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# Evacuation of Gaza

In international politics the mostly spoken topic is now the evacuation of the Jews settlers from the Palestinian land Gaza. From the video clippings of news channels we have found that the Israeli

police and armed forces had to face a strong protest from the fundamentalist Jews while driving them out of their settlements and most of the protesters were young who were perhaps born in

this land and it is really hard for anyone to leave their birth place. The Israeli government is now reallocating them in other parts of the country with due compensations. We have seen in the TV

that the Israeli forces pulled out the protesters manually not using any weapon or even stick.

Now I think it's high time for the Jews to feel the heartache of the Palestinians who for the

last couple of decades have been oppressed by the Israeli army in their own land and they have killed thousands of Palestinians.

Kamrul Hasan  
BUET



# Fundamentalism

Bangladesh is now on the verge of being a country that will be identified with Islamic fundamentalism and militancy. The recent underground activities of the Islamic (!) militants reminded us of what happened years back in Algeria and what is happening right now in Pakistan. It is no wonder that our law enforcing agencies couldn't get an inkling of the recent series of bomb blasts throughout the country, as they constantly denied the presence of such groups in Bangladesh. But when it really came into daylight, it's too late to capture the masterminds behind these evil activities in the name of Islam. The ruling party's role is even more frustrating and worrying. Two of its leaders are known to be involved in patronising the so-called



PHOTO: AFP

Islamic groups. At times the ruling BNP's allies and the top government officials tried to give an impression that there was no such insurgency in this country and Bangla Bhai simply didn't

exist. Probably they thought that they could fool the whole nation, but could they? Razib Rahman  
Gulshan, Dhaka

## Austerity measures

The government is contemplating some measures of austerity to be maintained by its officials as well as the countrymen. But at the same time the govt. should downsize its huge cabinet. A country like ours cannot afford such a huge cabinet of ministers, state ministers & deputy ministers. To save govt expenditure as well as fuel consumption abolishing the post of deputy minister could at least be considered.

In view of the present economic situation of our country, it is high time to get rid of all extravagant events. The whole nation will applaud the alliance govt if they themselves maintain austerity, and downsizing the cabinet could be the first step towards attaining that goal. H Muht  
Chittagong

## Two days weekend

We are nonplused but we have the crystal clear opinion that for a poor, underdeveloped and over populated country like ours which is beset with various natural calamities round the year, torn by political differences and unrest, strikes and hartals and law and order collapse, observance of consecutive two days of weekend on Friday and Saturday is detrimental to the interest of our people, economy, finance and administration of the country and also to international relations, trade

go for the two-day weekend.

There is no instruction, rule or regulation in Islam that offices should remain closed on Friday and Saturday. Furthermore, there is no instruction, rule or regulation that Muslims should not work on Friday. OH Kabir  
Dhaka

Champions in corruption for the last three years, politicisation of the administration, deterioration of law and order, successive series of blasts, and, above all, the worst inflation have put the country in a difficult situation. Now the government has declared two days weekend, which makes no sense. The outside world, however, has holiday on Sundays, we have on Fridays and Saturdays that means our transactions with them will remain suspended for three days, which will be a great disadvantage for us. Md Kabir Hossain  
Basabo, Dhaka

We are now fed up with traffic jams in almost all the streets of Dhaka City. People are not only late in reaching their destinations but face physical torture in the jam due to the hot weather. Since we are unable to widen the roads or reduce the number of growing vehicles, we must find out some other solution to reduce this problem, if not eliminate it totally. I would like to make the following suggestions:

- All govt offices should function from 0900-1600 hours.
- All corporate and private offices should function from 1100-1800 hours.
- Schools & other educational institutions should operate from 0800-0200.
- There should be two days of weekend for government/business people on Saturday & Sunday and another two days for students on Thursday & Friday.
- All shopping centres and shops except restaurants and pharmacies should be closed at eight in the evening.

Some of the advantages of the above proposals would be:

- The city will get rid of serious traffic jams.
- Electricity load will be equally distributed.
- Housewives will not feel lonely because during four days of the week, they will get company of their near & dear ones.
- Due to Saturday/Sunday weekend, international business will not be affected.
- The govt. expenses on utility services as well as transport will be greatly reduced.

Mohammed Alauddin  
Green Road, Dhaka

A two-day weekend was a long felt demand. It has now been fulfilled but in a wrong way. The decision of having Friday-Saturday weekend has ignored the business community and international relations and trade. We have international relations and trade with many countries of the world where Saturday-Sunday is observed as weekend. Consequently upon the recent decision of Friday-Saturday weekend our trade relations and diplomatic contact with other countries will definitely suffer. Our trading partners will suffer and will remain out of contact for three days. Only for Friday we are going to suffer for three days in this global market system. The Jumma prayer and lunch shouldn't take more than an hour. So what is the point of losing a whole day? S.M. Matfir Rahman  
Mirpur, Dhaka

and commerce.

