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# Another useless hartal



## Independence in 1947

Was it too early or we were not educated or prepared enough to take over the governance after India & Pakistan emerged as two independent nations in 1947? The consequences are part of a bloody history and even today the bleeding continues. The next generation progeny of those who directly face it is feeling the tragedy of independence of 1947 and its after effects. The cruel killings, migrations and other resultant problems are still in our minds. We can compare our independence of 1947 with South Africa's. The black South Africans were properly trained, educated and well prepared to take over the management of their country. See their tolerance as well as success! We shall not find any killing or retaliation by them. The country is developing although disasters and natural calamities are retracting it from the path of success.

I feel that the fate of the Muslims would have been much better in a united India. A united India would have been the greatest secular state of the world where peace & prosperity would have prevailed. Poverty, sufferings & killings would have been words found only in dictionary. The Kashmir problem, Indo Pak wars, Pak genocide in East Pakistan and many other dark episodes would have never occurred.

**Mohammed Alauddin**  
Dhaka

## MARCH 8

Every year around the world March 8 is being observed as the International Women's Day. Even in our country the day is now observed with great enthusiasm. But that does not denote that our women are getting better opportunities as they are supposed to get. It is a matter of pity.

The two leading politicians of the country are women. But that has not changed anything for the better as far as women are concerned.

**Advocate Saumitra Sarker**  
Zigatola, Dhaka



Another day of useless hartal without any major incident, people hardly took any notice of it but the greatest damage is done to the students as all educational institutions remained closed. Why this hartal? A man named Iman Ali was shot dead in an encounter with law enforcing agencies who is claimed to be a political activist. Our intellectuals and politicians demand proper legal process to be

taken but what they conveniently suppress is that our criminal justice system is so poor and so infinitely corrupt that the system itself needs cure. The system can hardly or successfully prosecute the criminals who enjoy the blessing of our major political parties.

I cannot give a proper answer to my school going boys when they ask why their school was closed and what was

the reason for another hartal. It is more painful for people like myself who either returned home disregarding a nice professional career in the developed world or have the opportunity to migrate to the west. We want to contribute to the development of this country and be part of it in spite of all the lacking. Friends who stayed abroad often call us fools but we know this is where we

belong and we must do our part to make this country a better one.

So, please do not embrace thugs and terrorists as your own, kick them out of your folds if you really care for the nation and its people.

**Khandaker R Zamam**, On e-mail

## Traffic on Rampura Road

Transports plying on Rampura Road always remain overcrowded, as thousands of people living in this area have to use this road. The worst is the Rampura Bazar point. A few buses have chosen to run seating service, which curtails their use to the general people. Seating system should not be allowed when the transports are scarce.

Unfortunately, we don't have BRTC bus on this road. This creates further shortage of transport resulting in severe problems for the commuters. During the present government's rule, BRTC expanded its services tremendously not only in Dhaka, but throughout Bangladesh. Overall transport management in Dhaka has also improved. We don't understand why then Rampura is ignored causing untold hardship to the people of the locality. I feel sorry

when I hear people say that some influential persons are not allowing BRTC service in this route for the interest of their own transport business. I don't know whether it is correct. But people continue to make scathing remarks against the government. I think our local influential political leaders may kindly come forward to solve this problem.

A foot overbridge: Every day thousands of people have to cross road at Rampura Bazar point on foot. It becomes very difficult to cross this road for old men, women, and children because of the fast moving and busy traffic. This is also very risky. Traffic always remains heavy on this road and to make matters worse, most of the vehicular traffic from the districts pass through this road on their way to and from Tongi/Tangail/Mymensingh and north Bengal area using Jamuna Bridge. So a foot overbridge is very

urgently required in Rampura Bazar area. I request the authorities concerned to look into the matter and take corrective steps.

**A.K.M. Harunur Rashid**, Dhaka

**Objective journalism?** The Daily Star published a photograph on the back page of its February 22 issue, showing the Islami Chhatra Shibir offering Asr prayer by closing a part of the road in front of the Muktagan. This is objective journalism. But such objective journalism was not seen in your daily when the Awami League, BNP, and myriad of other parties and organisations held meetings at the same venue by closing the same part of the road.

I am writing this letter just to point out the difference between claims and reality, as practised by so many other organisations and individuals in Bangladesh. My only regret is that DS is no exception.

