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Disgraceful!

December 16 is indeed one of the most important days in the history of Bangladesh.

It is a day when liberty of ordinary people was won and freedom was achieved. However, as a citizen of

Bangladesh, we cannot today raise our heads with pride. This is because the collaborators who were against our freedom are in the cabinet today. Those, who once opposed our independence, determine our future

now. The ordinary people of this nation is helpless. Our liberty is once again challenged by the rise of militancy. However, just like 16 December, we will win one more time. Because we are following the path of truth.

Ashkur Rahman
London School of Economics UK

People from across the social spectrum began to gather at Savar National Mausoleum after the placing of wreaths by the president and the prime minister on December 16.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Workers Party of Bangladesh, left-leaning 11-party, factions of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Jaker Party, Bangladesh Tariqat Federation, Sramik League, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Bangladesh Chhatra League were among the political parties and the front organisations placing wreaths at the memorial.

Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association, Muktijoddha Sangsad, Muktijoddha Kalyan Trust, freedom fighters, educational institutions, various socio-cultural and non-governmental organisations, and associations of teachers, officers and employees of different universities also laid wreaths.

Among others, vice chancellors of different universities, Bangladesh Bar Council, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Dhaka Reporters Unity, Crime Reporters Association, Press Institute of Bangladesh, Dhaka Palli Biddyt Samity, Bigyan Shilpa Gabeshona Parishad, Shilpakala Academy, National Museum, Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed, Jatiyatabadi Muktijuddher Prajanma, Bangladesh Hindu Parishad, Bangla Academy, Mohila Parishad, Nazrul Institute and Dhaka Officers Club placed wreaths at the memorial.

Based on the published reports, I have a few questions. Did Jamaat as a party celebrate the Victory Day by doing anything at the Savar Mausoleum?

If yes, how come the newspaper failed to report it?

If no, do they deserve to be part of the anything related to Bangladesh?

S. Sarkar
One e-mail



PHOTO: AFP

Soul searching

The Bangladesh government made a laughing stock of itself when it indicated that the minority community was involved in the suicide bombing threatening the country. Even a child could understand that the Khaleda Zia led four party alliance needed this weapon to arm them against the right thinking people of the poor country.

Unruffled by the label of being a failed

state, put on them by the international community, the BNP-led government wanted to do everything to cling to power without carrying out its responsibilities towards their countrymen.

The ruling alliance should do a bit of soul searching to get at the truth.

Ramen Roy
One e-mail

Transgenic Aubergine

It is learnt that a public-private research project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which is being implemented in Bangladesh, India and the Philippines has successfully developed transgenic aubergines. It is expected that by the end of the next year aubergine farmers in all the three countries will be able to harvest more crops and scrap hazardous pesticides by adopting genetically engineered varieties of aubergines that resist voracious fruit and shoot borers.

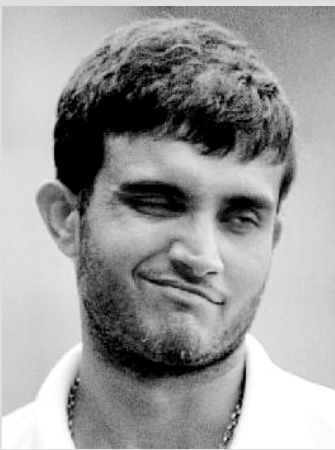
At present, India is conducting field trial of the transgenic aubergines. The result is very encouraging. Meanwhile, harvested transgenic aubergines are yet to receive the government's approval for human consumption. At this point, I would like to request the authorities in the three countries to carefully examine the effects/side effects of the transgenic aubergines before giving final approval for human intake.

(Note: (i) Aubergine (o-ber-jein) as called by the Americans is actually the fruit of Egg-plant (Eng). which is known as Brinjal (Eng) or Begun (Beng) in our country.

(ii) Transgenic refers to plant or animal containing genetic material introduced from another species through applying genetic engineering techniques

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Failed attempts!



