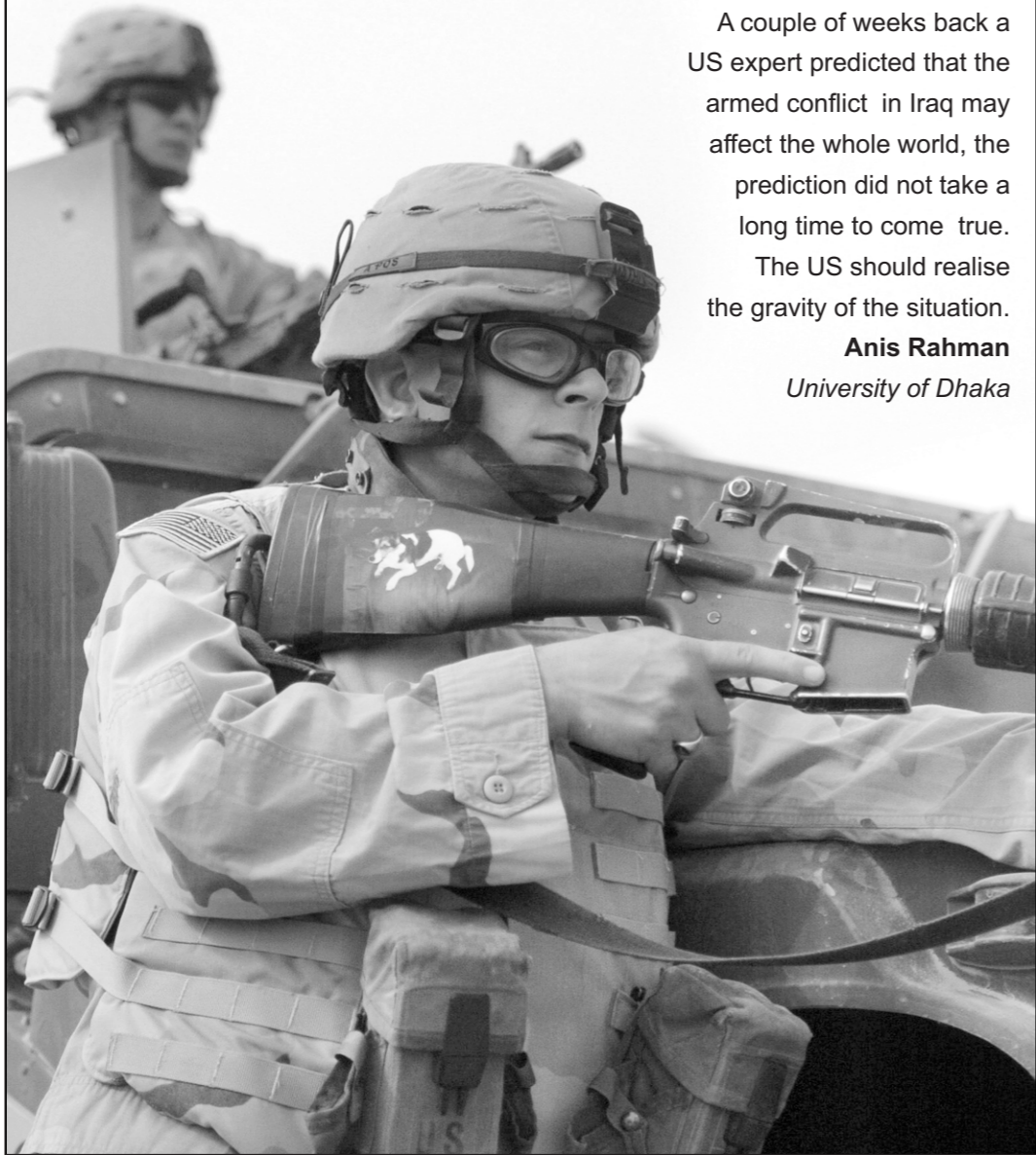


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Iraq situation



A couple of weeks back a US expert predicted that the armed conflict in Iraq may affect the whole world, the prediction did not take a long time to come true. The US should realise the gravity of the situation.