**Kamal Saif**, Islampur, Dhaka

**PM's visit to Pakistan** The recent (mid February 2006) visit of the Bangladesh prime minister to Pakistan has been hailed as a success by some quarters. But if objectively viewed the success would appear to be debatable. Let us examine it as to what we got from the visit and what we lost.

From the newspaper reports it seems that the prime minister, her counterpart and leaders, had discussed subjects ranging from political, socio-economic, and diplomatic, investment, trade and commerce, to education etc. The Bangladesh prime minister sought strategic business partnership with Pakistani entrepreneurs in potential sectors including textiles and to help increase bilateral trade to US \$1 billion (Ref. D.S. dt 15.02.06). When such visit takes place, it is normal that such discussions are made. In terms

of tangible results the only thing worth noting was that Pakistan agreed to extend scholarship facilities to 100 in place of the present 75 students. This is welcome. But in the context of very good relationship as claimed this is negligible.

The long outstanding issues like division of assets and liabilities and the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis were not discussed even on the sidelines. This is really a big failure. The repatriation issue is a humanitarian one and deserved consideration by both sides. It may be mentioned that a few days before the visit, the stranded people had staged a march to Pakistan High Commission to submit their memorandum. The police intercepted that march and in the ensuing encounter several dozen people were injured. In that back drop it was expected that the issues would be raised by the Bangladesh prime minister at least on

humanitarian ground as these people have been living a sub-human life for over three decades in shanties and make shift dwellings. Children, old and the sick are the worst sufferers. Children who are innocent are also not spared from living the very poor life their parents and guardians are living. They are deprived of basic human rights like right to education.

Seminars, symposia for welfare of the children are held but such children are considered something that does not deserve what the other children do. Though Pakistan is mainly responsible for their miseries, but international community, human rights activists and for all the genuine reasons the government of Bangladesh have roles to play. They can press Pakistan to take these people without further loss of time since with every passing day their miseries are multi-playing. And the

prime minister's visit was an appropriate occasion to bring home their problems leading to solution at the earliest.

Viewed in the above context, the visit of the PM may not be considered as highly successful since the long pending issues, the division of assets and liabilities and the standard Pakistanis, were not discussed.

The prime minister had missed the bus to the advantage of her Pakistani counterpart. Let it be hoped that these crucial issues will be discussed in the next meeting of the top politicians that might be held either in Dhaka or Islamabad or even during the visit of parliamentarians. It was a point that was highlighted during the discussion feeling that the exchanges of visits of leaders would cement the ties between the two countries.

Strengthening the ties is good but resolving the outstanding issues is

far better.

**Abul Imran**, Dhaka

**Sania Mirza**

I appreciate Mr. Md. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin for his letter on the above subject published in your daily dated Wed. March 08. 2006.

The award Padmashree is not cheap but this should not have gone to someone having the 32<sup>nd</sup> ranking in the world.

Moreover, women tennis players are treated as models these days. Everybody knows the popularity they enjoy. But the reason may not be that dignifying!

**Taher, J. Sharjah - U.A.E.**

## IRAN issue



# Crackdown on terrorists

After the arrest of militant linchpin, JMB second in command Bangla Bhai, the government has finished its major work of nabbing militants, but the govt. and the opposition's nasty politics based on this issue continues.

AL general secretary Abdul Jalil said, "The govt. is staging scenes of a drama one after another. Bangla Bhai and Abdur Rahman are the creation of four party alliance which is now staging the drama to misguide people." (The Daily Star March 7, 2006)

One the other hand, the government blamed the opposition by saying that they are not satisfied with the capture of Abdur Rahman. BNP secretary general and LGRD minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said, "Bomb attacks started during the AL rule but they did not catch the bombers and bring them to justice". "The opposition leader is trying to mislead the people." (The Daily Star March 5, 2006)

Jamaat leader Mr. Nizami said, "To create the background to ban Islamic politics in Bangladesh, anti Islamic forces created JMB. It was created at the time of AL rule in 1998. Sheik Rahman earned a lot of money doing fertiliser business at that time."

On the other hand, Mufti Amin said accusing AL, "After the arrest of Sheik Rahman they (AL) termed it a

staged drama which indicates they are associated with these militants." (The Daily Prothom Alo, March 6, 2006)

This confrontational politics was seen after the grenade attack on an AL rally on August 21, 2004, countrywide series bombing on August 17, 2005 etc. AL and BNP are the two sides of the same coin when it comes to politics. When any national issue arises they try to politicise it and use it for their own benefits.

