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# Maradona & the World Cup!

World Cup football 2006 has gained the momentum that has gripped millions across the world those in the stadium and outside stadium glued to the TV screens. Many a team have proved their worth by now.

Argentina, for example, have displayed a wonderful brand of total football that helped them outplay Serbia in style! Other teams are also playing well, but there will be many more things to watch!

We, television watchers, are enjoying the lively presence of football legend Diego Maradona in the gallery! This living legend showed plenty of wonders with the ball in the past that mesmerized the football lovers and now he in the same frame of mind exalted to an amazing height that truly reveals his love for the game! Appears football & Maradona are made for each other!

I'm sure that people are enjoying the gracious presence of this mighty man and the Argentine players are getting boosted seeing their hero waving hands.

Rafiqul Islam Rime  
Agrabad, Chittagong

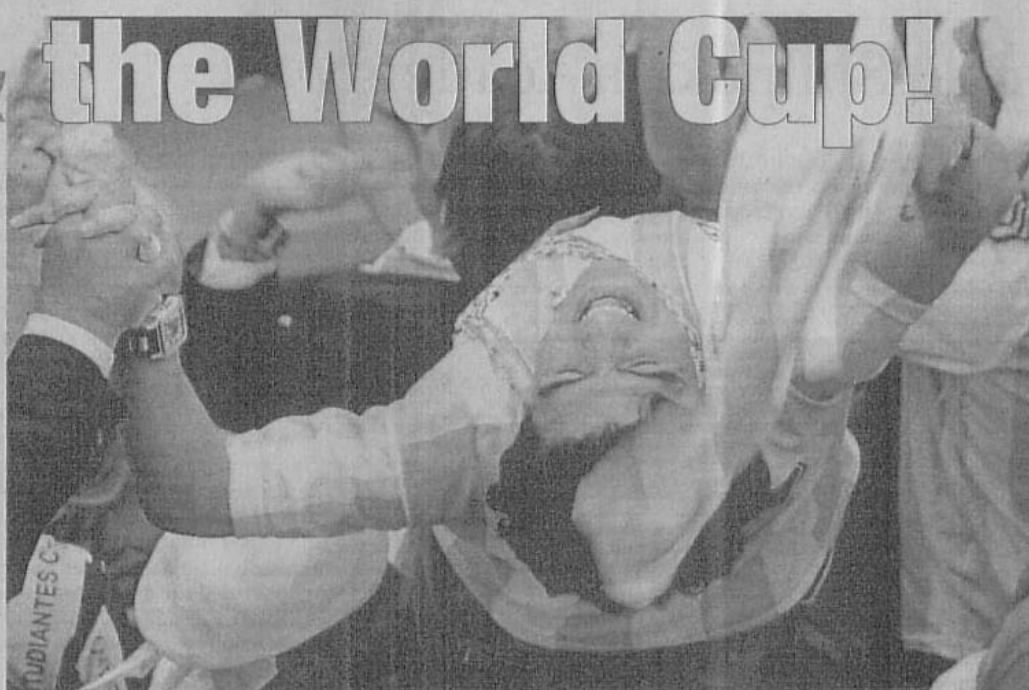


PHOTO: AFP

## Curbing corruption

'Corruption is now an acceptable conduct', the Chief Justice said while speaking as chief guest at a seminar on "Corruption: Awareness of citizens" held on 21 May. Though it brought shame to us but it is true and it also indicates that corruption takes place in every sector. About two months ago one minister admitted that there is corruption in every ministry.

It is said that ministers, members of parliament and politicians are corrupt beyond imagination. After getting elected, within a short time they become rich and powerful by exploiting and abusing their positions. General people are the victims of corruption. As a result, they feel that they are being deprived of their rights and they lose faith in the existing system.

As a student I am anxious about my carrier. There is no assurance of getting the job that I deserve. We know that it is not possible to build a happy and prosperous nation without removing corruption. Fighting corruption should start from the very top. It is also necessary to promote public awareness so that the corrupt people do not get any chance to hold any public office or responsible position anywhere.

## A note for Sheikh Hasina



Just as your opponent does, you too, often, talk about the ideals of democracy. Just as your opponent does, you too, often, talk about injustice, intolerance and so on and so on and so on.... As a former prime minister, you too are privy to the real corridors of power and hubris. I am sorry to pronounce, that, you too, flunked utterly.

Well, bygone is bygone. Despite your failings, as a person of secular orientation, I, still, am willing to cast my lot with that of the Awami League (AL).