Anis Rahman
University of Dhaka

Social tension

Being a common citizen, I never thought I had any duty towards my country or society and have kept myself busy only with my family, friends and relatives. But I find myself in a suffocating situation as social tension is increasing day by day. But unlike politicians most of the people of our country are now struggling to survive in a hostile setting. What we found all around us is corruption and violence. This alarming situation of our country forces me to conclude that we must stop it for our own sake as day by day it's going from bad to worse. We, the general people, must come forward to check the rot.

Afroza Begum Rosy
New DOHS, Dhaka

Changing western attitude

I have recently been to the UK and had the opportunity to meet some young intellectuals and have had discussions on the conflicts and difficult times that our societies are going through, ranging from the greatest falsehood of Iraq war, illegal detention of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay for years without trial, abuse of fundamental human rights and not to mention the acts of our own Rab.

I have always been an admirer of the British judiciary and the traditions set by great jurists like Lord Denning et al which reads like masterpieces of philosophy. We were unanimous in our view that the West, particularly the UK and the US, have regard for the rights of their own citizens but history and current global events highlight their gross disregard for the same when it concerns citizens of other countries. The naked aggression on falsehood of WMD and violation of human rights by the US have made it very clear to an inquiring mind what would happen to their own people if the factors in developing world were put to test in their own countries as one prophetically pointed out that the UK was never put to test. I am horrified to realise how fragile all those terms like human rights and rules of law etc are as eyewitness accounts confirmed how the law enforcers shot dead an unarmed man in cold blood in a London tube, his crimes- first, Asian looking and second, a suspect for London blasts. We now know that it was a terrible mistake and the deceased was a Brazilian, nothing to do with bombing. So, every person with Asian look and with a baggage or in heavy clothing could be the next victim of "shoot to kill" policy.

Khandaker R Zaman
On e-mail

Indigenous people

Under ritualistic regularity, this year too we have observed the international indigenous day with a lip-service to the pledge of materialising all fundamental rights of these people.

In the last two years, we have noticed, some influential quarters have tried to encroach upon their lands and homesteads; the state has evicted them from their places, and to crown it all, it has failed to mete out justice. It could be because of our attitude towards these people. We are not capable of placing the issue in right perspective.

Sulav Chowdhury
London, England

London blasts

The world leaders create chaos to implement their evil designs. They keep themselves away from the reach of common people who are not even aware of the evil designs. But they lose their lives for nothing. We mourn the deaths of the brothers and sisters in Britain who lost their lives and also pray for those fighting for their lives in hospitals. We condemn this kind of heinous attacks on the people who are not even indirectly responsible for the Iraq War. It might be that many of them demonstrated against the Bush-Blair decision to send soldiers to Iraq and chanted slogans for establishing peace in the world. The victims were heading for office as they do normally every day. Suddenly the blasts claimed their valuable lives. Who are responsible

for this? Why these incidents are happening in different parts of the world? We must find out answers to these questions.

The London police chief said that they had not received any warning about the blasts. "We have been in a state of alert. Of course if there had been any kind of specific warnings we would have dealt with it." He further said, "The blasts came completely out of the blue."

So the situation is tricky. Peace loving people all over the world must work together to counter these threats.

Md. Masum Billah
PACE-BRAC, Dhaka

Another devastation took place and it was feared that Muslims would be held responsible for the carnage and it came true. No doubt, the blasts will add to the sufferings and harassment of the Muslims in the western world. The culprits should know that killing innocent people is surely not the solution to any problem. And Mr. Blair should realise after setting others' property on fire that one can't remain safe anyway.

From Bangladesh's perspective, we must have our diplomacy on the right track. The Bangladesh embassy in the UK must follow the situation carefully. They can talk to the UK government to protect the Bangladeshis from becoming victims of anti-Muslim activities. The London carnage may bring another change round the globe like what happened after 9/11. It could also affect Bangladesh. As many Bangladeshis are working there as immigrants, they could be victimised. These immigrants hugely contribute to our national economy. To save the Bangladeshis from assaults, the Bangladesh government must do its bit.