Saurav Ganguly

Dropping of Saurav Ganguly, the former and most successful Indian cricket captain from the third and final Test, is very unfortunate. It appeared that the prolific cricketer's playing days are almost over. His comeback to the team was apparently hanging in uncertainty. Media billed the Saurav enigma as nothing but a case of political victimisation. The Indian union minister for agriculture, Sharad Power, who is the current President of BCCI has expressed his inability to interfere in selection matters. The issue of Saurav's omission has sparked fierce criticism in his home city Kolkata as well as in other parts of India. Influential ministers like Pranab Mukharjee and West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharjee too have expressed their dissent on the above. Somnath Chatterjee, the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, has accented to raise the issue in Parliament, which Sharad Power opposed saying any player can be dropped if the Board thinks so. And hence the question of having the issue raised in Parliament is irrelevant.

But the BCCI President may have forgotten that the most important thing is that Saurav is not an ordinary player and axing him without showing valid reasons was not right. We would like to see that the former Indian captain does get a fair share of justice.

Humayun Hyder, Zigatola, Dhaka

After the suicide bombing at Netrokona on 8 December, 2005, one of the victims, Mr. Yadav was identified as the main culprit by high-ups in the government. His father and brother were detained by police for nearly 2 days. Later they came to the conclusion that Mr. Yadav was innocent.

The way our government dealt with the death of a suicide bomb victim and police treatment of his family were cruel and inhumane.

Mushtaq Ahmad
*Shropshire
United Kingdom*

JMB

The recent arrests of top JMB men along with recovery of huge cache of weapons and bomb making materials really bring a sigh of relief to the ordinary people of the country. Rab personnel deserve heartiest congratulations for their splendid job. The government also deserves credit for letting Rab do its job.

I am hopeful that with the progress made by Rab so far, the activities of JMB could be uprooted and all its organisational structure crushed so that such notorious militant activities can end once and for all in Bangladesh. All the perpetrators, including the JMB chief, need to be apprehended and brought to justice. The political patronage that seems to be coming from one party of the alliance government needs to be stopped.

JMB seems to have gained more influence and perhaps have indoctrinated more people than what we could imagine. What is needed is exemplary punishment to the top JMB operatives along with its political sponsors so that the many other sympathisers and would-be militants can see the futility of such destructive acts.

I hope the authorities concerned do not become complacent and go back to status quo. We need to get rid of this menace once and for all so that it does not return to haunt us again.

It would also be appropriate at this point of time to take a closer look at what is being taught at the thousands of madrassahs in the country.

Is one thing to be a devoted Muslim practising the true teachings of Islam, and harming innocent people in the name of Islam is completely the opposite of what Islam preaches.

Zubair Sadeque
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Ordeal by innocence

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Mushtaq Ahmad
*Shropshire
United Kingdom*

Journalism in Bangladesh

As in so many other countries, violence is used against journalists as an attempt to intimidate them. Journalists have been murdered in recent years. Dozens of journalists were attacked while exercising their professional duties. Others have been injured & beaten up on numerous occasions. Numerous case of attacks on journalists & media offices, and of harassment, were also reported.

Violence has become a tested method of expressing discontent with journalists in Bangladesh. Recent years have not been good for democracy or for Press Freedom.

Now the BNP government wants to make a law to curtail Press Freedom. Journalists should resist this attempt by the government.

Saif Samir
Journalist, Ctg

War of words



PHOTO: AFP

How can he ESCAPE ?

It's simply a mystery that JMB chief Sheikh Abdur Rahman always escapes just before the raid by our security forces. How does he come to know the possibility of an imminent noose around his whereabouts? How he gets away unscathed even without a shot? And how is it that he moves inconspicuously when he is the most sought after man at the moment?

Is it possible that there are some clique of militants even among our security personnel? If it is so, let them be identified

first!
Arif Abdullah, Banani, Dhaka

Ours has become a country of terror. Terrorism has spread all over the country. Recently, some members of the JMB were caught but they seem to be the tip of a huge iceberg.

The govt. has failed to catch the big fish.

Rehana Akter
Intl. Islamic University Chittagong

The recent hot exchange of words between Iran and the US indicates one point that is, as it seems, the US is planning to attack Iran now.

