

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.

A culpable crime

The attempt by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to demolish a Muslim General's in Maharashtra is a deliberate act of provocation and a blatant act to arouse communal passions of the majority community. It deserves condemnation in unequivocal terms.

Robert Kader
Mehdibagh, Chittagong

A true depiction

Humayun Ahmed wrote a huge novel on Muktiyudho (liberation war) of Bangladesh named "Jochna O Jononir Galpo". With his amazing power he brought out the whole scene of the war in those 500 pages. This is the largest book he wrote and for me the best novel I ever read.

Being a fan of 'Humayun', I have read many books written by him. From his writing I have an idea about his mentality. For various reasons he is very sensitive about our liberation war. I thought the book about the war would not depict the reality and would be an emotional one. But this was not the case. He illustrated the war from all possible angles. Even he was brave enough to write that some Pakistani soldiers were not that brutal.

The novel contains an appropriate description of a great leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. At the same time he wrote about a devoted freedom fighter, Major Ziaur Rahman. He also wrote about Moulana Bhashani and other great leaders. You will feel the thrill of guerilla war and joy of victory here.

The matter that impressed me most is his effortless style. As he always does, he wrote in a lucid language.

Istiaque Uddin Rifat
Dept of EEE, RUET

RAB and mass arrests

There is a cliché that says heart is in the right place while the head is not. Sometimes clichés are not bad in describing certain situations and the one in question is perhaps very appropriately applicable to the present government's attitude towards governance.

The BNP led government has not failed to understand the problems. Its heart has been full of goodness for the country. But its head has never been in tandem with its heart.

Everybody agrees that our main problem is law and order, which has been deteriorating. The PM herself led on this issue from the front and her first initiatives resulted in the long arm of the law falling upon her own party to a large extent. But then when she had the situation under control, the head went in different direction and the army and the paramilitary who were doing a great job were given the immunity on custodial deaths. The initiative then fizzled and the criminals made up more than they had lost while the army and the para-military had them on the run.

Now the government has, being prompted again by the heart, decided to bring RAB and mass arrests to tackle the law and order issue. While criminals are being nabbed, many are being killed at the hands of RAB who have this time been given no immunity but have the government's approval in what they are doing. I guess the government thinks that the end justifies the means and that the RAB action would rid the society of the criminals and the people would in

the end rejoice. For the government's sake, I wish the solution were that easy, but it is not. The criminals being killed would be replaced as quickly for RAB has no authority of going after those who sustain the criminals, the political godfathers. In the end, our donors will come back at us on human rights when the aid issue comes up at the next Aid Consortium Meeting.

The same goes for the issue of mass arrests upon which your excellent editorial of October 9 has been written. This government needs to put its head and heart together, if it intends to do anything worthwhile for the nation.

Shahjahan Ahmed
Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka

Obscene films

We have not been watching television for the past two years. And we haven't been going to the cinema halls either. We are very busy with work, writing and discussions. It is great to watch some wonderful movies. However, both in television and the computer there are obscene or X-rated material. It is sometimes impossible to monitor what children are watching. We were reading the letter on Asia Today on BBC (Oct. 6, 2004) and the vulgarism of Bengali films. Whether they make vulgar films in Bollywood or Bangladesh, the society should take strong steps to clean up the act. We encourage students to read more and watch less television. If children watch too much television, this does not build intelligence, imagination, or creativity. Children also observe a lot of violence on television, and there are too many noisy advertisements which create confusion in the brain. One of our friends came to us the other day and we agreed never to send any children, whether they are students or the children of our friends, to coaching centres. In one coaching centre, a woman said that the children watch X-rated films and that they do not care to monitor the children. These centres pose as educational institutions, and the film industry in Bangladesh produces X-rated films and then they claim that they are making movies. We must encourage proper education and clean, healthy entertainment, instead of encouraging the sight of heavyweight, half-dressed women, violence, and illiteracy among people. When we read wonderful books, literature, articles and watch great films, it fills the human spirit and adds substance to our existence. I was watching Northern Exposure a few years ago and a wonderful woman named Sicily said, "We were not born to grabble in the mud, we were born to rise."

