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PHOTO: AFP

## Poor cricket

The poor performance of Bangladesh cricket team is still continuing. Their batsmen fall like nine pins, their bowlers are so generous to give away plenty of runs. Mentally they are so fragile that they surrender before the match starts. They go to the field only to participate, not to win. When their batsmen get a reasonable score, their bowlers spoil the spoilsport and vice versa.

There are no dearth of talents in this cricket loving country. Players like Ashraful, Bashar & Rafique are available here. They are class performers but their team is falling cheaply. There are some obvious reasons behind the fall of Bangladesh cricket. I am pointing out some of these reasons in this letter.

The selectors select new faces for every series or tournament. Some of them clicked, but most of them failed and were discarded for ever. There are no specific selection policies for the selectors. They gave chances to so many youngsters that they neglected the experienced. They discarded players like Akram, Aminul so shabbily that they opted to retire. But now we feel their absence in the team. Now, there is a big void in the middle order. In almost every match Bangladesh lost their top order cheaply & didn't recover from it.

It is very rare to watch that Bangladesh played two matches in a row with the same eleven. There is so much experiment in making the team, that no player is sure about his place in it. Even there is threat to the players that if they do not perform well in particular matches they would be dropped from the team. So there is an uncertainty that affect the players. And they cannot play their natural game.

The farce is that selectors sometimes discarded some players on the plea that they were not suitable for a particular version of the game. The famous incident happened to Md. Rafique - he was told by the selectors that he was not good enough for Test cricket. But when at last he got a chance in the Test squad he proved them all wrong & now he is the second quickest left arm spinner in Test cricket history to capture 50 wickets. This also happened to Javed Omar for contrasting reasons.

Some players of the team play for the national side directly from the under 17 or 19 teams. So they do not know how to cope with the pressure of international matches and fail miserably. Some of these youngsters have burnt out before blossoming.

Finally, the cricket board must be run by highly competent people. But that is clearly not the case here in Bangladesh.

So it is the failure of the cricket administration, not the cricketers alone.

Solaiman Palash, Dhaka

## Enjoy motorcycle ride

Motorcycle is a fast, economical and convenient mode of transport. It can contribute significantly towards addressing the ever-growing traffic menace in our country. Surprisingly, it has not received its due attention so far. The office goers as well as the student community can be immensely benefited by using motorcycles. The family members can derive benefit as well. However, the current market price of motorcycles is exorbitant. Measures should be taken to minimise the costs and make it affordable.

The government can encourage the use of motorcycles by providing them at subsidised rates to the genuine, authorised office-goers and students.

S Ahmed

Mymensingh Road, Dhaka

## How should we live?

We see women with dupattas and saris and sometimes even the dupattas are hanging and sweeping the dirty floor. Clothing must be practical, comfortable, and safe. Women must be sensible, and build their personality, instead of spending huge amounts of money and hoarding saris. In America and western countries, when women learn self-defence, they also have to wear clothing that is practical and safe. The poor people of Bangladesh make saris and they also work to make extra cloth like dupattas. Clothing must be practical.

We don't want to be "wrapped in tradition" or "trapped in tradition". When I was in Graduate School, I was reading a paper on Building Gender Free and Unbiased Language (for example, using both pronouns he/she). We read good books, magazines, or articles. For selective reading, we also have to set aside a certain amount of time to read. When we get the newspapers, we flip through it very quickly, and turn through the editorial and the letter page. The rest sometimes becomes information overload (saturation).

Sometimes our grandmother or someone sent us saris, and we kept sending them back. We saw another line, "wrapped in tradition". We don't want to be wrapped or trapped. There are so many advertisements that are gender biased. Some women want to hoard saris. But there are many women whose aim in life is not to hoard saris.

