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PHOTO STAR

Death threat to Hasina

We, the general people are very much concerned about the death threat given to the leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina. Actually it should not be considered as an isolated incident and cannot be taken lightly. In the recent years, we read many reports in local and international newspapers about the rise of militants in Bangladesh. We also experienced a series of bomb attacks on cultural functions and recently on the British High Commissioner. Political killings and law and order downfall are also visible in an alarming rate. A few months ago, an MP was killed in broad daylight. But most of the terrorists across the country are not brought to justice, criminals are not being punished. This encourages the criminals to be more desperate. They have gained such strength that they can give death threat to a former prime minister who is also the president of a large political party. If such efforts of the terrorists go unchallenged in future, then they may, who knows, challenge the government. So, effective measures should be taken to curb crime. The government should provide sufficient security to the leader of the opposition. The SSF should be employed in this business. After the last general election, the government withdrew SSF from Sudha Sadan, the residence of Hasina. But the government should realise that the security of Sheikh Hasina is a very important issue. After the attack on Prof. Humayun Azad the government employed armed security men to guard prominent citizens. It showed the government's honest desire to save the life of

prominent intellectuals from terrorist attacks. But if the criminals are not brought to justice, especially the militant Islamist groups, then they will continue to grow beyond control. It is not possible to provide gunmen for all of the 140 million people. Shams Md. Javed Sufian Sylhet

Telephonic threats these days is a part of the current culture of violence. Hence it is not surprising to read newspaper report that the chief of the Awami League has been receiving telephonic threats at home and abroad.

The political culture has definite link with the social behavior pattern, as the politicians have become practically omnipotent with their omnipresence. This is a nuisance, and the godfathers behind the scenes have to be handled firmly by those responsible for creating such situations in the first place. The moral question is: depend on truth, or on goondas? This is the indirect price of politics of violence, not only in Bangladesh, but all over the world.

There is a wise saying to the effect that violence returns to the source as a moral punishment. It is the environmental effect, and innocents also suffer. Dhaka has become a living hell without political consensus on common issues.

The message is clear take action, or retire into safety nets. AMahseen Dhaka

Green House Effect?

Patuakhali is my district town and it is one of the southern most towns in Bangladesh. Scientists forecast that due to the "Green House Effect", the southern region of Bangladesh will go under water due to the tidal wave of the Bay of Bengal. One estimate says 15.9% of our southern region will go under water and the Green House gas will enlarge Chloro Fluoro Carbon (CFC), Carbon-di-Oxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), Nitrogen Oxide (N₂O) etc gases. Then our natural bio-diversity will be changed drastically in many ways. It will also erode our ecosystem and ecological balance. Patuakhali town goes under water during the tidal wave almost throughout the year, specially

during the rainy season. This town goes under water twice daily during the high-tide. It also creates problem in daily life. Is it the effects of "Green House Gas"? If that is true, how can we take preemptive measures to save the southern region? Md. Zillur Rahman Back from Patuakhali

AIDS menace

AIDS stands for Acute Immune Deficiency Syndrome which causes havoc on the human immunity system, utterly destroys it and leads its victims to sure death. The first case was detected in the US in 1981. From then on the whole world is combating it. The global AIDS situation is very grim. A large

proportion of our total world population are affected by this deadly disease. Half of them are women and helpless children. It was mostly witnessed in the western countries till it spread through Asia. It is the result of free sex and drug abuse. Man only carries the virus and usually transmits it through sexual contacts, through unprotected sex and multiple sex partners, and through mixture of AIDS infected blood in various ways. Children may contract it from their infected mother. They contract the virus during pregnancy delivery or breast feeding periods. A study proved that 80% of the total AIDS cases have spread through sexual contacts. In India, the total number of victims is more than 40 lakh, whereas in China

it is more than 50 lakh. In Bangladesh, according to the estimate of WHO, there are 15,000 HIV infected people. That is a great threat to our future generation. It must be stopped at any cost. In this regard the media and religious preachers can play a vital role by increasing awareness among the people. Md. Shafique, Tangail