Touhid Muntasir
Jahangirnagar University

Ban on rickshaw

World Bank's role under the Dhaka

AL politics

The Awami League, the main opposition party of Bangladesh, has announced a package of reform proposals for our caretaker government and electoral systems. The idea of the opposition party is really innovative and laudable. But their approach is not at all clear to me. Apparently, they seem to be very serious about all these reforms. But they seem to have a blueprint to destabilise the government on the pretext of the reform proposals. They did not present their proposals to the government formally. And they are reluctant to go to the parliament to discuss the matter. They do not believe in the utility and importance of the parliament. Even they shrugged off the CEC's invitation to discuss the voter list issue.

But it is imperative for them to contact the government politically, if they really want to reform the caretaker government and electoral systems of our country. If they realise the necessity of reforms, they should have voiced the proposals earlier, not at the penultimate hour of the BNP tenure. To ensure free and fair national election, the existing electoral system, not the caretaker government system, needs to be



amended massively. The AL itself introduced it. So why do they want to change it?

Molla Mohammad Shaheen
Dept of English, DU

SSC results

The letter of Nusrat Rashida titled "SSC results" published in The Daily Star (August 17) has drawn my attention. I agree with the first portion of her letter. In fact, the writer has considered the matter from one side.

She has said that credit goes to the institutions like Viqarunnessa and Ideal as they have the highest number of GPA-5 scorers. But please look at the number of their examinees. The number of examinees in many schools is not equal to the GPA-5 scorers of those institutions.

Golam Rosul Maruf
Khilgoan, Dhaka

DMCH

How many public Medical College Hospitals run a Neurological Department; either for Education or for Service provisions? So, the article (25-07-05) attracted my attention! Among 13 Public Medical Colleges (PMC), the specific department may be present in 3 or 4 PMCs!

Therefore, the number of doctors & accessory staff and the scope for development of expertise in the subject are limited.

The information explains the reason behind the high number of deaths in the neurological department of the DMCH.

Dr. Lailun Nahar
On e-mail

Growing divide

What I observe is a gradual divide growing between Islam and everybody else due to the attacks of radical Islamic groups on people all around the world, and with little or no condemnation of those attacks by so-called moderate Muslims. The radicals, the terrorists, act as if they are speaking for ALL Muslims. When past and potential victims of these terrorist acts hear statements indicating that it is a war to the death against all non-believers, and when they do not hear anything contrary to that opinion from the rest of the Islamic community (or when the comments make excuses for the terrorists, as in Nur Jahan's letter "Injustice begets violence" August

3) what are they to believe? I do not want to see a world-wide campaign to stamp out Islam, and the surest way to prevent such a tragedy is for the normal Islamic community to take an active part in wiping out the radical Islamic terrorists.

Nur Jahan's letter of 3 August talks about the thousands of deaths caused by George Bush and his invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, but makes no mention of the fact that a large number of those deaths were the result of the Taliban fighters and Iraqi soldiers hiding among civilians and then firing upon the coalition troops. Also, how many Afghans were killed outright by the Taliban members? How many tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens were killed and tortured by Sadaam Hussein and his men? How many Afghans and Iraqis are still being killed by the remnants of the Taliban and by insurgents in Iraq in an attempt to destroy the new governments in the countries? If the efforts of the United States and allied forces are so hated and despised by the average citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq, if these people are so anxious to return to the days of the Taliban and of Sadaam, how can you explain the tremendous turnout for the open elections that have taken place in both countries? How can you explain the thousands of Iraqis who have signed up to join the military or police forces, at the risk of their lives, to take part in ridding their country of the insurgents? T. M. Grafius Sr, US

Jhintu story

I read with interest your recent reports on Jhintu. I wonder why someone in Bangladesh does not contact the Swedish government and report about him. His record as an expatriate Bangladeshi in Stockholm is also alleged to be murky.

MH, On e-mail

Law enforcers, or breakers?

