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Football
The Bangladesh Football team suffered a humiliating loss to India in the finals of the SAFF tournament. However, the coach and captain could barely show any causes of the defeat to a team like India, which is not better than ours. There were reasons to suffer from complacency but I still believe that the players themselves did not try their level best to win.

If this continues then Bangladesh will always languish at the bottom of world football.
Nayeem Islam
The Aga Khan School, Uttara, Dhaka

Current Iranian regime
This is in response to Mahjabin Ahmed's letter on December 21. Shirin Ebadi is a critic of the current Iranian regime. In fact, she used to preside of the judicial bench prior to the Islamic Revolution during which she, along with all other female judges, were dismissed from their posts. She was not allowed to practise law until 1992. She got the Nobel Prize of her continual struggle to improve the human rights situation in Iran.

The reformist government changed some of the harsher rules of the earlier more conservative government in the nineties. But that is about to revert back. Just two days ago, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad banned Western music from Iran's radio and TV stations. Music was outlawed after the Revolution until the late eighties.
Arshad Khan
One-mail

Ignorant people!
It seems that about every evil act of their government, the American people are always ignorant. I refer to Peter Blood's statement that the Nixon administration did not represent the views of the American people, who did not know what their own government was up to.
Democrats trot out this line to make the people look good - and so to defend democracy (all good comes from the people, all evil from their representatives). But they end up making the people

people wish "Happy Holiday Season" or "Happy Holidays." But that too sounds self-righteous, and it doesn't hold for our country with one day Christmas closure.
Merry Christmas to the Christian community of Bangladesh.
Ashish Ahsan
Uttara
Dhaka 1230

Shocked!
I am unhappy about my home city Chittagong. I wouldn't be able to do anything for my city living here (Sydney). I read in newspapers about JMB attacks. And they are still threatening to blow up the city.
But I want to know from our government & opposition leaders what steps they have taken against the JMB?
Rajiul Hasan, Sydney

Pak hockey
By knocking the Indian hockey team out while playing for the fifth position, the Pakistan team did hit the bull's eye. The sports authorities in Pakistan should reward the players after their very good performance!
Aftab Alam, Advocate (High Court) Swat, Pakistan

Ethics of condemnation
After the recent suicide attacks purported by JMB a lot is being said about the division between the teachings of Islam and the actions of the JMB. It is my view that whether religion condones terrorism or not is irrelevant. Terrorism is the ultimate unethical act and should be condemned by all regardless of what religious edict they follow. The dead are both Muslims and non-Muslims and it is of little comfort to those who follow other faiths and have lost loved ones in the attacks to hear about the peaceful nature of a religion other than their own. It does not make their loss any less.
It is imperative for all of us to condemn terrorism on universal ethical grounds. If we want to appear as a united voice against terrorism we need to appeal to moral and ethical principles that are common to all and not restricted to the adherents of a particular faith.

NATIONAL DIALOGUE

Poor Bangali and Bangladeshi Janata; they are waiting for a miracle to happen. Their freedom is being gradually and blatantly snatched away with the new scary tactic. Is their anyone in the government thinking about the future of "Democratic Bangladesh". I can bet they are thinking about short term gains only. If not, then why will Begum Khaleda Zia set condition for National Dialogue that "Jamaat-e-Islami cannot be held responsible for the rise of militancy." Is this dialogue really worth holding? Shouldn't this be regarded as nothing but political eyewash? I am sure such questions are in the mind of the Bangali Janata. I feel betrayed

by the BNP government when their acts, at present, are not nationalistic. The government is so blinded by Jamaat that they are willing to sacrifice their own MPs and ministers but cannot tolerate a single blame on Jamaat.

We, Bangalis and Bangladeshis, should be blamed too. How on earth can these people be elected to our parliament when they are known as killers of our worthy sons.

The Awami League should also be blamed. Instead of putting a stiff opposition to Jamaat, they are busy blaming the government and hoping to overthrow it. But this anarchy



PHOTO: AFP

will not be stopped with the end of the BNP government. The only solution to this is to chase the zealots away. They should

be stripped off their citizenship. Bangladesh belongs to Bangali and Bangladeshi.

Time has come to rectify the

mistakes of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib. Bangabandhu's "Shadharon Khoma" is the cause behind today's crisis.