BGMEA transparency

I was listening to the BBC news covering our RMG sector (proposed amendment to maternity leave, and other benefits to the garment workers, specially the problems of the female workers). It looked to me as if the chief of the BGMEA dribbled past the critical questions regarding weekly leave, overtime (payment) and other grievances of the workers. Like the terrorist activities the garment workers are afraid to complain officially due to fear of losing their jobs, specially in the absence of recognized negotiating groups. The authorities are naturally rather soft on the garment industry as it is the major earner of foreign exchange. The question is how far the regulatory role is to be compromised, and for how long. Lot of elaborate subjective propaganda and publicity is going on the media on how badly this industry might suffer from next year after international deregulation. Our MPs have to be neutral and tough, and not show partiality in their public responsibilities. The nation is bogged down with corruption and terrorism. How do we get out of it? There is a greater apprehension lurking in the background: the secret activities of powerful foreign nations to control Bangladesh through local stooges, as we have seen in some Saarc member nations. What the leadership has to say on the above state of affairs? The parliament may go into deeper debate on the alleged non-transparency of the BGMEA. AHusnain Dhaka

Old Dhaka

The photography exhibition on the building collapse deaths in Shankhari Bazar arranged by DRIK is praiseworthy. The main objective of the exhibition was to create awareness among people. The photographs showed perspicuous signs of realistic ingeniousness and the whole exhibition bore signs of deep thoughtfulness. The photos showed grimy scenes of dead bodies and rescue efforts. The captions too conveyed signs of brilliance. Unfortunately, these types of exhibitions alone can't create full-blown awareness in our frozen hearts, which are inactive for a very long time. The incident in Shankhari Bazar is an utter example of our lack of sensitivity and filthy greediness. The civic and residential condition of Old Dhaka is claustrophobic for hundreds of years. And the government is showing some awareness only when a building collapses. Previous governments too did nothing convincing to improve the living conditions there. We saw on the TV screen that ministers had promised to do something about the problem. When? It's after several deaths and destruction of course. Can't we ever be aware of a disaster before it takes place? Can't we ever be careful before a single life is lost as a result of our constant carelessness? KH. Asef Safa Kabir Upal Lalmaia, Zakir Hossain Road Dhaka



PHOTO BYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Saddam's trial

I felt very sad to see the deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein appearing before a court in chains and shackles. If you act unjustly, fate will not spare you, you will have to pay for it one way or the other. But I was also glad when I saw that Saddam Hussein stole the show, though he looked emaciated, he talked authoritatively and with pride, he was not nervous and all through the interrogation he responded with intelligence and eloquence.

We do not know what is in store for Saddam Hussein because in Iraq many people are supporting him and many are against him, we have to wait and see what happens.

But what about G.W. Bush, the President of the United States? Should not he be also brought to justice? In the name of war on terror, he has wrought havoc on the whole world, thousands of people have died 'including members of the coalition forces'. Many more have been maimed. Iraq, the land called the seat of civilization, has turned into ruins; all these happened due to the whims of Bush. To fulfil his wishes, Bush did not hesitate to resort to deception and lies.

I think if a survey is conducted about the most hated persons in the world today, Bush will top the list. If you commit a crime, you should be punished for it. It is the law of nature.