So our grandmothers gave us saris, we returned all of them. We don't want to fry greasy fish. We are not lured by the swish of saris. We are not wrapped or trapped in tradition. We want to be human beings like Fa-Mulan. Our first love is not a sari. We love to work, read, write, and live life. FM Chaudhury, Estelle Mahnuma, Suchitra A Sufia, M Shahi Gulshan 2, Dhaka

## The goat story

I just came from the market, buying some beef. The butcher admitted that sometimes they sell buffalo meat. I also asked him whether I could buy good quality meat. He

said I won't get good meat, because all they are selling at Gulshan 2 market is sheep. There was no way one can have meat without buying an 'asto goat'.

Can this be checked, dear government officials? If so, please be honest in dealing with these types of dishonest traders.

Ekram Kabir  
Gulshan, Dhaka

## Mahmoud Abbas Arafat's successor

Yasser Arafat had dreamt of an independent Palestinian state since he was a young man but was unable to turn his dream into reality. He was not just doing his job as president but as a Palestinian victim, struggling for freedom of his people.

Now Mahmoud Abbas may move into his position. Mr. Abbas who has strong views about the rights of Palestinians is not weaker than Yasser Arafat. He is a man known and regarded as one of the founders of the PLO. And if he becomes the leader, the eyes of Palestinians and Israelis will be on him.

Mr. Abbas is considered an exponent of a peace formula for the resolution of the Palestine-Israeli conflict. He is also respected by militant groups like Hamas, which is powerful in Gaza.

As a leader he has to negotiate with Israelis and have to take part in discussions with the Israeli government. But that is going to be a tough job.

Tahsin Hyder

Maple Leaf International School,  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

## Separation of judiciary

The issue of separation of judiciary from the executive is still awaiting execution based on the SC order issued a long time ago. The government has received extension of time several times. Now the SC has asked the government to explain by Nov. 29 why further time is necessary.

My humble suggestion to the Ministry of Law is to prepare a revised workable plan of action, may be they have one which has not been made public, with time table so that the SC can see the progress and difficulties, and can do the critical analysis to consider the government's request for further extension of time. As the position stands today, the government's credibility, efficiency and willingness are at stake.

SC guidelines are there, follow them and produce results and no more political spin. The government might have some partisan view on this issue, leave them aside and produce a neutral acceptable plan for the country. In this connection, I would like to mention that the AL government had a manifesto for freedom of press and news media like TV and Radio. They set up a High Powered Committee and said to have implemented some recommendations. But so what? There is no tangible result!

A Bangladeshi  
On e-mail

## Homage to Arafat

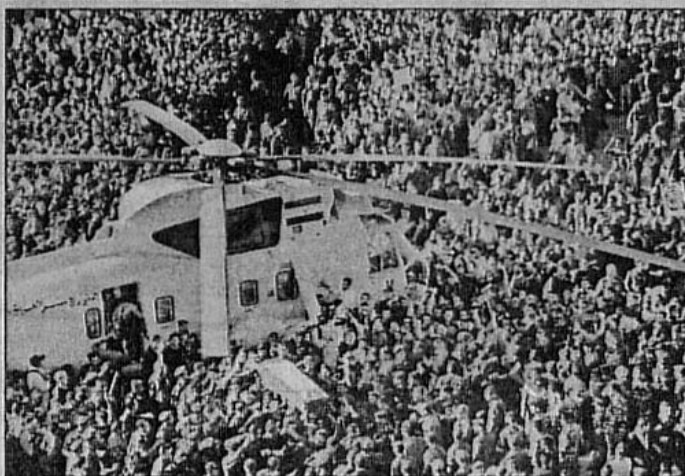
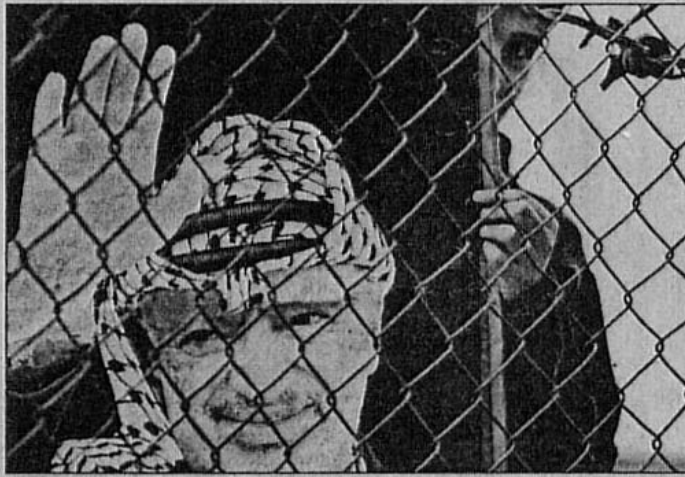


