboo, Dhaka