Suchitra, F.M. Chaudhury, M. Shahi, Michelle Chaud
Gulshan, Dhaka

Our cricket and its future

Cricket is so popular nowadays. We, the people of Bangladesh, are also crazy about cricket. After having gained the Test-status, the expectations of the local fans have gone up. But what we expect from the cricketers is far from reality! Every time we go to enjoy the game with high hopes, we return depressed. They cannot even compete with other Test playing nations. Their Test status is now in doubt. Teams like Kenya, Canada, Scotland and Nepal have improved

Taj at 350

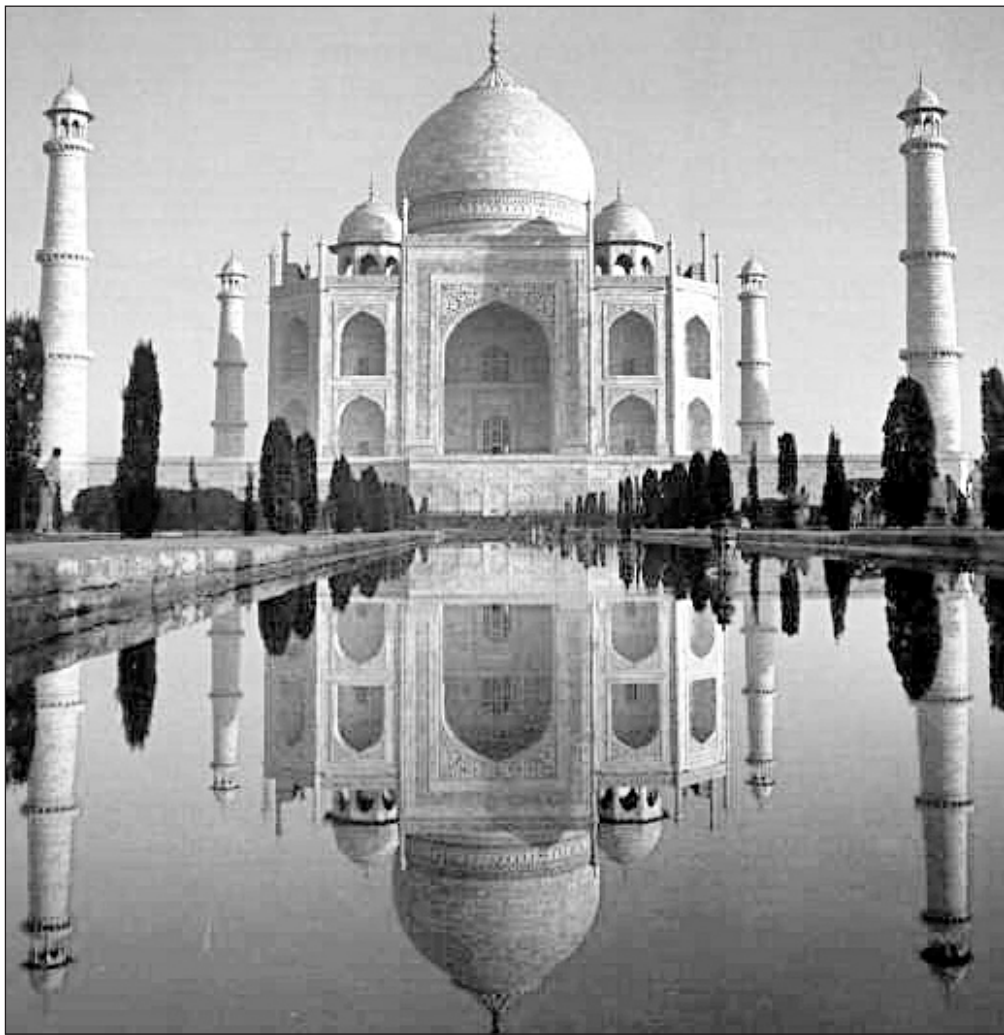


PHOTO: INTERNET

Tajmahal, the most sublime monument of imperial love and a majestic edifice, is entering its 350 years of existence. Being one of the Seven Wonders, it still conjures up the vision of Emperor Shahjahan who decided to make his wife's memory immortal. He is no more, but people from every corner of this planet come to watch this monument of love.

Its shimmering while marbles are still reflected in its shadow. The Indian government has chalked out an elaborate six-day programme to celebrate the 350th anniversary of its birth. It is indeed an occasion to reflect about this great monument.

