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Set the priorities right

Haven't we had seen enough monuments and heard big talks from even bigger mouths about immortalising our great liberation war and teaching our future generation the history of the two political parties.

It's a shame to see that now the government has suddenly got Tk 55 crore when it came to building an apparently useless theme park (same goes for the previous government too) in Chittagong.

Where was this money when people were starving during the floods? Why is not this money used to improve medical facilities throughout the country?

Our leaders need to understand that building huge monuments and 'heritage parks' isn't going to solve the myriad of problems that we have in Bangladesh. No doubt the Chittagong project is the first of its kind but then why not improve the national museum and include these facilities in it? Rather than cutting down the invaluable trees, why not improve the existing amusement parks?

Is it another elaborate scheme to pump more money into someone's private account?

So please stop it and stop tarnishing the image of the country.

Tanveer Ahmed
One-mail

One too many

Hi there. Here I thought I would be working all day just before the New Year sets in a foreign country where I am so far away from my loved ones from my family. I thought I would very seriously finish up all that I have been behind in. But guess what, it didn't work that way. It's too quiet here in my office. Almost everyone is on holiday preparing with resolutions for 2005. The silence gives me creepy feelings like I can't make any noise or else the silence will hear me and might mock me for not understanding what it means. Funny right? I have been sitting at my desk doing absolutely nothing, opening Internet Explorer 5.0 and looking through the tragic events from the Tsunami and the earth-shattering quake in the Indian Ocean affecting 11 Asian countries. So many lives have perished into oblivion, children have lost their parents, fathers & mothers have lost proof of their next generation. And men have lost their loved ones as well as women. These people wait for time and news of comebacks or deaths of those missing ones. What a pain that must be! I can't begin to imagine or feel it because till now I have not lost and will not like to lose a loved one, not to another human being or Nature.

After getting off work waiting at the train station I tried to imagine what a 35 feet high wave could look like. I couldn't! I tried in all ways by remembering all the details I had read on the e-newspapers and all the pictures I had seen. It helped my imagination a little. I could see this huge dark blue monster coming to grab me and take me away from all that I know all that I have seen and all that still awaits me in the future. And you know what happened, I felt so cold so lonely so sad so out of words to what all those people might have felt when they were taken away by the BIG BLUE.

I feel so sorry. Maybe if we just asked for forgiveness to Nature for all our misdeeds for all that we have done wrong to her she would return all those children, women and men she took away, all those homes and food for living. It should work? Right? Like those times when we make a mistake or make an error with our Mom or Dad. Afterwards we would understand or they would make us understand that it was not the right thing to do. And then they would do the most generous thing forgive us.

So why can't Nature forgive us? Why not? That's not fair? So many of us mean it when we say, "We are sorry, we won't do it again". So Nature should listen to us. She should give us one more chance to fix up all our mistakes. She is our protector, we love her, we respect her, and we wake up every morning with her blessings. So why doesn't she forgive us just as our own mother would. What is the difference, it is only a mistake? Or maybe just too many to forgive.

Mahfuza
Karlsruhe, Germany

Why not Rab?

Rab is doing their job very successfully and they know how to perform their duty. Nobody needs to advise them! It's their own concern. People support Rab. And I think whoever speaks out of the human rights (?) of the inhuman terrorists, he/she must be failing to comprehend the collective good. What happened when the terrorists killed thousands of men and chopped their dead bodies? Where were the so-called human rights sellers? I agree that it would have been better if Rab could have done something to catch the real godfathers. Rab activities would have been much more credible and reliable. But for this moment we have to wait and see what happens next, we have to be patient! I hope the government will keep Rab working until the terrorists are totally eliminated from our country for the greater interest of all.

Cantara Wali Ruhl, JU

Rab

The Daily Star in its December 30 issue published a letter with the above heading. In this regard I completely disagree with the views of Mr. Imran Khan. I would



rather like to say that Rab has come as a rescuer to save people. When criminals are killing people for tolls, ransom and for many other reasons, aren't they violating human rights? The right to move freely was drastically snapped due to the unlawful activities of these criminals. In Dhaka city, I saw that when a newly married bride was going with the groom to the groom's house, one of the family members was taking out all ornaments from the bride due to the fear of these criminals. Was it not a violation of human rights of the newly wed couple? It is a dream of any woman to go to her newly married husband's house wearing a full set of ornaments and nice wedding clothes. But the law and order situation was so bad that people could not move freely.

So people support what Rab is doing to curb crime.

Khaleque Zaman
Shah Bobujan Street, Kabul, Afghanistan

Good news!

I read the article by Morshed Ali Khan, "Gulshan-Baridhara's lake's water..." ("Star City", Wednesday, December 29th 2004), with elation.

At last! I can eat fish!

The article told me that the water in this lake is now so polluted "...that marine life could not survive..."

Western influence

Western traditions and media have a direct influence on our young generation. Nowadays programmes in some television channels show pornographic images. This explains why it is not uncommon to see two people sharing a lip-lock in many English medium schools. These types of programmes inspire unruly behaviour and lead to moral degeneration in society.