Tanvir Rahman
Atlanta, Georgia
USA

From bullet speed balls to high flip crosses from midfielders, Ceah jumps to the ball as if he is the guard of the quadratic box behind him. He is not the only man who saves the goals. If strikers want to go face to face with Ceah, they must first cross the penalty box, dominated by John Terry, the captain of Chelsea, the man who steals the balls from forwards like stealing candy from crying babies, though the babies are fast and aggressive.

Chelsea has around eight world class midfielders, like Frank Lampard and Arien Rubben. Talking about their force, Chelsea's midfielders play with passes from right to left and left to right, make crosses that hit players' head and sometimes score goals with immense control. All players do their homework well. But having a rich owner and good players don't mean a team can win matches, they need a good manager, but Chelsea has some-

set policy (highly motivated by politics), ideology, mission and vision. So every journalist, every gateman (a person in a mass medium who finalises the report after getting it from a reporter, widely known as sub-editor) and the whole authority related with news and other programmes both in electronic and print media work keeping this policy in their brain. Apart from this, nowadays electronic and print media are being launched to operate political, cultural and ideological campaigns and to save their black money. So how can we expect objective news from such kind of media? As a conscious newspaper reader and TV viewer I know how the same event is being published and telecast in different ways, expressing different and motivated meaning in different newspapers and TV channels. I can mention here a lot of examples from home and abroad in this regard, but here I will take two

technologically superior products. Airbus and Boeing will compete to sell few planes to Biman (Biman does not have the money yet to buy or lease new planes. Biman can be in private sector and still be the national flag carrier just like Air France and KLM) and it is their imperative to see a strong cash flow from Biman to buy their aircrafts.
Ten years ago once I wrote that external players such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank and foreign investors will dictate our policies. Now we also realise that we have to look East and adopt a free economic policy like our neighbours in the East. When we were students of Dhaka University in the 70s we raised our voice for free economy but nobody gave it a dam. We were just a few then and now we are many. You will get attention from within and from abroad.
Let's connect the dots now and try to make prediction for the future. Here are some news of last one month:

1. Bill Gates in Bangladesh and will help to train teachers and students in Microsoft technology
2. Ted Turner in Bangladesh to observe how micro-credit is shaping the face of Bangladesh.
3. Hilary Benn in Bangladesh to deliver a strong message to Bangladesh business community.
4. ADB proposal for Bangladesh to be the transport hub of the region.
5. Bangladeshi garments are so competitive in the world market that they are not included in LDC privilege quota.
6. Over 2 billion dollars investment from Tata and Vulcan Energy (By the way Paul Allen is the co-founder of Microsoft). What else do we need? You name it.

Ekrum Belal, Look-East Club

Road accidents

Every year thousands of people die in road accidents. So everybody wants Nirapod Sharok. But one thing I want to bring to the notice of all is that local bus and truck are manufactured from some unsafe materials like unsafe glass (usually used in buildings). This glass cause grievous injuries to passengers following any accident.
Habib Faruqui, Dhaka

One child family

Population explosion remains an ever vexing problem. Bangladesh with an area of 142000 square km. and population of over 140 million is reeling under the pressure of its huge human mass. Although population control measures have attained commendable success yet all the success stories are being eclipsed by certain other discouraging factors. Our below 15 years population is 48 percent. The lower working class and lower middle class are yet to adopt proper family control measures. Adolescent and child marriage is quite prevalent among the above mentioned groups. The 'Mullah' community and other religious group people at large are not practising population control themselves but on the contrary tacitly discouraging other gullible persons from adopting family planning measures.
Now, the era of complacency ought to be over and pragmatic, harsh, seemingly unpopular but effective measures should be undertaken to contain the popula-

tion growth to an acceptable level. We can discuss China as a model. China has adopted and enforced the following measures for population control. One family- 'one' child family policy has been implemented in 1980. The defaulters have been severely penalised by loss of job, loss of trade, non-enrolment in schools, cancellation of food coupon and priority in allotment of houses, transfer to far-flung areas etc. 'The China story' is a success and we should look at their prosperity. They have contained the population at 1200 million and projected population decline in the next 100 years will be by 500 million.
The same policies may be custom-made for Bangladesh with some modifications. Our government allows free education to female child, allots subsidised fertiliser and seeds, and also gives other facilities to the population. The 'one' child families can be given incentives like free or