PHOTO: AFP

Mr Yasser Arafat, an uncompromising leader of Palestine, breathed his last on November 11, 2004 in a military hospital in Paris. We are very shocked at his demise. He sacrificed his life to liberate the Palestinians, but unfortunately his dream did not come true. Though at an early age he had waged a militant movement against Israel, he initiated the peace process to resolve the Middle East crisis. To recognise him as a peace icon, he was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1994.

He left no stone unturned for an independent Palestine state. Finally, he was a genuine friend of Bangladesh.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen  
Dept of English, Dhaka  
University

Even before Yasser Arafat, President of the occupied Palestine and the leader of the Palestinian people, breathed his last, the pre-planned vilification campaign by the Israelis and their western allies had commenced.

The vilification will now be taken to its height in order to weaken the hands of the new leaders of Palestine so that they can be presented with a fait

accompli road map to accept. Mr Muntaz Ahmed  
On e-mail

Abu Ammar is no more. This single sentence has devastated the hearts of millions of Palestinians and a billion Muslims all over the world. It was evident but still the pain is unbearable, the loss is inconceivable. The man whose life has been the history of Palestine...who is more important than their national anthem or the flag has finally fallen to the inevitable tragedy of life.

Yasser Arafat is not just a name, it's a legacy-- the undisputed leader of Palestinians who were destitute on their soil for more than half a century. The man taught the landless millions to dream for a motherland...sing an anthem...imagine in the colours of red, white, black and blue. The man started from nothing and devoted his entire life in this uneven struggle against Israel. Whatever shape the dream for Palestine has today, its duo to him.

When the entire Muslim world is gripped by pain and grief...the comments made by Ariel Sharon and his dearest mates George W Bush were



PHOTO: AFP

simply wanton and mindless. It appears that these two persons have no respect for the emotion of millions or billions. To the Israeli premier...Arafat is a terrorist. Does he have any idea what a terrorist means? Did he see that terrorist receiving funerals in three different continents. Did he see how his police and security forces had to sweat to contain thousands of grief stricken Palestinians in the West Bank?

Will there be a single Israeli who will be chanting to exchange his own soul for that of Ariel Sharon? Is there a single American who will tell George Bush that you are more important than our flag or national anthem? If Bush and Sharon spend the rest of their lives as president or premier, even then they will be nowhere near the grace of Arafat. My heart goes out to Arafat's family, friends, relatives and millions of inconsolable Palestinians. They have lost their father, the architect of their freedom...the lyricist of their saga of life.

If Arafat needs to come once more to turn his dream into reality...then the Almighty Allah, please take my life in

exchange of Arafat's! Md Bashar Farhad  
Mirpur, Dhaka

I'm very shocked to hear of the death of Palestinian leader Mr. Yasser Arafat.

This great man fought for the dream of the Palestinian people. "Intifada" is the dream of Palestinians! Freedom, justice and own land. That's what the Palestinians ever wanted! My heart bleeds for this group of people who have been suffering since 1948 because of the bestiality of Israeli authorities.

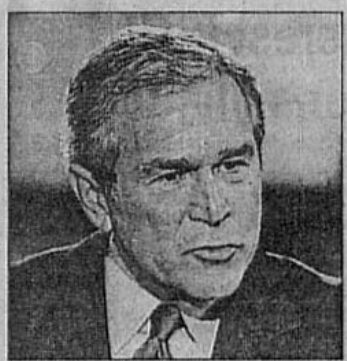
Cantara Wali Ruhi, JU

The last and only true protector of Palestine is now dead and surely this has brought relief to Israeli authorities as well as the Bush government. Yasser Arafat struggled all his life for the just rights of the Palestinians. An independent Palestine was his dream. And on the deathbed his last wish was to see his tomb in Jerusalem.