ABM Shafiqul Islam
Dept. of English, Jahangirnagar University

so quickly, though they don't have enough facilities. We have a huge number of supporters, a world class coach, but there is no improvement. Recently, they were beaten by Scotland, though in a practice match only. What a shame! Their performance in the ICC Champions Trophy was also nothing but a disgrace. It seems, they have no love for the nation. They go only to travel, not to play.

However, I am optimistic about our young cricketers. If we can bring the best out of them, we can hope for better performance in the international arena. Good luck to Bangladesh cricket team.

M Hossain (Mintu)
Dept of English
University of Dhaka

Political paradoxes

There are many paradoxes in our politics. Here are some acerbic observations.

Corruption has been decentralized and democratized, but not power. Corruption is proportional to the concentration of power. These sandbars (chart) have to be dredged through public orders. Not allowed. It has created an

underground of unholy godfathers, bowing in every direction, regardless of the compass. But the mothering effect in leadership in politics is not very much visible. Purdah? No comment. Too much hijab effect in our politics. The covering is not enough. Too much unwanted exposure. Indecent (talking allegorically).

The power-handling capacity in our political systems pathetic, unholy, and dangerous. The masses cannot be charged (like a battery) with national motivation. Systems loss, plain and simple. Transfer power and reap the benefit.

Concentrated sunshine burns, as a magnifying glass focussing the sunlight can light a cigarette (I have this folding gadget for use in emergency to produce a fire while outdoors on trips or picnic).

The politicians are bad listeners, and worse speakers. Now the purpose for having two ears is understandable: listen with one ear, and let out with the other. The tongue rolls to grind truth with falsehood, and the masses are served this vomit in palatable packages. Mouth ulcers imposed on gastric patients, for national

development and progress! That is why Dhaka is flooded with clinics of all sorts. Take your choice, but the fare is similar. There is no political VATthe Exchequer would earn millions. Note the banners, posters and placards at political meetings and indoor seminars and conferences: mostly in English! Soliciting business? Our Constitution may provide more power to the opposition, to make this confinement more attractive. The UN has no charter on this perplexing topic. How to make the JS (parliament) more attractive for the MPs? Outdoor and secretive politics is more popular than indoor formal parliamentary politics. Where is the catch? No comment.

AZ
Dhaka

Culture or politics?

We are having serious problems with our culture and politics. Politics is of course within the broad field of culture, but defiant political styles are trying to make and unmake national cultural patterns. Which is leading and which is lagging?

The politicians led with governance, but what is the output? Social culture is the integrated end-image of the behavior pattern of the society. Turbid politics has displayed many other players from the cultural panoramic game. Today the culture we are cultivating (which we could not develop as yet) is no credit to the political culture we allow the political leaders to cultivate. The situation is getting out of hand, and the solution is receding.

A pessimistic society has to undergo a longer period of suffering and adjustment. The tutorial teams are not visible, as the society has lost the moral courage to be neutral politically on apolitical issues. The ramifications of such culture have to be studied more deeply for public awareness. Philosophers point out that when the time comes, the leader appears. This time delay is turning into a severe punishment for the nation.

Very rarely the apex leaders discourse on the moral bandwidth of cultural patterns allowed to grow like weeds (no gardeners in gardens turning into wilderness). Not because they are not interested, but due to ad hoc unwanted pressures, political, religious, economic and otherwise, surrounding them day in and day out (unstable equilibrium).

Our politics today is too crowded, and has yet to reach normal routine level. To be able to concentrate on urgent non-political issues riddling the society. Therefore the systems losses in our society is very high. When the curator is mentally sick, the physician has to go for treatment, leaving the society in an orphaned state for a while.

Time and again the fingers are pointed towards the leaders. What about the other leaders? Persona non grata? When leaders in a society are divided at the national consensus level, how to heal the scars, and get out of the vicious circle? There is no internal space for contemplation on objective pursuits.

Some followers are morally blind. This blindness is virtual (like cataract), and could be corrected. New vision lenses are required, in addition to political lenses and

spectacles.
Alif, Dhaka

A change is needed

Democrat candidate John Kerry won the first televised presidential debate against President GW Bush. Kerry looked poised, confident and presidential, while with glittering eyelids, nervous gestures, sometimes scorching for words, president Bush was a sorry sight.