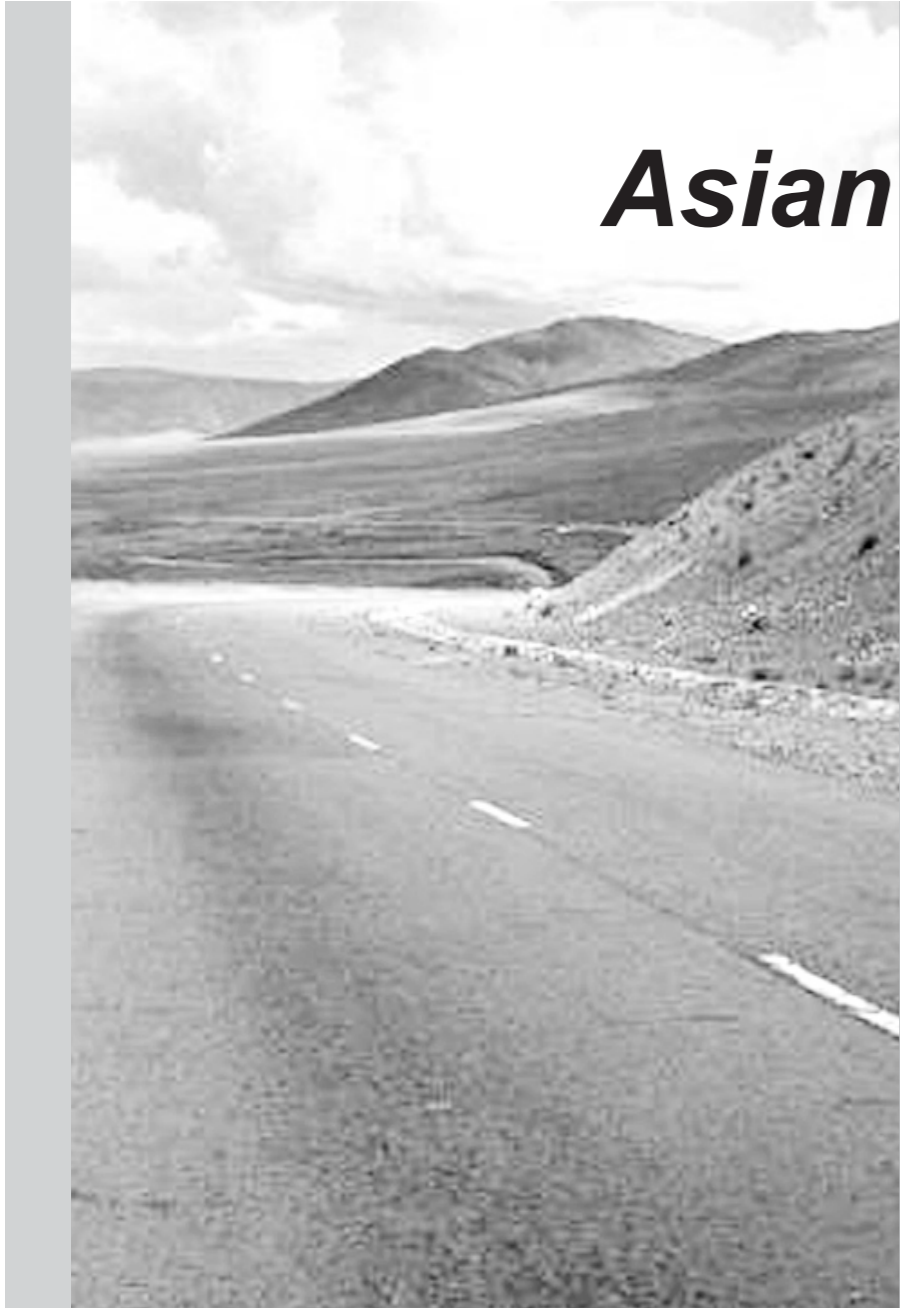
subsidised education, ration, priority in school admission, subsidised allotment of fertiliser and seeds, transfer to remote areas for the defaulters, plus point system for the 'one' child, fixation of targets for the monitors, cash incentives, massive propaganda as to the necessity of 'one' child family, some security to the farmers etc. Unless some very drastic measures are adopted all our development policies and activities are likely to be negated by the impact of huge population pressure.
We would appeal to the policy makers, the government and the all concerned agencies to seriously ponder over the issue and act.
This country can not contain more than 100 million people.
SN Mamoon
Dhaka

