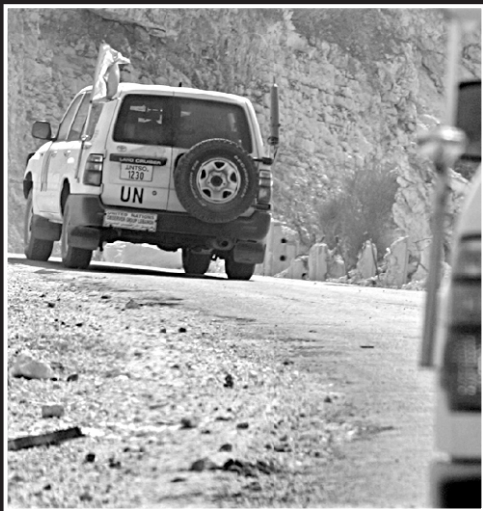


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



PHOTOS: AFP

Might is right?

More than 500 dead, around 1800 wounded and millions displaced by the barbaric aggression of Israel in Lebanon. Over the past three weeks the world has noticed the consequences of the use of one's military might over another and a severe crime against humanity. But ironically there has been a soft response from the UN, EU and elsewhere around the world with most pointing their fingers at Hezbollah for triggering the conflict rather than blaming Israel which could instantly settle the conflict by responding to Hezbollah's diplomatic offer of a prisoner swap. But Israel instead preferred to exercise its military power over Lebanon like it has been doing with the Palestinians till today.

The US did act but only as an ally of Israel, not as a neutral superpower. Not surprisingly, it backed Israel's military assault on Lebanon condemning Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation and demanded its disarmament. Now, the US must understand that Hezbollah fought against Israeli occupation over Lebanon in the past and they are considered as freedom fighters in their country. They hold seats in the parliament and form part of the government. So they cannot be destroyed or eradicated until Lebanon itself is destroyed. Therefore nothing can be achieved by the application of brutal force and there has to be a diplomatic solution to end the violence. After the tragic event in Qana there has been calls for an immediate ceasefire from UN, Arab League and other countries but Israel doesn't seem to pay any heed since it knows that they can only plead as they don't stand a chance against Israel's military might, strongly backed by the US. Therefore Israel thinks it is not accountable to justify its actions. Despite all opposition it continues to pound Lebanon everyday killing innocent civilians, mostly children. It definitely proves that nowadays "might is right."

Ahmed Deedat
Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000

This is a response to a letter written by Mr. A. Khan on this topic. I am deeply shocked to see his support for Israel and his attitude against those who are fighting illegal Jewish occupation. Mr. A. Khan, let me remind you of a simple piece of history. Israel was formed by forcing out two million Palestinians from their homeland using an illegal and false claim that God has promised them that land. As a result, the Palestinians have become refugees in their motherland and are living a substandard life. And those who are fighting to earn back their rights, you compare this fighting of theirs with extremism and terrorism? Mr. Khan, how would you feel if you and your family are forced out of your house by a group of hooligans who falsely claim that God has promised them that house? How would you feel if you see you and your family living in the streets while those hooligans are living in your precious building in luxury? Your statement that Israel is recognised by the UN doesn't legitimise their illegal grabbing of Palestinian lands. We know very well how ineffective and heavily biased the UN is.

Mr. Khan, we also want to live in peace. But if the Zionist terrorists snatch away our rights and do not allow us to live in peace, we have no other option but to fight them. So, I would urge you to point your fingers at the real culprits for disturbing peace, instead of the victims.

Mohammad Abdullah
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

It is better to be more cautious in making remarks about the Israeli invasion in Lebanon. It's not a clear conflict with Israel ("Zionists") and America ("Christians") on one side and the Lebanese ("Muslims") on the other, like mentioned by many readers in your daily. Let's not forget that - for example - Saudi Arabia, as a Muslim country, is one of the closest allies of the US. Not only Muslims are victimised by the Israeli air strikes in South Lebanon but people of different religions and different nationalities have been killed or made refugees.