Now knowing all the effects and consequences it is up to the young generation to choose what is good for them.

A worried teenager, One-mail



Thank God! I had been worried.

On the rare occasions that I sample the hedonism that is Dhaka by night, I prepare for the evening's debauchery by having a meal, and fish is probably my favourite food.

I am reluctant to eat fish in Dhaka, however, because I just don't fancy eating the flesh of something that has lived in one of the city's lakes.

Now I know it's not possible, then I intend to go out tonight and have a slap up fish meal.

Another beneficial side affect is that filling the lakes illegally, in order to construct a residential building, will now stop.

The first reason is that no one will want to live in a building founded on toxic waste and sewage, and the other is that the nasty water of the lake will dissolve the fill material faster than the lake can be filled.

I mean, would you want to fall out of a window into millions of gallons of this stuff? What happens when the lady of the house throws you out because you're late from work, or she smells whiskey on your breath, or sees lipstick, same colour as your secretary's, on your collar?

The penalty for these indiscretions is death by dissolving in Gulshan lake.

Aaaaargh!

You have been warned....

Dr Richard Murphy
Gulshan, Dhaka

Hartal

It is nice to see that the opposition parties are resorting to protests in the more civic form of "Manab Bandhan" & "Manab Prachir". Main opposition party Awami League is back in the parliament too. I felt that 'sit. We are on the way to practising sensible politics. But

we failed to make a start. We again have started "HARTAL". It's pointless to mention the demerits and criminal aspects of staging a hartal. Both major parties back HARTAL when they are in opposition, but none of them want to do anything about it when they are in power. They abuse democratic rights to deny basic rights of millions of innocent daily wage earners and citizens. It is clear that our Major Political Parties will not do anything to put an end to it.

Can we propose a referendum to BAN HARTAL? Let us propose a referendum to ban student politics too. I appeal to people of all walks to think and talk about it.

Rahim Ahmad Munshi
Anzac Parade, Kingsford, Sydney, Australia

Tigers roar at last

It was so ecstatic to see our heroes playing such a great series against the mighty Indians. The Tigers finally have given a wake up call to the other teams and silenced the critics. It was great to see a series full of positives. In all the ODI matches Bangladesh crossed the 225 mark and it was enjoyable to have our fastest bowler back to action. The youngest centurion Ashraf, surpassing the highest Test score of any Bangladeshi, was also a great sight. In the Test matches, we need our players to be trained harder. They have the

no idea about hydraulic horns and they use the horn unnecessarily. This happens in every road and residential areas in front of schools and college. We want this problem to come to an end.

I hope the authorities would take the necessary steps to stop noise pollution.

Md Sohrab
Chittagong

Blaring horns

Sound pollution can cause great harm. A man can become deaf. And loud horns greatly contribute to sound pollution. Is there a law to prevent this? If the answer is 'yes', is it ever enforced?

Jafor
IUUC

Rab

Rab is the proper team to eradicate crime. But their actions are questionable at times. Society has become very corrupt. Before Rab was introduced the top criminals were arrested but hardly punished. They always managed to get out of jail. But now it is a different story.

But it's not a solution. The crime situation will improve only if the godfathers are punished. Today if a criminal is killed, the godfathers will make another within days. So killing the criminals can offer a short term solution only.

The criminals should be kept alive so that they can divulge truths about their godfathers.

Md Ziaul Hoque
IUUC

Our business partner

At long last, Malaysia is officially recognising Bangladesh as a possible investment partner, in sharp contrast to the mere import of labour for many decades. (Some other Asian developed nations and EU members are also coming in for relocation of their sunset industries, after the Taiwan and S Korean burn-outs).

This is evident from the fact that

Kudos to Rab

Recent letters commending the effective work of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the courageous act of containing listed terrorists and notorious criminals have inspired me as a regular reader of the DS, to express my appreciation and strongly recommend them to keep up the honest work till terrorists are curbed, if not totally exterminated from the

country.

We, the peace loving citizens, are with them because unlike politicians- we suffer the most as- also unlike them, we do not foster terrorists for votes or business- while heartedly pray for their elimination.

In July 2003, so-called Kala Jahangir threatened me and I lodged a complaint with the then

RAT. I apprehended retaliation. But RAT performed an excellent job in apprehending an accomplice of so-called Kala Jahangir, who had made a call and threatened me for money. They caught him red-handed with the booty.

Like many others, I could not appreciate some opposition leaders' assertion of trial when they go to power for some custodial or the so-called 'crossfire' deaths. They could not submit any authentic list of innocent activists who died or that their party workers were never involved in terrorism. Those who died were terrorists with gruesome records and as such had all the potential and power- with the help of our politicians and godfathers and when human rights champions remain mysteriously oblivious to be free from the cage and repeat more heinous misdeeds. We certainly cannot deny that law and order till recently was hopelessly frustrating and that instead of reprimanding Rab for curtailing crime, all of us that includes the media- need to support the effective measures to punish criminals. If the present government continues to utilise Rab without political domination or influence, many people like me sincerely hope that crime will be controlled to a bearable level as it has already shown noticeable improvement. I request the government to keep up the good work, ignoring political provocation from the opposition that will conveniently oppose govt's positive efforts and so obviously reproach Rab. We should be united to defeat the enemies of peace.