Asian Highway

Whether we support or not the present quasi-fundamentalist BNP-led government, or whether we are anti-Indian or not, we should not take the line that goes against our interest. The proposed Asian Highway runs from Bangladesh to Myanmar, our next-door neighbor, not directly, but via India. This Highway will make us take a detour of about 1,700 kilometers by road to reach Myanmar, China and the Southeast Asian countries, such as Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore. Not only that, we will have to pay for transit to India for using its part of the Highway. For example, the distance by road between the Yunan province of China and Bangladesh is only 900 kilometers. If we take the Highway via India, we will have to add extra 1,700 kilometers to that distance.

Besides the question of distance, we will have to pay India and Myanmar for the transit instead of paying only to Myanmar, which lies between our country and China. It is sad that due to our myopic politicians and inert bureaucracy, we have not yet been able to help Myanmar to construct the road, linking that country with ours.

The course of the Highway that Bangladesh prefers will also benefit India, the Southeast Asian countries and any user of the Highway, as it will reduce the road distance between India and the Southeast Asia by 500 kilometers.
Faruque Hasan, Uttara, Dhaka-1230



look like a bunch of retards or very evil. If the people never know what jiggery-pokery their governments get up to, then they are intellectually challenged.

If they do know, then they are morally challenged.
Iftexhar Sayeed
Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka

Christmas vs. X-mas

Many of us refer to Christmas as "X-mas." But some Christians find the term offensive (I learned the hard way) because X-mas was a term invented by Jewish business establishments who wanted Christmas shoppers' money without having to say "Merry Christmas." Secular minded

Yahya
US

Chelsea, again

Six months after winning the Premier title, Chelsea is still strong and confident about lifting more cups and keeping them in their trophy cabinet. New sign-ins like Michael Essien and Hernan Crespo have given them the strength to fight battles of English and European football. The mighty power that they carry is not only built by these two players, Chelsea is an example to us--- how to play with decent team work, showing skills and talent.
The team has one of the best goalkeepers of Europe, Ceah.

one great, that's Jose Mourinho.
Tahsin Hyder
Maple Leaf International School
Dhanmondi,
Dhaka

Are BBC and CNN neutral?

When I was a student of Mass Communication & Journalism of Dhaka University, one day in a reporting class one of our teachers said, "Objectivity is a bogus term. There is nothing called objectivity in the world." He wanted to explain to us that any event first starts to lose its objectivity from the hand of a reporter who covers the happening. Every mass medium in the world has a

recently telecast events by two world famous TV news channels-- the BBC and CNN. One event is Hurricane Katrina of the United States of America from where the CNN is being run. Another is oil depot explosions of the United Kingdom from where the BB operates. We will see how CNN covered the Hurricane Katrina which occurred in their own country and how they covered the oil depot explosions which happened in the UK. In the same way we could also see how the BBC treated the Hurricane Katrina which did not occur in their own country and how they broadcast the oil depot explosions which occurred in their own coun-

try. Though oil depot explosions are far less significant compared to Hurricane Katrina, but nonetheless it will not be difficult for us to find out how the event was portrayed in different ways in the above mentioned two TV channels. Everybody knows that the US and the UK are strong allies of each other, specially on fight against terrorism but nonetheless both the TV channels do not miss the chances to portray elaborately if they find any negative aspect of the other country. Hurricane Katrina was one of the biggest natural disastrous in the US history. We cannot but give thanks to BBC for their bold and elaborate coverage of Hurricane Katrina. The post- Hurricane scene had a wide-angle, deep and long term impact on economy, lives, environment and market. Even the market of some poor countries in the world was upset at that time. Besides this the United States faced great difficulties to manage the situation smoothly. Widespread criticism was raised for mismanagement, discrimination against the black community and indifference of the authorities. We have seen BBC covering all these issues with boldness. At the same time we saw CNN busy with showing rescue operations, relief distribution, President Bush's visit to the affected areas, pumping of water outside the city etc.