Although I agree that the international efforts are absolutely far from sufficient to stop Israel, I still have the impression that the international community is doing far more to stop the massacre in Lebanon than the OIC or the Arab League. Also the official protests (if any) ventilated by countries like Bangladesh or Pakistan sound extremely weak, and I do not see thousands of people marching in the streets of Bangladesh or other (even Western) countries to protest against the murder of fellow Muslims in Lebanon. The voice of the United Nations or Security Council cannot be heard due to the aggressive bombardments by Israel on Lebanon. Why can't a united Muslim front try to stop Israel? Why doesn't a Muslim country try to take up the responsibility of a peace broker? Why does the world have to wait for America (one of the beneficiaries of any Middle East conflict)? Is it maybe because there is no unity between the different Muslim groups?

Why does Saudi Arabia have more interest in donating arms to Hamas instead of helping the Palestine's new government in

the development of their new state? Did Iran have no other choice to help the people of Lebanon, than to donate arms to Hezbollah during the past decades? Is selling arms to Israel the only way for the US to secure peace in the Middle East?

Is it not a coincidence that the US, Iran and Saudi Arabia are run by oil regimes? Greg Palast remarked correctly (Daily Star, 27th July 2006), "... I wonder if Bush would let Olmert have an extra week of bombings, or if the potentates of the Persian Gulf would allow Hamas and Hezbollah to continue their deadly fire-works if it caused the price of the crude oil to crash...". Murder in the Middle East seems very profitable, not only for the US also for Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia (Sunni) and Iran (Shiite).

The aggressive and murderous bombings of Lebanon by Israel on civilian targets is a clear violation of the United Nations resolutions and International Law. It is a clear abuse of all basic Human Rights we stand for. Such military aggression will make the region more vulnerable to military conflicts in the future and will never ensure peace, only hate. Afghanistan and Iraq did not become a safer place after the military invasion by the US and its allies.

Peace in the Middle East can only be established with the combined efforts of the United Nations AND a united Muslim front (OIC or Arab League or others). Timur Goksel, former UN diplomat, is correct; the conflict will never end without "a friendly word from Damascus".

Willy Legendre, Cox's Bazar
(ex-relief worker for different international organisations in war situations like Iraq, former Yugoslavia and Somalia)



Is it the same Buet?

Buet is the university where top students of the country get opportunity to study. But what is happening there over the last few months? Students refused to sit for the term final exams due to World Cup football. So far I know not a single university was closed for such a long time due to World Cup in Germany, Brazil, Argentina or Italy.

Buet students damaged their own hall, teachers' quarters, cars and nearly 50 students were seriously injured. Buet was a battlefield for several hours. It is high time for them to think what they are doing as students of the prestigious university.

Md. Maidul Islam
Junior Engineering Executive,
SSL (Systems & Services Ltd.)
Road no.14/A, House 39,
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

I am extremely shocked to learn the irresponsible acts of the Buet students. This is not the first time that they have done this. The authorities should take tough measures against the hooligans, so that this type of incidents are not repeated. Shame on Buet students.

I have been teaching in many countries and in many institutions, but never heard of any incident like this outside Bangladesh.

Fauzi Islam, Houston, Texas

Buet is the top engineering university in the country and the very best students study there.

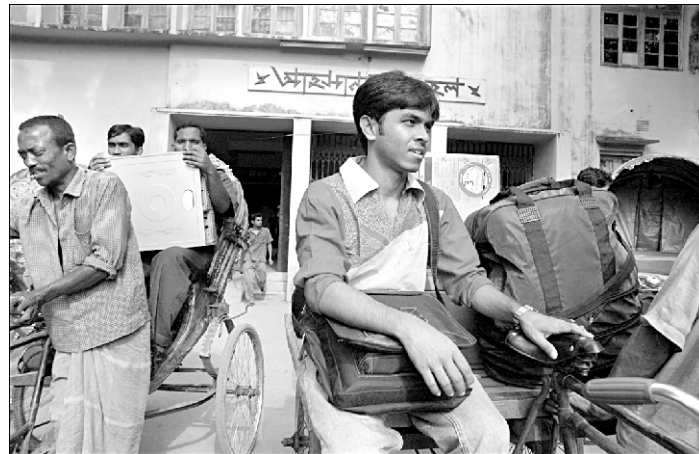
I was totally shocked to learn that the exams of Buet had been deferred because of World Cup football. Can anyone give me one example of any country where something similar happened?

It was a shame and disgust

to the nation as a whole.