We hope Kerry will become next president because America needs a change in its administration. GW Bush's foreign policy has implanted anti-American feelings in the minds of people all over the world. Once America was the dream-land, people used to go there in search of the 'golden deer'; people envied those who got the chance to live in the United States, but not any more. Bush has destroyed everything.

So, people are looking forward to a change in the US administration. The new administration should act wisely and sincerely and find a peaceful solution to the Palestinian ordeal and bring stability to the war-torn Iraq. We expect the people of America will consider these aspects and choose their president accordingly.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Report on Dr Azad's death

Suddenly everybody has gone silent on the still incomplete issue of the mysterious and doubtful circumstances under which Dr Humayun Azad died in Germany. Neither his relatives nor friends, nor even journalists, are showing any interest in a final and acceptable report on his death. The German government under extreme pressure from his family had promised to give the chemical report on his death after two weeks required for it. Since Dr Humayun Azad became a national issue, the nation is naturally waiting for this report. In the absence of this report, many negative speculations are being made which are likely to tarnish the image of this writer.

The journalists should play their due role in this respect.

Mohammed Alauddin
Dhaka

Thin veneer

The thin veneer of the roads in Dhaka metropolis symbolises the depth of our public leadership (the private motivation and lead is very strong). After the recent heavy rains (600mm), the work of the contractors and the laxity of the inspectors have been exposed. Full of potholes every sector of public service. And we are talking about development all the time. Parroting is not genuine leadership.

The speeches of our leaders are boring, in the sense that there is hardly any variety in the approach to topics, arguments, and presentations. It is like a race track, with plenty of illegal betting. Why speeches are essential in and out of season? Do it, and let others point out.

As a 'hardened' citizen, I have one piece of advice: Get out of the rut, or get lost! Our search parties will not disturb you!

Alfa Ahmad
Dhaka

Architecture and shopping malls

As a roving urbanite, now settled in over-developed Dhaka (since schooldays in old 'Dacca' decades ago), in under-developed Bangladesh (with the highest density of population in the world per sq km), it indeed generates queer feelings gazing at the glittering shopping centres (inside more salespersons than shoppers!); and then face the morning papers wherein the modern local architects pronounce abstract theories on the relationship between art, architecture, shopping cult and social space, on which 99 per cent of the people cannot find relevancy. Why so much fuss about one percent of the well-to-do population?

That is the problem with IT (information tech); it is a one-way flow from the industrialised rich countries, from the West, or the North-South blocked corridors of "communication" (ICT). Global culture trickles down you know from where to where (high to low pressure gradient). We are at the receiving end, and grappling with imitations (copying) all the time. The same is the problem with the cultivation of western democracy does not take roots, neither the managers (politicians), or the managed (democracy and

US policy



PHOTO: AFP

How would the people of the United States of America react if their homeland is invaded and occupied by, say, the UK Cuba or Russia killing and maiming thousands of men, women and children without any mercy and qualm of conscience defying UN resolutions and flouting world public opinion, protest and condemnation?

Would the Americans welcome the foreign hordes with garlands, bow down their heads, entertain the marauders with drink and dance?

US President George Bush desired so from the Afghans and Iraqis when his troops invaded and occupied those countries.

Today the US is expiating its crime and paying a heavy price for occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The number of US servicemen killed in the Korean War was 54,246 and 90,198 were killed and 153,303 wounded in the Vietnam War. How many US servicemen and civilians are going to be killed and wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq and in the so called US war on international terrorism?

US President George Bush calls Iraq, Iran and North Korea an axis of evil. Would it be a mistake if someone call the US, Israel and the UK an axis of devil? After invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, which country the US is going to attack next on the pretext of eliminating terrorists? Syria, Pakistan, Iran or North Korea?

We have witnessed the brutal occupation and malevolence of Israel on Palestine for over half a century and blind US support to Israel. And now we find the US following in the footsteps of Israel in Afghanistan and Iraq.

US President George Bush blamed Saudi born billionaire Osama bin Laden for 9/11. He also blamed Saddam Hossain for possessing weapons of mass destruction. The US President killed and maimed thousands of Afghans but he failed to capture Osama bin Laden. George Bush also killed and

maimed thousands of men, women and children in Iraq and arrested Saddam Hossain but miserably failed to find any weapon of mass destruction.

