



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.

# Police and public trust

The recent series of scandals involving junior police officers cause concern to the law abiding citizens of the country. But police will never regain the trust they lost as a result of the scandals, unless they are determined to make a fresh start.

The news of alleged crimes of embezzlement, extortion, highjacking, rape, attempt to murder etc are not merely irregularities, but incident that greatly disturb people. Their arrest came

as no surprise as it was only natural for police authority to bring them to task to prevent an erosion of professional ethics. The police officers above the accused persons should be reprimanded for inadequate supervision of subordinates. The police authorities must be held responsible for the failure to address the incidents which are significant as they will undermine the very basis of police discipline. Administrative officials with

responsibilities are accountable for the action of their subordinates. It makes no sense for them to try to evade responsibilities and accountability. People would like to see measures adopted to ensure that discipline and order are restored in the police department. **GMF Abdur Rob** Cantonment Residential Area, Dhaka Cantt. Dhaka



## Bill Gates

We all have seen the picture, Bill Gates smiling with the backdrop of mildew infected wall in the house of a Bangladeshi woman of very modest means. If we look closely we will see that there was no pretension in that smile. It was the smile of contentment, which stemmed from this wonderful satisfaction of giving to others selflessly.

Bill gates is not unique in this regard in America but this giving away of money by the super rich people is a uniquely American thing. One of the richest people in America was reported to have said that 'dying rich is a disgrace'. Rich people in other countries of the world usually do not do that.

This is the one practice of the Americans we can and should learn to copy and not feel guilty about it. No camera will follow us and it will not make any headline in the newspaper but we will be able to smile like Bill Gates. We can go to a far away corner of Bangladesh and take pictures with many others who will be happy to smile with us for as little as food for couple of days or means of education for a year or so. Those of us who are already doing this, keep smiling, you are already Bill Gates, just nobody knows about it. **Islam, US**

## Not 'Alems' but 'Ulama'

Nowadays I see people are using the word "Alems" to describe the plural of the word "Alem" Actually in Arabic language it does not work like in English where you add "s" or "es" to make plural.

In Arabic it is completely a new word. So in the case of "Alem", the plural is "Ulama". **Tariq M. Abd'alah** Irvine, US

## Question leakage of 27th BCS

The present government did the right thing by cracking down on copying in public examinations. It's not evident to me how this menace got entrenched in our education system. But what I learnt from my superiors is that copying in exam was unthinkable during British and Pak regime in our country and the practice ushered in soon after the independence. A spate of pass-percentage was registered in the SSC exams in 1972 amid jubilation of liberty under the loose machinery of the then nascent govt. Since then copying in exam has been a normal phenomenon. The government certainly deserves credit for eliminating it to a great extent. But what's on the flip side? We see a new menace looming large in holding of the BCS exams where leakage of the questions is alarmingly on the rise. Like the previous years, it's another blow to all the scrupulous examinees who appeared in the 27th BCS preliminary test, held recently. The government should handle the matter efficiently to save the bureaucracy from what looks like certain ruination. **Dr. Md. Zahid Hussain** Dept. of Urology, BSMMU, Dhaka

## Is hartal going to help?

The country observed another day of hartal. This time it was called by the lawyers in protest of the suicide bomb attacks in Gazipur and Chittagong. I completely understand the insecurity the lawyers are facing after the death of two judges and two lawyers. However, I do not see how the dawn-to-dusk hartal is going to help improve their security. One might argue that this would put pressure on the government to secure the court premises.

The reality is these terrorists are not killing anyone in particular. They started with the judges and lawyers. Let us assume that the government secured the court premises and gave adequate security for the lawyers. What are the terrorists going to do? Will they stop? No. They will start with new targets. They won't hesitate to kill even children. They don't care if it is lawyer, judge, man, woman or children they are killing. They are the enemy of humanity - enemy of you, me and all those who support democracy. Considering the police/people ratio in Bangladesh and the resource the police have, no government in Bangladesh will be able to secure our life from these derailed suicide bombers unless we general people help the government. How can we help?