But before that, would you care to explain, why a party with such history and diversity remained stuck with a single leader for 25 years? It is not wrong for the daughter of a great leader to follow her father's path. But it is wrong to cling to such position after a catastrophic debacle (of last election) on the way. And it is doubly wrong, when you keep blaming the other guy for your own failings. The BNP played the game fair and square and they won. It was not their fault that you failed!

Yes, after the sad demise of Bangabandhu, may be, you were the needed glue to prevent an Awami entropy. But it is a quarter of a century now. If the AL still cannot get over, none is going to prevent its eventual demise.

Dear leader,  
May be, you already have served your noble purpose.  
Mohammad Zaman  
On e-mail

After the setting up of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), one and half year has already passed. But this Commission is still inactive. ACC needs full independence and more power so that it can take effective measures against corrupt people.  
MdAKAzad  
Dhaka University

## Avoid wastage

I would like to draw the kind attention of my Muslim brothers to a touchy matter. The Almighty Allah has given me the opportunity to say prayers five times in the holy mosques of Bangladesh for the last 35 years.

But I had some sad experience about wastage of electricity in the mosques. The devotees insist on keeping all the fans and lights on even when these are not necessary. If the Imams and Muazzins of the mosques become more alert and tell the devotees that wastage of anything is not permitted by our religion, matters will improve appreciably.

Md. Emdadul Haque Badsha  
Joint Director (Marine)  
BWTA Bhaban, Dhaka

## Clean candidates

I would like to refer to your article entitled "Quest for clean candidates" written by Mr. Md. Ameer-uz-Zaman which appeared on 14 May 2006 in your daily.

Mr. Zaman should know that none of the members of the civil society will be able to win a single seat in the forthcoming elections as they neither have the money, nor the goons needed to win an election. They can only win provided they are nominated by either of the two major parties.

Regarding civil society, I have nothing to say as its credibility is highly questionable in the public eye.

Khairul Masud  
Eskaton, Dhaka

## Role of Imams

I am an American researcher working on engagement between development organisations and Imams and the increasingly active role of Imams in community development. In America, misinformation and negative press concerning Islam is widespread—a manifestation of ignorance and arrogance against a backdrop of a misguided crusade against "terror". However, many Americans and I reject this demonisation of Islam, promoting education and critical consciousness instead. Prior to visiting Bangladesh, I countered misinformation about Islam and advocated for the inherent humanity of all, irrespective of religion, with academic and theoretical arguments.

But since being welcomed here by scores of Imams as their daughter and sister, the experience has become personal. Personal experience carries a weight unmatched by purely intellectualised arguments.

Bridget Kustin  
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

## Special days

In line with the British and American culture, Mother's day and Father's day are being celebrated in our country too. Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in May while Father's day on the third Sunday in June. On these two days mothers and fathers traditionally receive gifts and cards from their children.

Good culture! But in our country the days meant something more than ceremonial celebrations. In our culture father-mother occupy a special position because they sacrifice their wealth and comforts for raising their children and developing them into true human beings, having a good moral character. So, it is our foremost duty to obey the words of our father and mother and to do hard work for translating their dreams about us into reality.

Prof. M. Zahidul Haque  
Chairman  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

## No regard for us!

The two major political parties—AL and BNP—hold rallies on their central office premises almost everyday. Such rallies cause a lot of dislocation to public life. For instance, when the BNP holds a meeting in front of their central office, the road from Al-Helal box to Kakrail remains closed for long hours. Similarly, during AL processions and rallies, the areas around their central office come to a standstill.

Politicians do politics for the well being of people. But they pay little heed to the needs of the common people.

Nasirullah Mridha Salim  
Matuail Mridhabari, Dhaka

## Zargawi's death

Mr. Bush, Mr. Blair and Mr. Maliki while celebrating Mus'ab Al-Zargawi's death termed it a serious blow to Iraqi freedom fighters.

They perhaps don't know that it may only inspire the freedom fighters of Iraq.

Aftab Alam  
Advocate, Swat, Pakistan

**Breaking of parliamentary norms**  
People were stunned when they saw the incident in the parliament

on 13 June, 2006.

A very embarrassing situation arose when the leader of the opposition hurled abusive remarks at the prime minister and other politicians: later, to further aggravate the situation some MPs of the opposition threw files and papers at the speaker.

According to the rules of business of the parliament, nothing can be said about any member in his/her absence. But our opposition leader has broken both the principles by making offensive comments about the prime minister while she wasn't present in the parliament. She termed the ruling party leaders "thieves", "bandits", "criminals" etc., which was an un-parliamentary behaviour.