The argument by some persons that the international price hike of oil has compelled our government to introduce two days of weekend with a view to cutting and controlling the use of fuel in government and private transports is not valid. As a matter of fact, more and more people, especially the government servants, will use transports and fuel to go to their hometowns and villages and also to go to distant places on pleasure trips, picnic and holidaying during the two days of weekend. Thus three working days will be lost.

We fail to understand what wisdom prompted the government to

television or give lectures in various universities and call for reforming Islam. They take certain verses from the Holy Koran out of context and claim that these incite hatred and so they should be reformed (read deleted or changed). We know why these people do this. Islam bashing, especially when a Muslim, or who repeatedly claims to be a Muslim, is doing this is the shortest route to international stardom and hence the easiest way to make money.

The problem is not the need for introducing anything new or bending the existing rules, but better understanding and practising of the existing ones. Azad Miah  
Oldham, UK

## New education system

I was reading the letter on the new education system, published on Sept 16. At the moment I do not have any knowledge of the new system.

In today's hyper competitive world generalists have the least scopes. It is the specialists who are in demand. I myself am a MBA. Much depends on the field one is working and the place one is in. In the UK, for example, if one doesn't have a professional qualification one doesn't actually have much of a chance higher in the ladder. Unlike US the employers in the UK don't actually demand so much of MBAs. For example, almost all graduate recruits in Finance have to pursue CMA qualification. It could be also ACCA as well or CA, especially the graduate recruits of audit firms. Again, some of the MBA programmes are specialised programmes and others are general programmes. Abdullah al Mahmud, UK

## Identity crisis

We Bangladeshis seem to be suffering from an identity crisis that leads us to a state where we get so confused that we fail to make up our mind as to the sensibilities in relation to our national interest. Sycophancy is in our blood that has not gone away despite our long history of struggle and independence. Our intellectual crisis is so acute that we treat sycophancy as intellectuality and wisdom as stupidity. As such, we have a breed of intellectuals who are totally isolated from the masses. Nowadays, we find legal experts

## PRICE HIKE & Ramadan



PHOTO: AFP

Though the month of fasting is thought provoking with some ideas of purity, generosity and self-sacrifice, but the real picture of a country like Bangladesh is totally different. It becomes a course to the people of Bangladesh for increasing price of daily necessities where most of the people are living under poverty line. The strange thing is that this picture becomes clear every year but the steps, which are taken by the govt, are not adequate enough to change the situation. Mars, DU

are also filling in their intellectual quota in times of disputes while national interest is at stake. I do not have anything personal against them but it saddens me when I watch on TV that some of them are actually ignorant of the issues that they pretend to have expertise on.

For example, our higher courts exercise a far superior independence and wisdom in public interest litigations than what one should care to see in the US.

The High Court in Bangladesh has in recent times given two landmark verdicts on issues of military

rule and Niko exploration in Bangladesh - both reflect independence and wisdom of the court as well as the courage of the justices concerned. There is no international law or convention or rule of arbitration that encourages or supports any breach of law by any multinational organisation of a country in which it operates. Khandaker RZaman  
One-mail

## "Karnaphulir Kanna"

Why has the government banned the documentary film "Karnaphulir Kanna"? That is a relevant question. The film depicts the picture of the life of the people living in the CHI. Can we really suppress the truths that are already well known? The government should ask itself how we are going to be benefited by banning the film. Pavel Chakma  
Rajshahi University, Rajshahi

## Use of a passport

The holder of an expired passport cannot travel; but the information about the holder is still valid. I went to an NC bank to open a new account, and submitted my expired passport as identification paper. It was not accepted, as the validity of the passport had expired. But the information in the passport had not expired. An official clarification is solicited on this point. The passport was not renewed as it was not necessary to travel (in old age). Similarly, an educational certificate issued by an institution or university does not expire; it is permanent.

The bank also imposed an impractical condition the application had to be vetted by a holder of an account in the bank. I told the officer that I did not know anyone, and I was not expected to go about and ask strangers whether he had an account with the bank. I went to a foreign bank and was able to open an account on the spot.

Bureaucratic practices have to be updated and simplified. A citizen  
Dhaka

## Katrina victims

I am shocked to read how the round the clock misery, hunger stricken screaming children and adults, dead bodies floating in clear view are some of the issues residents of Louisiana are facing today. We face something similar to this almost every year. My sympathies go out to them seriously, my sympathy does go out to the sufferers.

But do you know what is surprising me the most? The United States of America - the land of plenty, the most sought after country in the world, the centre of democracy, the CIVILISED: during one of their worst moments in recent times is facing rape? Vandalism? Armed mugging? This unbelievable situation even led to the Governor, Babineaux Blanco, ordering a "shoot to kill" status to the police and other law enforcing authorities. Wow! I can't imagine how people from such a civilised country can resort to such activities.