Nur Jehan Chittagong

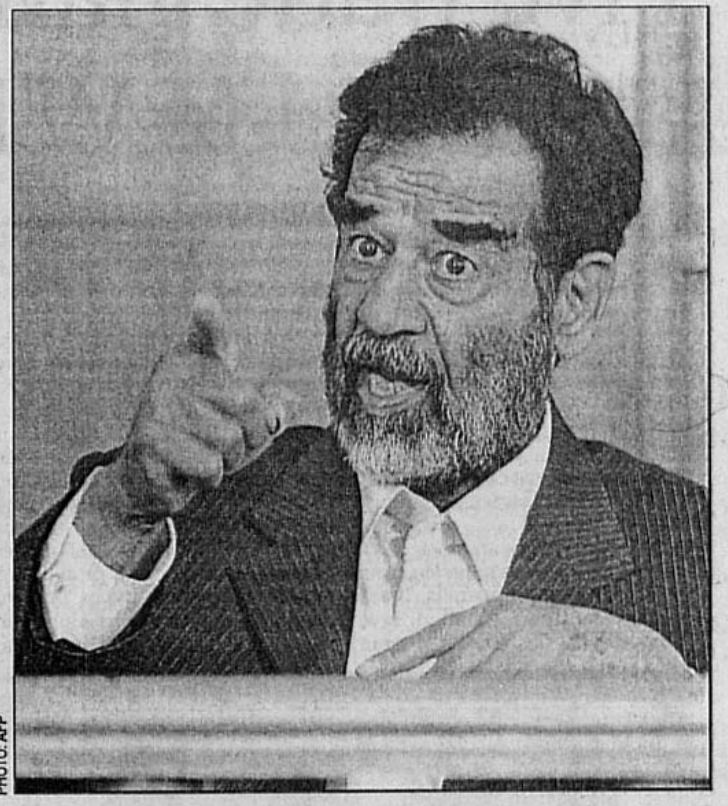


PHOTO: AFP

not. Logic of a fundamentalist is to consider his own thinking and belief as true and unquestionable whatever may be there in science or knowledge. This is not a logical conception.

Fundamentalism of some religious societies of the west believed that the Sun revolves around the Earth daily, because it is their belief according to their holy scriptures and as such unquestionable. Out of this fundamentalist belief, they imprisoned and tortured Galileo, throughout his life. Yet Galileo's Heliocentric concept was found to be true, contrary to the Geocentric concept of the fundamentalists.

Repetition of same words, again and again, is not acquisition of knowledge! But our great Prophet Hazrat Mohammed (Peace be on him) gave highest priority to the acquisition of knowledge i.e. to know the actual truth about the world and creation i.e. to be dynamic adjusting with the new truth acquired for advancement. Knowledge is acquisition of truth as against falsehood, superstition and fundamentalism.

At the beginning of the British rule, the fundamentalists boycotted English language for which we, Muslims, of the subcontinent, remained backward for 100 years. Even the modern cultural fundamentalists are abhorrent to English language making us incompatible to keep pace with the progress of the modern world.

Fundamentalism is, therefore, contrary to logical perception and truth based on science.

It will be a great service to mankind, if the fundamentalists of all the societies of the world realise their mistake. Arfin Badal, Dhaka

easily point out these differences, and any citizen can have access to the basic information from books in libraries.

To cite some stray examples (I am not an expert): why men have beard? Perhaps for weather protection. A woman's body (anatomy and physiology) is designed for child-bearing, and not for 100m sprint or marathon race, or activities requiring strong muscles and extra strength (the body cells are coated with fat for motherhood needs). Emotionally and mentally women are different (extremely intuitive). Imagine a tennis ball cut into two pieces. The latter, separated, is not a ball, and cannot function as a ball (complementary, the yin-yang principle, if I understand correctly). Man and woman have to work as a team; the question of competition does not arise, and should not. The respective domains have to be respected.

I would request the experts to present more scientific information to the public for awareness. Alfa Ahmad, Dhaka.

LGED Administration

LGED is reputed for its rural development and quick decision making, compared to the other public organizations. But what is happening in its own administration? There is nobody to look into the matter. As a result, the administration is going on as per the will of

taken part in it with much pleasure and enjoyment. An initiative has already been taken in Comilla to arrange a mathematics festival. As soon as the students heard the news they have been getting ready to participate in it. It has been observed that the students have begun to collect books written on mathematics. They have begun to discuss various problems of mathematics with their teachers and friends. I think such initiative can play a vital role in removing mathematics-phobia from the minds of the students. The coverage of the "Porthole Lao" has increased the popularity and familiarity of the Mathematics Festival. Whoever has taken the initiative, I offer heart-felt thanks to him. Side by side with the Mathematics Festival, an English Festival may be arranged. I think the organizers will get the same or more response from the students. In an English Festival there may be competitions on essay writing, quiz on correct pronunciation, debate, extempore speech etc.

I request the affluent people, writers and journalists to think about the matter and take the initiative to arrange an English Festival for making English easier and more interesting to the students of our country. Md. Abdur Rahim, Comilla

Urdu speaking people

It has been regrettably noted that

Bengal are. And those of us who were born after 1971 are Bangladeshi by birth.