We deeply feel and strongly believe that the hard facts and actual reasons for 9/11 and US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq are as follows:-

Israeli occupation, oppression and suppression of the unarmed Palestinians, the pain and pang, despair and frustration of the Palestinians and the Arabs and blind US support to Israel for over half a century aroused some people to frenzied action and to hijack some US planes and crash those against the Twin Towers of New York.

President George Bush attacked and occupied Afghanistan to divert the attention of his people from the controversial and manipulated US presidential election, 2000 and to show the Americans his power to avenge 9/11.

Although with US logistic support Israeli bombers attacked and destroyed a nuclear power reactor in Iraq in 1981, the US invaded and occupied Iraq in 2002, on the pretext that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, to help Israel consolidate its power and position in the Middle East and to build up a gargantuan US empire in Asia and Africa.

Today the US train is derailed and fallen into the tunnel with no light at the end of it. President George Bush is misguided, ill informed and crudely advised by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Defence Secretary Rumsfeld at home and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and some of other sycophants like Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi etc. etc. abroad.

Would the next president of the US, the incumbent or John Kerry, be able to rescue the country from the dangerous course?

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Wari, Dhaka-1203

parliamentary flow) can cope with the local applications. No time to stand and stare (reflect): where life is leading us, or where we are dragging our micro-life with micro-credit.

We cannot even get pass mark on hybridization techniques. Decades are lost in the transition process where we since we achieved 'Liberation' or independence in 1971? Where are the architects of the mind? Doesn't matter! Matter and materialism are the ruling demons, well-dressed in the latest fashions. Look at the

Price spiral

The authorities concerned should take the necessary steps immediately to contain the price spiral and to mitigate the sufferings of people ahead of the Ramadan. The prices have already gone beyond the reach of the common people.

Md Khairul Alam
New Hall
Shere-e-Bangla Agril. University
Dhaka

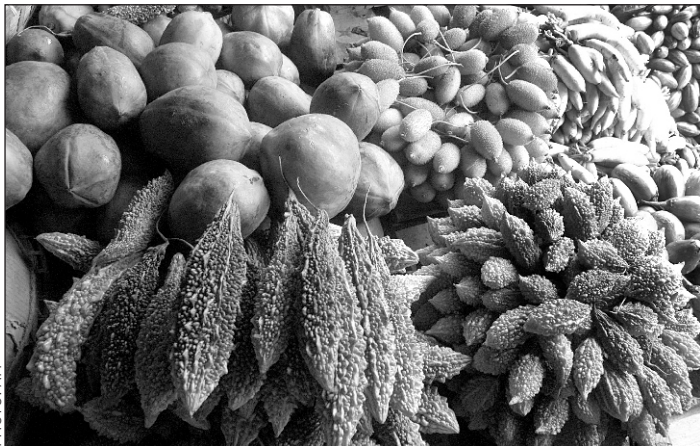


PHOTO: AFP

"Phir Milenge" : The film

Recent release of Bollywood "Phir Milenge" starring Salman Khan, Shilpa Shetty and Abhishekh Bacchan is different from other releases this year. While most of the

rest of their life in peace. The film also imparts a lesson to ignorant people that AIDS virus does not spread in us when we touch and even embrace the infected ones.

successfully enacts the role of an AIDS patient fighting for her rights. But the summary of the whole message of the film comes in the last hour when Abhishekh, a lawyer, makes

enough for Abhishekh's performance in that high court scene. I really think there must be some kind of law for AIDS patients to ensure that they enjoy all the rights that

other people do. Otherwise, the AIDS patients will not only lose a secured life but also cause the disease to spread unknowingly.

People are becoming aware day by day and films like 'Phir Milenge' will help them to be more aware of the disease. The director of the film really deserves acclamation for a job well done.

Wajahat
Anwar, MA in English (final year), Dhaka College



PHOTO: INTERNET

And all these messages have become so effective by dint of some powerful acting of Abhishekh Bacchan and Shilpa Shetty. Shilpa

his speech before the high court judges demanding the rights of the unfortunate people who are HIV positive. No words of praise are

the right to live in society and to work with us. We should not ostracize the persons who are HIV positive; rather we should encourage them to live the