We can keep an eye on our surroundings. In Bangladesh, we maintain good relationship with our neighbours. If we see someone around who doesn't seem familiar, we may try to know his whereabouts. At the least we can inform the police. These days cell-phones are everywhere. Any suspicious activity could be easily reported to police. In the countries like the US it is a common practice to report suspicious activities to police. I admire those general public who caught the bombers in Chittagong and Chandpur. If we are more vigilant and keep a close watch on our surroundings, we will be able to resist/eradicate this ill power. A hartal or a boycott can only halt our resistance. **Abdus S. Wahed, Ph.D.** University of Pittsburgh

**Haripur fatwa** It is good to hear that the so-called fatwa in Haripur has been strongly resisted by common people. However, I have some points to make.

The resistance to this fatwa did not come from the intention to protect women's rights. Rather, it was intended to preserve the shop owners' rights. Since it is ultimately some men who will end up losers, they are trying to resist the fatwa. We never saw such resistance when a raped female child got the verdict of lashing! **Fahmida** On e-mail

**BTV autonomy** Recently BBC Bangla London broadcast a lively, lucid and informative programme on corruption in Bangladesh. Those who have listened the programme enjoyed and liked it. We wonder why such programme

is not arranged and broadcast, telecast by our radio Bangladesh Betar or BTV?

Is it because our radio and television are not free from control of our government? In this connection we would also like to mention here that we are surprised and shocked that when the BNP is in power our radio and television hardly broadcast/telecast any news or programme on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and when Awami League is in power our radio and television hardly broadcast/telecast any news or programme on Shahid Ziaur Rahman.

We demand of our government no matter whether BNP or Awami League or any other party is in power to grant autonomy to our radio and television in the interest of public service, accountability and transparency of our government. **O H Kabir** Dhaka

## Punish the corrupt

Bangladesh is champion in corruption for the last three years. But we are doing nothing to improve the situation. Corruption is increasing day by day, because the corrupt elements are not punished. The government must ensure that the corrupt elements do not go unpunished. **Didarul Islam** International Islamic University, Chittagong

## Is Islam?

We know Islam means peace. But nowadays some masked people by the name of Islam are trying to prove Islam as a religion of disorder. They think, by creating disorder, they can establish Islam in Bangladesh. In the Holy Quran Allah says, "Creating disorder is a more vile act than murder." So how could they

think that by bombing they can reach Jannath? What do they want to show by killing innocent people?

Their mindless acts show the world that Bangladesh is a country of militants. The militants give Islam a bad name all over the world and try to spread fear among people, and by their acts they want to keep Islam away from people. So it is clear that they are enemies of Islam. So it is high time for Muslims to unite against them. **Seyda Asma Akter** International Islamic University, Chittagong

## Local community radio

Some good news in the DS of Dec 6: local community radio broadcasting stations are being set up across Bangladesh by a group of NGOs, supported by GoB and UN agencies.

I recall that in the 1960s, the then government of East Pakistan (Secretariat at the Eden Buildings in Dhaka) initiated and operated a community listening radio scheme (CLRS) through distribution of about 10,000 newly developed transistor radios in the community centres and coastal and rural areas.

These local radio transmitting stations should have come 10-15 years earlier. In the 1960s, in Japan, the national radio broadcasts were relayed on the T&T line telephone during the line-idle period. The farmers in the fields could listen to the broadcasts through loudspeaker system installed on poles around the fields. Now fixed wireless telephone system has been introduced in Bangladesh. Hence listening to radio is no longer a problem in the remote areas (without electricity), as cheap solar panels are available for village homes.

It is interesting to see that Bill Gates of Microsoft is taking interest in Bangladesh. **A Mawaz, Dhaka**

## Terrorism

The country is riddled with JMB terrorism in the name of establishing Islam. But Islam does never support indiscriminate killing of men, women, and children. It has been reported that the arrested militants couldn't recite 'KALEMA' even when asked to do so by the law enforcers. They are misguided by vested quarters that want to attain their selfish goals through terrorism.

The political parties and their leaders should now concentrate on finding a way out of the present crisis. They should sit together and reach a consensus on how to combat the wave of militancy that has already caused much damage to the country. **KH Mahtab** Tligor, Sylhet

## Corruption-- root cause of poverty

In a recent discussion with fellow Bangladeshis, we were asking them to express what in their opinion is the most crying need for Bangladesh, in terms of priority, for the optimum development and rebuilding of the nation.