George W Bush termed Iran as a part of "axis of evil" and Iran by contrast has been telling that it would not let Israel go unpunished if Israel attacked Iran's nuclear plants. Though we do not support the comments made by Iranian leader that it would wipe out Israel from the world map, yet we do not support any kind of instigation that will lead to a huge destruction.

America should practise tolerance and it should teach Israel the wisdom. Bush, now realises that it was (war on Iraq) a war based on flawed intelligence reports from CIA, but at what cost does his realisation comes? Yes, it is he who unleashed hell upon a five thousand years old civilisation now totally destroyed. See the power of whims of powerful men!

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Corruption free Bangladesh?

Would we ever be able to free our country from the curse, pestilence and mortally affected epidemic of corruption?

Yes, we would be successful in eradicating corruption within 2-3 years provided we are determined to do so. Where there is a will there is a way.

The first and foremost thing we require to contain corruption is to prepare a comprehensive list of our all past and present political leaders, ministers, MPs, top government civil, police and army officers, physicians, lawyers, engineers, industrialists, businessmen, traders and contractors and obtain from them their statements of assets, proper-

ties, present source and amount of monthly income/ (In a prescribed form).

Our Ministry of Finance, in a special Cell, may maintain the required yearly statements from all concerned.

If the yearly statements of assets, properties, present source and monthly amount of income appear to be doubtful, illogical or wrong the Ministry of Finance may refer the matter to the CID for check and verification.

Thereafter, if necessary, the Ministry of Finance may pass on the matter to the Anti Corruption Commission for necessary action.

This is time for action, not contemplation.

OH Kabir
*Hare Street,
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True education

The aim of true education is to make man fully equipped to be useful to himself and to society. It is to develop the whole man, his body, mind and soul. An educated person should be well mannered, thoughtful, creative, kind, sympathetic and cooperative. But it is a matter of great regret that many of our so-called educated people do not behave the way they ought to.

It is cause for concern.

Limat Ferdousi
Intl. Islamic University

Nurture them

It is true that our country is poor but it is also true that there are many hidden treasures in this country. What are those treasures? It is an important question. The treasures are the meritorious students born in poor families.

We should nurture them so that they can exploit their full potential to

become worthy citizens.
Md. Shajahan
Dept. ELL

Avoid negative thinking

The developed countries are becoming richer by using the information technology. On the other hand, LDCs or underdeveloped countries are becoming poorer due to the burden of huge population.

So we don't have any time for negative thinking. We must watch what the world leaders are doing. We must make an optimum utilisation of our resources.

Mrs. Laila Bilkis Zaman
Chapai Nawabganj

Little drops of water...

What a horrible situation the country is facing. The nonpartisan general people's concern is echoed in every corner of the country where there is a television and people can watch incidents happening across the country. I am long used to evening walk along the road gone through the points where people witness TV programmes in the evening.

While walking past these points I could see the commuters in the locality and the passersby viewing the gruesome, horrific, brutal scenes, presented by the TV channels after the bomb attacks in Gazipur and Chittagong by terrorist groups. When they viewed everything, the effect of the misguided thoughts of fanatic groups was quite manifest on them. They looked baffled.

Their comments on this matter expressed their agonies. This sort of brutal events could only blur the image of the government.

The government, so to say, is

walking along the tight rope. So the only thing it can do is to take tough measures against the militants keeping in mind the proverb " Little drops of water make an ocean."

NNC
Palashbari, Gaibandha

Travesty of justice

It is difficult to imagine a more tragic time for a family than seeing their son got killed in a carnage no one find sense for. But police have more imagination. So the family of Yadav, who died in Netrakana bombing, was dragged through more.

Almost as soon as the police inspected the crime scene, the honorable minister declared emergence of Hindu militant suicide bomber in Yadav. The irony was hard to get over with: the severity of injury inflicted upon Yadav became a case against him. Lengths of wire that forced its way into his flesh bound the investigation for several days. Prompt police arrested his father and brother.