My confidence in the law enforcers has been shaken beyond measure. The law enforcers of this country have changed the meaning of law

enforcement. With the recent criminal activities of corrupt police officers coming into light, I bet even the professional criminals are amazed.

Recently, our car was hit by another private car, which was apparently being illegally used for giving driving lessons. Our car was towed to the Ramna police station. On arriving to the police station and seeing the very badly damaged state of our car we were informed by SI (sub inspector) Mr. X that they have found the other car that had rammed ours and that it was in their custody. To our bad luck, which I later realised, the car was owned by a VIP of a bank who incidentally was a close relative of a high official in the police department. Finally, after the matter was settled it was time for us to take our car so that we could give it for repair as early as possible. At first the SI was hesitant to release our car but finally after emptying our pockets of Tk 2000 he gave his permission. Then another problem we faced that as our car wheels were bent sideways it couldn't be dragged so we needed a tower, which could lift our car and tow it. After several failed searches for a towing machine we asked the SI to help us obtain a government owned machine. He took another Tk 2000 from us and said that the car would be delivered the next day to the given address.

Next day came and went there was no news of our car being delivered so I headed towards the police station again and met the SI who said that the tower would arrive any moment and take our car and then he left. After the tower arrived the driver said he can't take the car, as he did not receive any money from the SI, I was flabbergasted! At the end I had to pay the driver another 1,500 before he agreed to tow the car.

The law enforcers are looting so much that there is nothing for the actual looters to loot! We only wanted to get the car out of the police station (no laws broken) and had to spend Tk 5,500. We had no choices left.

Who will look into such ruthless exploitation of vulnerable citizens by the police?

A citizen, On e-mail

Safe food drive

People welcome the drive against food adulteration. Apparently it seems that the magistrates are responsible for deciding which edible goods are adulterated and which are not! But this practice is wrong; it creates a sense of insecurity even among the honest business men. The test should be conducted in labs before labelling any food as adulterated because wrong accusations will not only cause a huge loss in the short term but also destroy the goodwill of the company concerned. Many

people don't go to restaurants but they eat foods sold by hawkers or makeshift shops.

School children buying foods from hawkers is a common sight. Why isn't the government taking action against these street hawkers? Why do we find magistrates only in food outlets where they can charge huge fines?

Mohammad Tareque
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

If food turns out to be life threatening, then we have everything to be

worried about. Since the independence of this country, there has been no effective anti-adulteration drive to probe deep into the standard of various foods served in the hotels and restaurants, and sold in the markets. Often there is no expiry date or production date written on the packets of foods that are openly sold in the markets. The customers usually do not notice it most of the time and become victims of deception. Besides, a large part of our population is still illiterate and

do not care about it. Then the picture of the hotels and restaurants and fast food shops, which have recently been brought to light with the help of mobile courts, has panicked us. Almost all the restaurants along with the famous ones serve stale and rotten foods to the customers who eat these foods in good faith. What is more important is that they use toxic and deadly chemicals in foods and prepare them in an unhygienic environment.

Thus we are being exposed to

many lethal and incurable diseases like nervous breakdown, cancer etc.

Ramprashad Banik,
Jahangirnagar University

It may sound quite strange to many that mothers also serve adulterated foods to their beloved ones. But how? Well, mothers may prepare food items in their clean and hygienic kitchen, but what about the ingredients with which they prepare their so-called home-made 'pure and fresh'

foods. These everyday ingredients, such as edible oil, flour, milk powder, condensed milk, salt, tea, noodles etc., mothers can't produce in their houses and have to buy these ingredients from markets and then comes the question whether they are pure or not. So we may be the victims of food adulteration even in our houses. It will be useless to raid only in restaurants and shops as they have to use sub-standard raw materials to produce their items since there is no standard

raw materials in the markets. One may argue that there are both 'number 1 (pure)' and 'number 2 (impure)' raw materials available in markets but the food producers prefer 'number 2' to profit more.

But the fact is that there is no 'number 1 (pure)' item in the market at all as we common people think. This idea has been invented only to cheat the consumers.

J Swift
Chittagong