Later, the opposition MPs threw files at the speaker, breaking parliamentary norms. This was not expected of them.

We hope the political leaders would refrain from such actions in future.  
Saeem Arafat Hossain  
Lalmatia, Dhaka

## End of democracy?

The election process is the single most important factor for the proper functioning of democracy in a country. However, the present government seems to have had everything set for a farce in the name of election. The political appointment of an extremely biased CEC, the murky preparation of a voter list full of spooky voters, intense politicisation of the administration and the change of the retirement age of the chief justice to put in the man of their choice as the Chief Advisor of the future caretaker government make the intention of the government pretty clear. We all were hopeful once the opposition returned to the parliament and the chance of a dialogue between the government and the opposition seemed to be bright. However, the hopes are fading now as the government has taken a firm stand on the inclusion of Jamaat in its dialogue delegation.

It seems to me that the coming days will be more violent. The opposition is left with only one way to press the demand for electoral reforms, through the means of hartal, seizure and street agitation. And the tough stance of the government on the issue of handling opposition political programmes will only contribute to the deterioration of the situation. We can only hope that a so-called 'third force' doesn't take the advantage of the turmoil to put an end to our democracy (however faulty it has been).  
Faiyaz AlZamal  
McGill University, Montreal, Canada

## Is student politics needed?

The question "Is student politics needed?" has really attracted me. According to the situation of our country it's now a sensitive point. There may be great controversy whether student politics is needed or not. But I feel in most cases, the young students who are innocent and immature are utilised by political leaders to satisfy their selfish motives. They are used just as pawns in the cruel game. The standard of education in our country is decreasing. We are unable to compete with the technologically advanced world in most of the areas. In fact, politics is supposed to make one conscious about one's rights and about the welfare of the nation.

So, I think after acquiring a standard in education the students can allow themselves to have a role in the political world. Steps should be taken to ban politics for the young and to make the society free from the curse of student politics, which is but a denigrated form of politics itself.  
Md. Wazed  
International Islamic University, Chittagong

## Crossfire or shootout?

We again came across the story "Two top outlaws killed in 'crossfire' with Rab" as reported by your Rajshahi correspondent. The story indicated that two leaders of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) were killed in an encounter with the members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

When they reached the village, the accomplices of the PBCP leaders opened fire on the law enforcers, prompting them to retaliate. Rab sources said Fazal and Muktar sustained bullet wounds during the "shootout". They were taken to Naogaon Hospital where the doctors

declared them dead." First, this was not a "crossfire". This was a shootout or a gunfight. A "crossfire" is when lines of fire from two or more positions cross each other at a single point, such as soldiers or outlaws caught in crossfire.

It's about time we used the correct words. Either the outlaws were in the middle of two Rapid Action Battalions groups shooting at them, or they were in a shootout or gunfight.

Second: the "outlaws" did not 'receive' bullets during the shootout. They weren't given bullets, presented bullets, or anything like that. They were shot.

It's time the press started using the correct words and terms.  
M.M. Haque  
London

## Escape

It gives me the happiest feeling ever when I recall the most memorable day of my life. Trapped alone among all the lifeless creations of God for so many years gave me a feeling of disgust for myself. I was surrounded by boulders, dry and still. The momentary tactile of the wind used to feel great. Lack of life in that pitch-black darkness was no less than death. I was almost dead there.

All I used to hear was the low noise of the ants' spectacle, footsteps of various insects. Sound of the birds' chirping used to drown me in glee. Spiders were always nauseating, the filthy creature that never even tried to get out of my body when stuck. I had a clear idea about the bugs' life, few complain against mine. Spellbound in a deep hollow hole for millions of years felt very suffocating though I never had a track of time.

That day I suddenly felt the change in altitude. It wasn't supposed to be that hot so high above sea level. I could predict something was coming. I didn't feel the cool sensation of the breeze on my hot body. I felt a pressure from deep inside, I was being heated from the core. I knew I was getting red. I felt a surprising excitement when I felt my molecules vibrating really fast. I knew it was the time to say farewell to my home, to tell them that I would never return, yet I knew that none ever felt my presence.

The volcano exploded, I cascaded out with success. I was free at last!

Xyasha Zabeen  
One-mail

## Perturbed civil life

The death anniversary of late President Ziaur Rahman was observed on May 30, 2006 with much ado as usual. The wave of the programmes on that day made quite an apparent heave and sway throughout the whole city of Dhaka (apart from the country, though). The wave could be felt in the traffic system of the city too. Thousands of police personnel were deployed at every possible point to halt the traffic carrying the insignificant members of the public and keep them standstill during the whole period of the ingress and egress of the vehicles that were carrying the national leaders and other important persons. The security measures were adopted to ensure the security of the VIPs who were inaugurating a 'Kangali Bhoj' programme (feeding the destitute).