Interestingly, each of the people present had a different suggestion for the most crucial priority for Bangladesh. One said we need Education before anything else, one said Leadership; another said Rural development, another Law and Order, Transport, Foreign Investment, etc. Each had a different opinion to start with.

Of course we need all those, but I asked what do we need before everything else, before we can implement all those grand visions of development? What do we need desperately right now as a priority before we can see any light? They all said - yes, their initial point - education or whatever was the

crying need.

Then I pointed out that Bangladesh must unequivocally slice corruption before any other development. The country is certainly not short of programmes for development. Billions of foreign dollars are assigned through the government to endless programmes of education, electrification, roads, poverty eradication, rural enterprise, foreign investment, farmer subsidies, border control, environment, aviation, as much as the government can imagine. Unfortunately, 90 percent of these programmes begin and end at the government offices, and the money is channelled to the wrong hands. Nothing gets implemented, why? Because the funds and resources are both misappropriated and stolen directly from the ministries concerned, or they are abused so grossly that the programmes are totally crippled. Corruption is the disease that Bangladesh must curtail BEFORE making any dreams of survival - let alone prosper. Otherwise those goals and dreams, as we see before our eyes, end up as pipe dreams.

No programme of development whatsoever - absolutely none - will come to fruition unless corruption is removed in the first place. Funds, resources and master plans need transparent application. So although poverty is caused by lack of economic growth, the growth of the economy is road-blocked by corruption. Corruption is therefore the direct cause of poverty. The way to reduce poverty and develop a nation is to cut down corruption, and the Bangladesh government is obviously toning down this simple concept. Politicians and bureaucrats are wallowing in the world's biggest hotbed of corruption.

The outside world can see this glaring disease of corruption in Bangladesh, they politely tell Bangladesh to remove the scab, and they try to discipline and encourage Bangladesh with harsh words and even embarrass us openly with statistics. Yet Bangladesh and the people appear unconcerned, because they are unformed and unaware of the damage and extent of corruption in Bangladesh. Awareness, that corruption is the root cause of poverty, is the first step to national development. Please spread the word. **Khaled Gazi** California, US

## Iran president's remarks

The recent anti-Israel comments by Iran's firebrand President should be condemned by the international community.

It is absolutely detestable for a president of a country to use such words as 'wiping out' another country. These remarks certainly do not do any good in having any chances of a peaceful co-existence between Israel and the Arab world.

This highly sensitive and populist comment by none other than the President of Iran should not be taken lightly. **Aranya Syed** Queen Mary University of London London, UK

## Earthquake

Following the 8 October massive earthquake, which claimed more than 50,000 lives, we need to seek forgiveness of God, for earthquake is totally unpredictable and there is no way to contain its fury with our available resources. **Habib Qureshi** Peshawar, Pakistan

## Who will guide us?

This is in response to H Hossain's letter on October 29. He raises

# Bomb attacks

Bombs destroy life, wealth and the image of our country. If their leaflets are true, they are bombing to establish Islam in our country.

But what they have forgotten is that Islam doesn't permit such violence in its name.

**Fakir Mizan**

Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh



PHOTO: AFP

some very important points regarding our country. I share his opinion on Bangladesh. Just look at India, they manufacture nearly all their needs by themselves, including cars and vehicles. And us? Champions in corruption for the fifth time in a row, we reject our own products for that oh-so-pretty foreign made goods. Corruption and poverty are rampant; people are suffering; food adulteration has seeped into every imaginable corner. I am frustrated with our situation.

The media is the only light that shines brightly in this dark horizon. Yet our bigwigs seem focused on putting it out of action, instead of tackling the real problems. We are heading towards a deep abyss out of which there may be no return. Who will guide us out of it? Surely not our selfish politicians. **Oeshwik Ahmed** Lalmita, Dhaka

## Bangladesh: Next Iran?

This is in response to a letter by Tishan Mahfuz on 12-12-2005. It is interesting to see that lately some of the letter writers while describing the rise of Islamic militancy in Bangladesh almost always mention and make comparison of our situation with that of Iran and Afghanistan in the same breath. Especially while referring to Islamic militancy, most people implicate Iran.

Here is an attempt to remove the

misunderstanding about Iran.