The Yadav theory crumbled soon as the skeptic press brought contrary witness accounts, and pointed out that similar injuries were suffered by previous bomb victims. By the time police admitted their wrong, five days of farce has been added to Yadav family's tragedy, 40 hours of which saw his father and brother behind bars.

We appreciate a now wiser minister's courage and honesty to admit to BBC that Yadav was "completely innocent." That is a good start, but more need to be done. Yadav's family deserves an official apology, and the country needs a few answers. Generally, even if someone is guilty, why should his family members be arrested for his fault?

Specifically, with JMB fingerprints all over, why police needed a second guess? Had the minister and police fed on each other's lead and speculation? So that we don't take our eyes off the ball at crucial time again, we need to learn the lessons from the Yadav case.

Ashish Ahnan
*Sector 7, Uttara
Dhaka 1230*

Deserving but...

I watched the last few episodes of Close up-1 very carefully. I was really thrilled hearing the band music performed by the contestants coming from different specialised areas. When Nolon Babu's turn was about to come I along with some of my friends thought that he might not be able to perform as was the expectation of his fans. But putting everyone in the hypnotic spell of his melodious voice he surprised us. The judges were really impressed and each of the judges had all positive comments. The main vocal of the Souls was also equally overwhelming. But regarding the performance of other contestants we got some negative comments from judges. When the programme was over we waited for the result. But we sadly observed that Nolon Babu did not get the marks accordingly although he did not have any problem in his performance. Even the honorable judges did not raise any question regarding his pronunciation and stage performance. There was no deviation in his performance from that of Souls.

Why did it happen?
Md. Main Uddin
*Senior Lecturer
Daffodil International University*

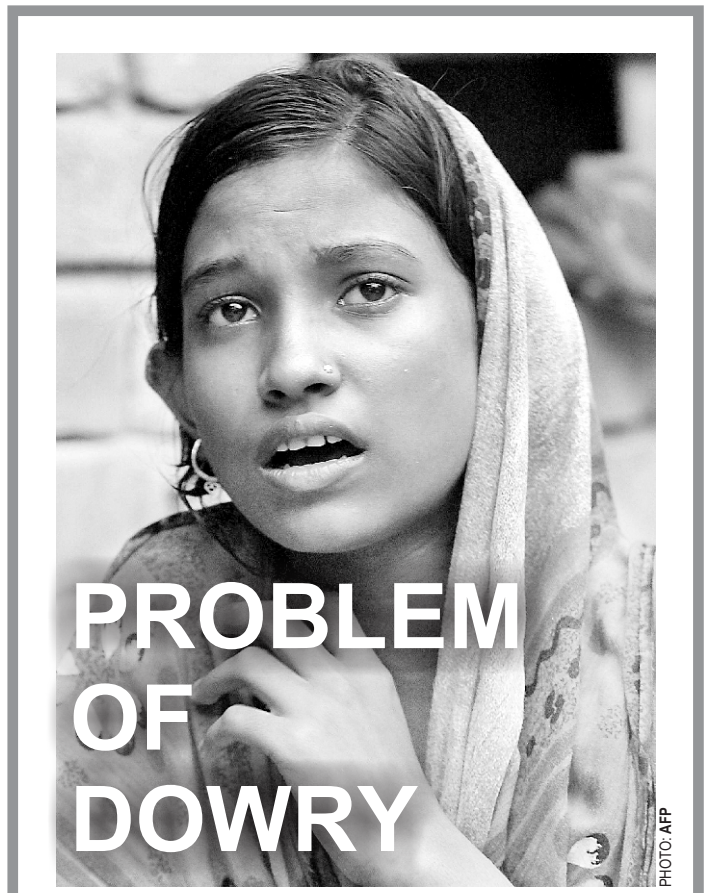


PHOTO: AFP

PROBLEM OF DOWRY

Dowry means the money or property which is demanded by the bridegroom's family from the guardians of the bride during marriage. Dowry has become a common culture these days. It is a curse to our society. It seems that the bridegroom is marrying money not the bride. Dowry is a serious problem for poor parents who have daughters to marry off.

Society should address this problem which makes the lives of girls and women miserable.

Ayesha Tamanna
Intl. Islamic University