So this was an outward picture of the day. The inner picture was in fact a sweating experience on a hot summer day, which we all had to go through by waiting in the same

place of the road for hours. We could not move in any direction for a long time. We had the right to see the government vehicles running fast along the free roads that were cleared up by the police. But we did not have the right to question the priority of such measures resulting in an undue confinement in the road by the government functionaries, nor had we the right even to express our annoyance over the situation. Is it what we call democracy or democratic gesture And, last but not the least, for how long will this obnoxious conduct be repeated?

In the present era of emancipation of thoughts, exchange of thoughts and culmination in the idea of fundamental freedom and human rights, the conduct seemed to be a total fiasco. It was simply an old-fashioned and deceitful molestation having complete disregard of the rights of the citizens of Bangladesh. It could not show any sign of discharging the responsibilities, at least of a citizen to a fellow citizen, let alone of a national leader.

I was passing the idlest moments in a bus and echoing with Mr. Bob Dylan- "How many roads must a man walk down before you call him a man.... The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind". Some of the co-passengers were far too much critical about the situation. One of the modest co-passengers delivered a semi-lecture like a leader on a rostrum that the people of Bangladesh nowadays have become more conscious than ever and they cannot be fooled around anymore by our leaders. So this is how the general people reacted who apparently had no political involvement.

We surely have all the respect for a veteran and courageous freedom fighter like late President Ziaur Rahman and he deserves, for all time to come, salutes from the bottom of our hearts. But the exaggerated political ostentation has overdone many things which may result in public annoyance (or even turmoil) on the one hand and disgraceful retreat on the other. This ought to be pondered by all of our national leaders.

Later on I thought that the situation would be much worse when the security measures would be withdrawn after the 'safe exit' of our national leaders and the police would forget about controlling the huge traffic jam at every crossing. So I gave up waiting, got down from the bus and walked a long way home. At home, I was really at home pondering the whole abject position of the political molestation over the civil life. Would it ever be possible that we can breathe complacently without criticising

our national leaders? Would it ever be possible that we will find and, if necessary, invent words to praise our national leaders for their auspicious and fruitful deeds? Would it ever be possible that the oligarchs of this country would some day realise and believe in the concept of 'Equality' and 'Fraternity'? Probably time will tell.  
Abul Fattah bin Hyder  
Khilgaon, Dhaka

## TV channels

Thanks to Mr Jahir U Hyder for his letter, captioned above, published in your daily on May 4. Five private TV channels are operating at the moment in Bangladesh, and some more are likely to be in the offing as the overall trend suggests.

I fully share the views expressed by Mr Jahir that the existing ones are not telecasting an adequate number of educational programmes. In my opinion BTV should come forward as the pioneer in introducing such programmes.