We are now in the year 2004, but after 33 years of living in Bangladesh, M Nasim Khan, in connivance with the so called leaders, is playing the band of stranded Pakistanis. We disdain their campaign for a tripartite meeting India, Pakistan and the so called leader of stranded Pakistanis. They are only making the lives of camp dwellers pitiable and hindering their integration with the local community, who are very friendly.

Under the circumstances, we are left with no alternative but to request the government to kindly review the above matter and stop those stranded leaders from confusing the matter and fishing in the troubled water. Md. Abdur Khaleek, Nilfamari

Misspelling in a 'warning'

Misspelling in the warning on the wall of Savar Cantonment farm is very much noticeable. They have spelt the word 'trespassing' by adding an extra 's' to the first 's' of the word. The spelling remains the same for long. It is wholly unfortunate that such a mistake has gone unnoticed. I expect that the spelling will be corrected as soon as possible. Md. Minhazur Rahman Dept. of English JU

Offices in residential areas



PHOTO: BYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Now that a large number of high-rise multistoried shopping complexes have come up, the government may issue an order to shift all business offices and NGOs from residential to business areas. For example, Mohammadpur and Lalmaia are full of offices. The greater nuisance is that in the same building some flats are used by families and some by offices. The NGOs get sufficient funding to shift to business buildings.

The government may tie up with Rajuk and DCC to enforce suitable residential environment for family life. It is not clear why regulatory monitoring is so lax, and deterrent punishment is virtually absent. Why no action is taken

against the landlords? The licences of the NGOs and registered and unregistered private companies may be cancelled for violation of regulations, if warning and reminders are ignored.

Next to the residential building where I stay with my family (in a flat), there is a big head-office of an industrial company, where factory goods are stored, and dozens of salesman crowd the premises all the time (the landlord-cum-owner lives on the top floor with his family). There is no signboard to indicate business activity! AMawaz Dhaka

the few high-ups of LGED and powerful leaders of the party in power.

They don't care about any prevailing service rules. It is a matter of great concern that incompetent junior officers and employees have been placed in important positions. The LGED decision-makers should pay due attention to the matter. Kamal Upazila Complex Sharsha, Jessore

Mathematics Festival

The Mathematics Festival is an exceptional festival which has created much enthusiasm and curiosity among the students of the country. Wherever this festival has been held so far, the students have

vested interests are out to form those living in so-called Bihari camps since the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 till to date as stranded Pakistanis. They are holding press conferences and through letters in the dailies claiming that M Nasim Khan is their leader and SPGRS the representative organization, which are not correct. It was a mistake on the part of the quarters concerned to treat those non-Bengali speaking people as stranded Pakistanis after 1971.

Actually, they are those Urdu speaking people of India who migrated to erstwhile East Pakistan, after partition of British India in 1947, which emerged as Bangladesh in 1971. So they are Bangladeshis, as much as those migrating from West

Mobile phone providers

Your decision to introduce Prepaid Cards may have brought added revenue and may have brought technology closer to a wider section of population but its usefulness, practical utility and positive implications are marred by the fear and worries faced by parents in particular when offensive calls cannot be traced.

With the recent phenomenon of school going children being the target of extortion, we urged you to reconsider and find out an alternative solution to serve the people. That is what we would expect from a good corporate citizen.

F Rahman Dhaka

What is fundamentalism?

This is a reference to the letter of M Shahidul Islam of 8/4/5 published in an English daily on 10 July, 2004, supporting fundamentalism. He has said that fundamentalism is key to perfection and will go on and on.

Now, let us try to understand what is fundamentalism? Fundamentalism is to stick to one's own belief and thinking without considering whether his thinking is logically and scientifically true or

The biological difference

My strong editorial (July 7) on wrestling by women (in public) spotlighted the political side only. The biological differences between man and woman have to be considered also.

The Supreme Creator has designed man and woman to be complementary physically and mentally, to share the joint burden of life and family. This set of specifications is timeless, and not bound by geographical location, religion and culture. The scientists and teachers in the academies can