But the Israelis have refused to honour his last wishes. The international community should condemn the Israeli move.

Muftah Wali  
Department of English,  
Jahangirnagar University

# "Ohio has failed the world"



I commend the courage of Mr. Zaid Ali for his excellent article. In light of the various legislation enacted to seek out "terrorists" on the soil of the United States, such as the "Patriot Act", "Homeland Security" and "Tips", I hope and pray that Mr Ali will not end up being a victim, but rather will be afforded the freedom to express his opinion as guaranteed by the constitution of the United States.

In order to understand Mr. Ali's view point, one needs to understand the peculiarities of the US democratic system. Contrary to popular belief, the democratic system, instead of being "by the people, of the people and for the people", is more of "by the lobbies, of the lobbies and for the lobbies". To the un-initiated, a lobby is usually a person or a company (law firms in most cases) that have unobstructed access to the upper echelons of the US government. The job of a lobby is to influence the lawmaking process of the US government to enact laws in favour of the special interests being represented by the lobby. Lobbies invest heavily in presidential campaigns. Most of the funding for

advertising, travel, and budget for campaign staff comes from funding provided by the lobbies. Industrial giants such as UNOCAL, ENRON, IBM, GM and Microsoft, for example, utilise lobbies to obtain business benefits and tax breaks.

Religious and political groups also utilise lobbies to further their own agenda. Two such groups are the Evangelical Christians led by Rev Billy Graham and the Zionists. While the Zionists do not have a representative leader they are comprised of political and financially influential persons in the United States. Many of the architects and supporters of the war on Iraq are Zionists, such as Ken Adleman, Paul Wolfowitz, Daniel Pipes, and billionaire publisher Steve Forbes. The objective of the Zionists is to ensure the continuity of Israel by ensuring the uninterrupted flow of money (6 billion per year, officially) and arms to Israel, and destruction of any and all states that oppose the existence of Israel. The objective of the Evangelical Christians, on the other hand, is to destroy Islam in Jerusalem. In essence, the objectives of these two lobbies are therefore the same, while they may differ in religious ideology.

With Jerusalem surrounded and protected by Israel, the purpose of the Christian Evangelists is being served. With the continued genocide in Palestine, with most of the Arab governments reduced to proxy governments of the West, with the current war on Iraq and soon to be commenced war on Syria and Iran, the objective of both the Evangelical Christians and the

Zionists are being served. Add to that the voracious appetite of the US economy for oil. With Iran and Iraq each having as much oil as Saudi Arabia, subduing these two countries to ensure uninterrupted flow of oil is an added boon.

In order to maintain this comfortable status quo, therefore, Mr. Bush, with his aggressive stance was the candidate of choice of these two lobbies, among others. Mr Kerry on the other hand appearing subdued and eager to mediate the US out of its quagmire in Iraq and create a Palestinian State, was perceived as weak and ineffective.

Ahmed Sobhan, Akron, Ohio

The article written by Zaid Ali "Ohio has failed the world" faces remarkable sarcasm & criticism by American individuals only. They claimed that Zaid Ali's article carries only misinformation and hatred. One Mr. Bruce Irle complained, "calling Mr. Bush is a known liar is more than irritating". He claimed, "the borderline is slanderous, can Mr. Ali provide one instance where Mr. Bush has lied". Honestly these lines couldn't help me laugh. Would I call it your arrogance or ignorance that you still want one single instance to know where Mr. Bush has lied. Was the declaration of war against Iraq was not on false ground? Did he not lie in front of the media that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction? Could Mr. Bush prove his allegations to be true? You said, "A liar requires intent to mislead", do you really think that Mr. Bush has no intent to mislead the world giving false statement? Honestly, I don't think Sir, you're



just in your statement. You're analysing everything through your blinded one side view because your people are not being tortured in Abu Ghraib prison, your people are not being killed in American air strikes.