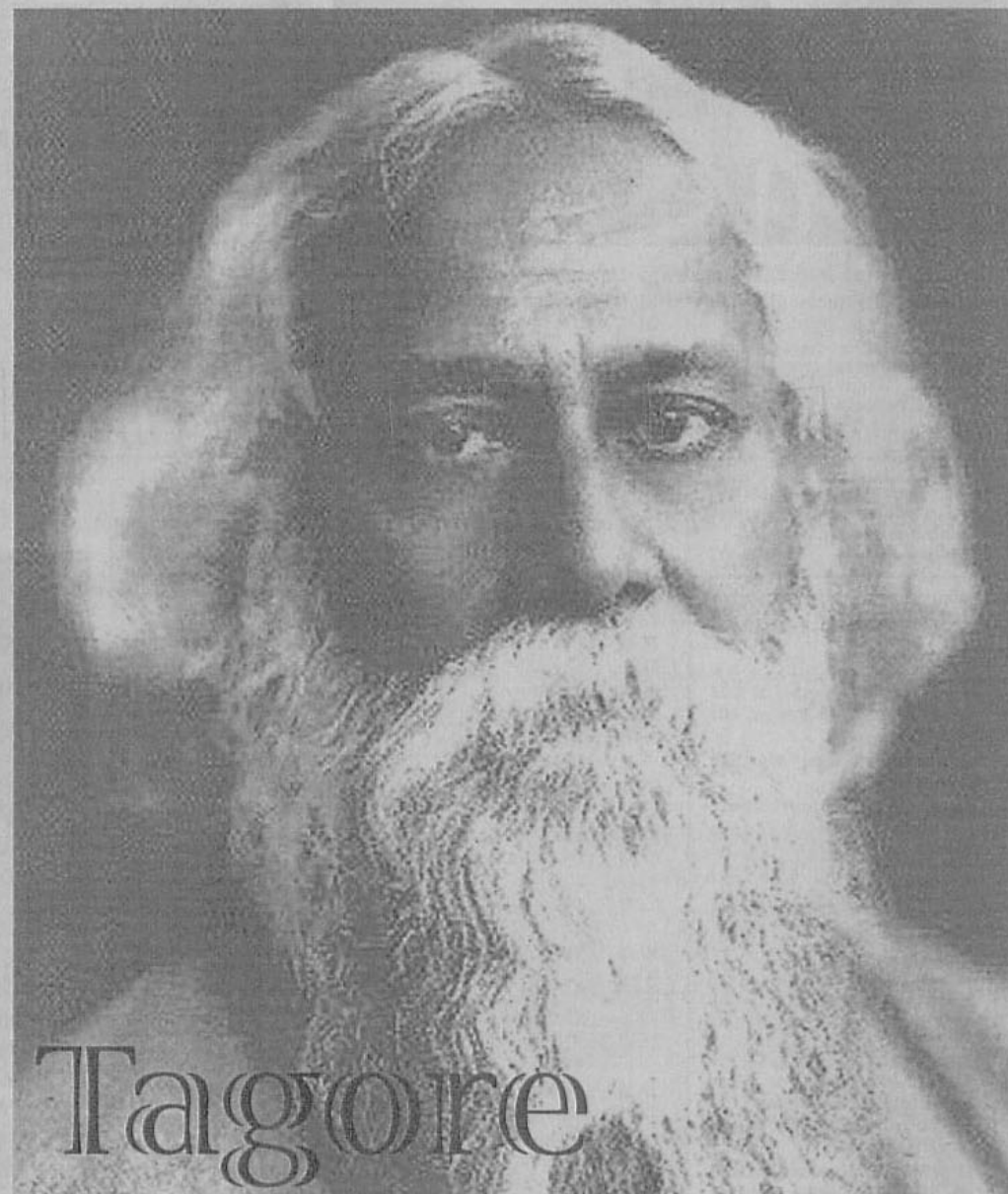
There is no denying that TV is a very useful and effective medium of presenting diversified programmes of importance on our day to day life and at the same time it can play the role of a 'model teacher' for the school students. It has to be admitted that the standard of education in the country has gone down to such an extent that there is no yardstick to measure it in anyway.

In view of the prevailing situation different TV channels, in collaboration and understanding with each other, can take up educational programmes in such a way that the students can be benefited immensely by viewing them at their leisure hours. A teaching programme of one hour duration may be arranged specially for the students of class V, VIII and classes IX & X every day.

Erudite teachers of repute should be engaged to conduct such programmes for the greater interest of the students. All the subjects should be taken up for discussions and lessons may be given to them in lucid language so that they can grasp the topics, take note of them and learn the things of their syllabuses for securing desired marks in their examinations.

I believe the BTV and the private TV channels can thus do a great service to the student community who are supposed to undertake leadership with responsibilities to run the affairs of the country in the days to come.

Mohammad Babir Uddin  
Uttara, Dhaka



When in London for my Masters in 1967, I shared a flat with a friend. He was doing his Extra Masters. We bought an old car together and went around England in it accompanied by my girl friend Doris, a lovely Swiss girl. I made her learn the following lines by heart and we would recite it to each other much to my friend's annoyance. Here are the lines of the great sage of India:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high"  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;  
Where worlds come out from the depth of

truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake." (Gitanjali xxv)

This should be compulsory reading. Gurudev, as Tagore was affectionately called, wrote the national anthems of India and Bangladesh and the above should be the anthem of the world.  
Capt. O.A. Shareef, Karachi, Pakistan

# BOYCOTTING ISRAEL...

The boycotting of Israel by most Arab and Muslim nations except Qatar, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco is absolutely obsolete in this fast changing world.

I don't understand the point of not establishing any diplomatic and economic ties with the modern and technologically advanced Jewish state by most Muslim states since its creation in 1948.

The charge levelled by the Muslim states against Israel of oppressing the Palestinians is nothing but hypocrisy. If all the Muslim nations are comfortable with having ties with the US in all aspects, which is at present suppressing and destroying one Muslim state by imposing war or economic sanctions, there is no reason they should not go for the same with Israel.

After all, God hates hypocrisy.  
Oneil Osman, One-mail



PHOTO: AFP