Firstly, the then Taliban ruled Afghanistan was never an ally of Iranians, rather Iran played the single most vital role in the removal of the Taliban regime alongside America. In fact the Taliban ruled Afghanistan was recognised by two governments: Saudi Arabia & Pakistan. Iran has recognised Afghanistan only after the establishment of Hameed Karzai government. We are all aware of the plight of Afghan people especially the women during (and even now) the Taliban regime. Now to present some very basic facts about Iran before the readers. It won't be out of place to mention that I've had the opportunity to get familiar with the mainstream Iranian life and culture for the past 23 years as my husband is from Iran. Iran indeed is an Islamic Republic and surely their women put on head scarves but never by relinquishing their independence. As most of us are aware that over the last fifteen years or more Iranian cinema has been claiming the most prestigious awards at all the major film festivals across the globe. Movie experts categorically agree to the fact that Iranian cinema means exquisite work. Only recently Iranian lawyer & legal expert Shireen Ebadi won the Nobel Prize for her outstanding achievements in the legal arena of Iran. While a state like Singapore imposes censorship on the Internet, there is absolutely no censorship in Iran on Internet. In the higher education institutions including universities and college 25 percent of the teachers are women. Female students account for more than their male counterparts on graduate and past graduate levels. participation of the women in offices, banks, insurance companies, various govt & private enterprises comprise 30 percent of the total work force. One of the four (selected by the parliament) vice presidents of Iran is a woman. Iranian men and women enjoy their right to vote equally in local and national elections. Iran being an Islamic Republic celebrates its cultural festival like "No-Rooz" (new year) with more fervour than religious festivals e.g. Eid-ul-Fitr. Almost all major roads, squares and parks are adorned with stone and bronze statues and sculptures; no question of confrontation or compromise with religion when it comes to their culture and civilisation. There are invariably the cinema, theatre, opera & orchestra houses in larger cities that bear testimony to the fact that in spite of its Islamic identity Iran is far more advanced than many Muslim nations, particularly Saudi Arabia. In Iran women under 18 do not get marriage license, men and women get engaged first and then get into wedlock; otherwise break up as easily as anywhere else in the Western world.

Even in the remotest rural areas computer education is compulsory,

male and female students receive co-education in medical schools, engineering colleges, and universities. Young girls and women flock in & around the cyber cafes, restaurants, parks and streets like in any European country -- at any given time of the day or even night. **Mahjabin Ahmed** Satmasjid Road, Dhaka

## Victory Day

December 16, 1971 is one of the most memorable days in our history. On this day we achieved victory at the cost of millions of lives. On 25 March 1971 the Pakistan army attacked the peace-loving citizens of Bangladesh. They killed many innocent people, tortured innumerable women and killed many intellectuals of our country. But the patriotic sons of Bangladesh did not tolerate this inhumanity. They snatched away the golden sun of independence from the barbaric Pakistanis.

Every year we observe this day with great solemnity. We remember the supreme sacrifice of the valiant sons who died for the country and pay glowing tributes to them. **Jannatou Ferdous** Chittagong

## Bird flu, a red alert

Bird flu is now considered the great menace rocking the thoughts of health conscious people from Europe to Asia. The disease has already manifested itself even in some European countries. As a country of South Asia, Bangladesh is also not free from this danger. It stands as a vulnerable country because of its location on the major route of the migratory birds, which are most likely the carrier of Avian flu virus. Though the government has already taken some precaution against this disease and put a ban on the import of chick and pet birds from some specified countries, but these initiatives are not enough. The people of Bangladesh are still in the dark about the symptoms of this disease. Moreover, some shops in Katabon are selling pet birds imported from different foreign countries, which could be the carrier of Bird flu virus. Therefore, The health ministry should pay heed to these shops by sending inspectors to examine whether there is any infected bird or not. Beside this, the media can play a role in this regard. It should launch an extensive media campaign towards building public awareness regarding the deadly virus and its symptoms and effects.

We humbly request the government to pay due importance and priority to this issue; otherwise the disease may sneak into the country and become fatal to both birds and human beings. **Akhi and Himel** Dept. of Law, DU

# Face the winter

People of the northern region in our country know what is real winter. They face the wrath of the winter.

We should come forward to help these people in distress. **Md. Nazmul Huda** IIUC



PHOTO: SHEHZAD NOORAN