Nasir Uddin Roney
Dept. Of Anthropology,
University of Chittagong

Tsunami havoc

We all are shell-shocked at the devastating Tsunami that attacked the maximum littoral areas of Asia. The Tsunami with 8.9 magnitude originated in Sumatra Island of Indonesia. The catastrophic tidal waves lashed Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives. Thousands of people have been decimated by this natural calamity. The coastal areas of these vulnerable countries have been shattered by this horrific mishap. Many tourists have been victimised by this calamity. At this crucial moment, an urgent rescue operation is the crying need. The victims need to be salvaged and rehabilitated with utmost urgency and care. The donor agencies and the developed countries should come forward to minimise the sufferings of the affected people. The UN can play a proactive role in

this regard to co-ordinate the relief works in the affected areas.

We should be more alert from now on with special preparation for risk management to combat natural calamities. I hope all the people across the globe will commiserate with the victims and help them minimise the humanitarian crisis.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen
Dept of English, DU

Help Tsunami victims

I am ashamed that Bangladesh has not yet responded fully to the Tsunami disaster. Thank God, this time it has spared us, but being a nation experiencing such disasters many times

over in our living memory, we should have been more sympathetic towards the victims.

Although we, the so-called kind hearted people, may not have financial resources to help them, has our manpower become non-existent? Have we become so dependant on Aid that we have forgotten how to give it?

Our army, navy and airforce can still play some useful role along with other rescue operators. If we were to do so, it would not cost us financially.

I pray that our government, specially the defence department wake up and do their duty to mankind. The relief materials sent so far to Sri Lanka and Maldives are not adequate.

We must respond vigorously.
Arsh Ali, One-mail



Happy New Year

There are times when we like to share our happiness with others, there are times when we remember our near and dear ones, when we feel like to wish them once in a while if not always, no matter how far we are, no matter how busy we are....yes, there are moments when we recall our past and make our house of thoughts full of exuberance. Such a thought is the onset of a new day...a new start...a brand new day!!!

A very Happy New Year to all of you.

Rizwan H Jabbar, One-mail

In some parts of the world, people have finished celebrating the New Year, while in other parts, people are looking forward to celebrations. For some people, whether the New Year should be celebrated is a question that is posing a moral dilemma. The reason is not difficult to guess, given the numbers of problems people have to cope with lately: terrorism, war, inflation, and Tsunami, the most catastrophic of all, unfortunately, at the end of the year. Yet life moves on. Life departs. Life arrives. That's where we are obliged not to be just self-centred, but to enjoy the life while making sure-- at least "one life has breathed easier because you have lived", to put it in the words of Emer-

son.

The year 2005 will bring an unprecedented change in our horizon. The Daily Star will broaden its horizon by criticising everything that impinges on civil liberty, freedom of press, secularism, social justice and a whole list of issues that have a lot to do with personal freedom and human development all across the globe.

Last but not the least, we wish a very happy 2005!

Gopal Sengupta & Shyamali Sengupta
Montreal, Quebec, CANADA

We exchange greetings for the New Year 2005. The Almighty created 18,000 Makhluks and Insan (human being) is the greatest of all His creations. It has been a commendable decision to close down the bars across the country on the eve of the New Year. The consequence of alcohol intake has been devastating for centuries in our country.

The New Year 2005 should start with good work! We all should refrain from bad things like usury, bribery, gambling etc.

Golam Ashraf
DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka

People do not support the media or so-called champions of human rights to foment anarchy and divisiveness. We had enough of it already! We whole-heartedly wish our media to help us unite. Our politics has become a contributor to the disintegration of conviction and trust without which government or any administration fail to perform or operate effectively. And we have already set a flagrant paradigm to the rest of the world as a "non-functional" state. We have also failed to shun politics of "mutually agreed and assured destruction". Our politicians have not learnt to unite us for betterment of the nation. They have issues for their personal goals and greed for power. I am convinced that Rab will achieve the desired goal if they continue their endeavoured without paying heed to some political comments or to those so-called protectors of human rights and indirect saviours of criminals or terrorists. Rab must keep in mind that if terrorists or criminals are faced with the prospect of total extermination, they will think twice before committing such acts!

Crime in Bangladesh is a very complex problem; there is no simple or pleasing solution to it. I am appreciative and hopeful of Rab's success and extend kudos to them for their bravery and the task of caging some notorious criminals dead or alive! Keep it up!!

Tajul Islam
Gulshan, Dhaka

The outcry against Fallujah blood-bath has reverberated far beyond Iraq's borders. Innocent Iraqis are being blown out indiscriminately which is a common phenomenon these days. At the same time, optimism envisioned that a more experienced US president would justify himself to the nations in his second term is drifting away.

Nasir Uddin Roney
Dept. Of Anthropology,
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Shattered hopes