Bangladesh has already pledged US\$1 million. Since they have the shoot to kill order, should we offer them the services of our elite force Rab? John  
One-mail

## Bangladeshi maidservants

I was sick to my stomach after reading your report on the rape of our Bangladeshi women in Saudi Arabia.

How long are we going to tolerate the abuse of our women and that too in the holiest land for Muslims, Saudi Arabia? Why is it that the Saudis have not done anything about this matter? They repress

women in all levels of society and they turn a blind eye when women, and that too Muslim women, are being abused and raped by their so-called "Muslim" employers? The Bangladesh government should ask for a public apology and monetary compensation for these women. Just because the women were poor no one is taking this matter seriously. If this had happened in the western world, there would have been immediate justice and compensation for the victims. This shows how much the Saudi government cares for the Bangladeshi Muslims' sentiment. It's time we stood up to the Saudis who treat the Bangladeshi workers, especially working in low paid jobs, as second class citizens and abuse them on a regular basis.

We want justice for these women and your newspaper should highlight their plight as much as possible. Mehbooba Khan  
New York, USA

## "Tritiomatra"

I was watching the TV Program "Tritiomatra" a few days back and observed

Mr. Zinnah (MP) of the BNP proudly stating that his government had decided to send domestic work-

ers to Saudi Arabia, while Mr. Zillur Rahman mentioned about the misfortune of the domestic workers abroad.

The State Minister of Home Affairs also spoke to the reporters the other day mentioning that the government would be sending some female Ansars to Saudi Arabia and accordingly they were being trained on operating washing machine and they were being taught Arabic language and culture. I am paraphrasing below a report published in the August 2005 issue of the monthly Emirates Women.

According to ILO 19,000 (nineteen thousand) domestic workers fled away from their employers' house in the year 2000 in Saudi Arabia being tortured by either the employers or by their family members in different manners. Most of those were from Indonesia. The Indonesian government has stopped domestic workers' recruitment from the KSA. Last year, the Indonesian consulate handled 800 cases in UAE of the dispute over the maltreatment the domestic workers received from the employers or their family members.

The government should think twice before sending female workers abroad. A.S.M. Saiful Islam  
Dubai, UAE

# Gas pipeline issue

The Indian Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar visited Bangladesh on September 5 last. The main purpose of his visit was to discuss the issue of gas pipeline from Myanmar to India through Bangladesh.

After the meeting with Bangladesh's Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman, Mr. Aiyar said that the initial agreement came at a meeting and "specific proposals have been drafted which will be vetted by the competent authorities from both sides, before a MoU on the pipeline is signed".

But his Bangladeshi counter-part was found not so much optimistic about signing a MoU very soon. Bangladesh urges India to provide facilities for taking electricity from Nepal and to remove barriers in our trade with Nepal and Bhutan using Indian territory. Bangladesh also wants India to lessen the trade gap between the two countries by taking some pragmatic measures that India can afford.

I think the issue of Bangladesh-India bilateral trade gap is of a different kind. If we have something valuable to sell, India will buy that. Bangladesh should not raise that question while talking on matters of a very different nature like providing gas pipeline facility.

But the main gas sale and purchase will be between India and Myanmar. So what is Bangladesh's benefit in providing the gas pipeline facility?

M A S Molla, Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

# Punish the players!

The Bangladesh cricket team lost to Sri Lanka in almost two days in the first Test. It seems usual for the team to lose by a innings and within three or four days. The players also seem to enjoy this as it gives them the opportunity to visit tourist spots and write for papers back home in the remaining one or two days of a Test match.

Why should not they be punished? In fact, they are

never punished for such disgraceful defeats.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is giving the contracted players monthly salary. In addition, they get match fees for participating in matches irrespective of winning or losing a match.

Moreover, they are flooded with awards, cash and others, whenever the team wins a match after losing 30 to 40 matches shamelessly.

Players' earning from advertisement and writing for papers is not meagre either. In fact, our national team players are among the highest money earners in the country. They get all these by disgracing the country's image abroad. They also make room for people like Warrie to make derogatory remarks against our cricket.

I do not want to sound like a cynic. I also feel proud and happy whenever our team does well and brings honour to the country. Like the players are rewarded when they win a match, I think they should also be punished whenever they lose a match without a fight. BCB should make a provision that in case the team loses in less than four days in a Test match, 50% of their match fees would be deducted. Like the system of reward, a system of punishment should be in place. Mohibul  
Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

## Rethinking on Islam

Shafi Ahmed (Letter, 13 Sept) got it spot on when he said, "What we need is to re-appraise and re-emphasise the fundamental purpose of Islam". There are a lot of so-called Muslim intellectuals (darlings of the West) that would come on