Esparza Robert wrote interestingly against Zaid Ali's, but showed the very exact intention of American people. She didn't vote for Kerry as Kerry was against war and as her words follow "How could we win a war that he is against to begin with?" I like to thank you first because you accept the truth that Americans imposed the war on Iraq whereas your so called great leader Mr. Bush said mendaciously that he is fighting for the freedom and democracy of Iraqi people (which he's never asked for).

The fiendish dictatorship of Mr. Bush has no doubts crossed the limits set by Hitler.

Farhat Naz  
Kayettuli, Dhaka

Bruce Irle of Hillsboro, after boldly defending Bush's truthfulness, tells a big lie himself. His statement about John Kerry's testimony to Congress is a lie. Kerry did not say that he was daily exposed to atrocities in Vietnam, he merely summarised the testimony of other veterans who had seen such atrocities. The testimony Kerry summarised and presented before Congress has been thoroughly checked and found credible. Who is the liar here?

Mr. Irle shows his ignorance by writing about how the Republicans are good for the economy. It seems as though his opposition to the Democrats is so great that mere facts cannot shake his beliefs. What new jobs is he talking about? And if he believes in less government, not more, then I guess he opposes the Patriot Act too.

Abdur Rahman  
New York, NY

Bruce Irle wants an example of Bush lying? Is he serious? How about "By far the vast majority of my tax cuts go to those at the bottom." Or "I barely know Ken Lay." Or when he said in the debate that he had never said Osama was not important? I could go on and on. By making such a ludicrous claim, Irle shows that he is either ignorant or blindly biased, just the point that Mr. Ali was trying to make!

It is no wonder that Bush was re-elected!

Masoud Anwar, Dhaka

I have a question for Esparza Robert. How has the Iraq war anything to do with the US national security? Does she really think that the US is safer now? I have news for her -- no one in the world has any respect for Bush or the US right now.

Zareen Ali, Dhaka

Just take a look at JDF's reply

and you will see what kind of a nation the US is. George W. Bush defeated John F. Kerry by a huge margin, not because most American voters preferred Bush's foreign policies to Kerry's or anything to that effect but because he is an avowed Christian. The very same nation goes around the world preaching its own distorted "values" of democracy, civil rights, equality, freedom of speech etc.

Quoting from Paula Bernstein Thousand Oaks, California, US, "As a person of colour in the US, he is likely to be falsely arrested and/or hassled by authorities."

What kind of a nation can have such rampant discriminatory practices? I used to associate these concepts with South Africa during the Apartheid. So much for a "great" nation, huh.

The fact is no one outside the US basically cares a lot about Ohio or any other state of the US. What bothers most of them is the length to which the US government will get involved in local affairs.

If one is to believe Esparza Robert, then "The reason Kerry lost was because he was weak on defence... he was against war." That must be a huge surprise to learn that Americans voted the one candidate they thought will be a better warmonger. Truly revealing account of the American psyche, wasn't it?

For all the Americans who remain misinformed for one reason or another, let me just ask you these: Has the number of terrorists increased or decreased after Bush started his attack on Iraq? Were there fewer or more terrorists before? Was

the world less or more peaceful before Bush attacked Iraq?

Almost the whole world supported the routing of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which anyway wasn't recognised by more than 3 countries as legitimate, yet Americans wanted not to end terrorism but to escalate it by invading a relatively peaceful Iraq. The outcome of that invasion as we all know has not yet been favourable for anybody.

Nafis Kamal, On e-mail

In Monday's New York Times, columnist Bob Herbert makes the following point:

"I think a case could be made that ignorance played at least as big a role in the election's outcome as values. A recent survey by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland found that nearly 70 percent of President Bush's supporters believe the US has come up with 'clear evidence' that Saddam Hussein was working closely with al-Qaeda. A third of the president's supporters believe weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq. And more than a third believe that a substantial majority of world opinion supported the US-led invasion.

This is scary. How do you make a rational political pitch to people who have put that part of their brain on hold? No wonder, Bush won.

Perhaps our American readers who have been so vocal in recent days would care to comment? Rezaul Khan  
New York, NY