**Taslim Hasan Sabu**  
University of Dhaka

Recent arrests of the masterminds of banned JMB Abdur Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai by the government have put an end, seemingly, to the havoc that had been tearing apart the secular spirit of the land for long.

Now that the masterminds are locked in custody, it is the crying need for the government to bring everything before public, the secret information that the criminals have given and most importantly it has to work hard for weeding out the links / sponsors of the criminals and their whole network and prove its goodwill towards uprooting religious extremism for good from the country. There is more than one reason for the nation to look for a clear and

sustainable action from the government as it kept the nation and others outside in continuous obscurity as to the presence of these elements in the country from the very outset.

There had been reports that Bangla Bhai and others were there under a direct patronage of people in the government. Dissident BNP lawmaker Abu Hena made it clear that there was some influential force in the BNP led-coalition government that had been patronising the extremists for a long time.

**Rafiqul Islam Rime**  
Agrabad, Chittagong

The BNP-led alliance government at last held JMB spiritual chief Abdur Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai. The countrymen from all walks of life applauded the steps taken against the top militant goons.

Now, the people would like to see hard steps against the JMB godfathers. The industries minister Matiur Rahman Nizami from the very inception of militancy in our country criticised the role of the media.

He maintained that the JMB was a creation of the media. He stated that there was none called Bangla Bhai. Now what he would say about Bangla Bhai, Abdur Rahman and other JMB

Iran is believed to be the biggest power in the Middle East. This country has made an enviable progress in every sector - private or public - through hard labour and relentless perseverance. As an important part of development, this country has now taken up an ambitious project of achieving nuclear energy which has given rise to a wide spread apprehension in the world, especially in the Western hemisphere, to speak specifically.

Iran is desperate to achieve its long-cherished atomic power by any means to meet the growing demand of fuel, as claimed by this country. On the contrary, the western countries, especially the US and the UK, are determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear power by fair means or foul. They fear that world peace and security will be endangered if an uncommitted and 'evil' country like Iran, as they speak, somehow gets access to nuclear power. This tug of war between Iran and the western world over Iran's attempt to attain atomic power has unavoidably resulted in the extreme polarisation of world politics.

Consequently, the negotiation on the Iran issue is coming off the right track of solution and becoming more intricate day by day. If we want to trace the root of this fierce conflict, we have to take the present backdrop or Arab politics, economy, geographical and strategic position, huge oil resources and the aggressive foreign policies of the western countries, into account.

The US and the European countries have always tried to exert influence over the Middle Eastern in order to have their interests served. Now the Middle Eastern countries view the West with great suspicion except Iran, which has gradually become the giant of the region. For this reason, it is now the biggest challenge for the western countries to subdue Iran at any cost if they want to have absolute control over the Middle East. They are now preparing themselves to launch an unprecedented attack upon Iran with

a view to subjugating the country if Iran does not abandon its programme of nuclear energy forthwith.

Iran has unambiguously declared again and again that the aim of their nuclear project is not to produce lethal nuclear weapons; rather their aim is to make peaceful use of atomic energy like generating electricity to meet the gradually increasing demand of fuel. Iran is trying wholeheartedly to assure the world that there is no iota of probability for the world to be harmed by their nuclear project. As a proof of the authenticity of their assurance, they have signed the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) and even allowed UN inspection of the nuclear base. But the western countries are not convinced enough to abstain from formulating an illegal and immoral military strategy to attack Iran.

But it is worth remembering that if the US together with European allies launch military operations on Iran without any provocation, the result of the unprovoked aggression will be terrible. In view of Iran's vastness, powerful military force with far-sighted leadership of Ahmadinejad, it will not be so easy for the US and its allies to attack Iran as it was in case of Iraq and Afghanistan.

We hope the US and its allies will be prudent enough not to commit such a horrible mistake which will cause only violent hatred and immense destruction of life and property on both sides, never to be compensated.

It is high time both Iran and the US together with its companions demonstrate the highest degree of forbearance for the sake of peace and prosperity and thus find out the possible as well as feasible ways of solving the impasse created over the nuclear issue.

**Ramprashad Banik**

Jahangirnagar University



PHOTO: AFP