Mr. Shadman
Summer Analyst
CIBC, Retail Risk Management

I felt very ashamed as I saw the footage on TV which showed broken cars, window glasses. I felt totally outraged hearing that some family members of the teachers were injured (report not confirmed). I used to feel very proud that we, the students of Buet, are different from the rest of the people in Bangladesh; we are mature as well as intelligent but my belief suffered a heavy blow



after I saw residences of teachers being attacked by us. I believe that all the assets of Buet belong to the poor people of Bangladesh. We have no right to break anything. Secondly, there were children in the residences of the teachers. They had no role in the matter. Our conflict was with the authorities, not with the family members of the teachers. If we throw stones at them, then there remains little difference between us and irate hoodlums.

Having said this, I strongly condemn the police atrocities on the students on the night of

30 July.
Asst student
level-3, term-2
Mechanical Department
BUET

It is such a disgrace for our nation that police are beating up university students. Buet students are regarded as the most talented among the student community of Bangladesh. Such a barbaric attack on them by police is a matter of great regret. If this process continues for long, one day our most esteemed engineering university Buet will

lose all its glory.

We urge the govt. to take necessary steps to prevent further attacks by police on Buet students.

Abdullah Tahir Chowdhury
BRAC University

It is very unfortunate to see that Buet had to be closed due to student unrest, caused by a small number of students. The Vice Chancellor failed to bring the situation under control with the help of law enforcement agencies. Buet is known internationally, for its research and high quality technical education. In the past, Buet students'

participation in politics was viewed as part of any pro-people movement, which is no longer the case. I am writing about the students who are creating trouble in one of the finest educational institutes in Bangladesh. This unrest can no way contribute to a healthy learning environment, will rather create 'session jam'. In the past, this type of student unrest and 'session jam' did not hurt the economy the way it will now. The economy is growing at a much faster rate than expected due to massive private sector growth, which requires substantial supply of skilled technologists.

Student unrest in Buet will certainly have a negative impact on the economic development scenario.

Ekramullah Chowdhury
On email

Campus politics

Over the last few weeks the nation is observing a severe chaotic environment on the university campuses. Not only Buet or Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University but also half a dozen of public universities are facing class suspension, strike, clash among the student-wings and vandalising of premises by students. The reason behind this turbulence goes back to political rivalry, corruption of authorities and the question of the acceptance of VCs. Indeed, this is a sudden buzz in our education sector that will cause irreparable loss to the rising generation of the country.

But our national leaders are maintaining a conspicuous silence on this matter. This is indeed an ominous sign for the country.

MAlauddin Ansary
Zahurul Haque Hall, DU

Indo-Bangla relations

Thanks to Mr. Rajen Sen of Mumbai for his views on Indo-Bangla relations (DS 02, Aug. 06)

and his understanding of the Bangladeshi psyche. I just hope more of his fellow Indian citizens adopt this kind of open-mindedness. I have had the opportunity of working abroad with Indian nationals from a varied range of ethnic and social backgrounds over a period of 10-12 years. I found initially that the overwhelming perception in the minds of my co-workers regarding Bangladesh and its people was very negative, to say the least. The general idea was that this was a sort of a vassal state, which was not paying due respect, and the populace followed a life-style/culture closely resembling or following the one to be found in the Muslim slums and ghettos of the major Indian cities. An extension of this idea was that the ungrateful largely Muslim populace was a natural ally of Pakistan and were out to subvert Indian interests. [To my surprise, I found many people from West Bengal were the most ill-informed/ mis-informed about Bangladesh. The people from the South were a bit more aware but showed a general war-mongering attitude. The Indian Punjabis that I worked with, though not very enlightened about Bangladesh were the most pacifist of the lot, presumably due to their closer proximity to the front line.]

I think, for this kind of prejudice against Bangladesh to have formed, the Indian media and politicians with their anti-Bangladesh rhetoric are mostly to be blamed. When regularly bombarded with stories of countless numbers of "illegal Bangladeshi immigrants" being responsible for most of Indian society's ills and Bangladesh soil being a safe haven for various secessionist outfits waging "terrorist activities" against India - the common man will gradually also take up that view. The Bangladeshi stories that see the light of day in Indian publications are those of gloom and doom. When this happens over a period of time, society, generally will have formed a negative view. This is reflected in how the Indian media at large and even senior Indian bureaucrats treat Bangladesh. A case in point is the recent Mumbai train explosions where the media and politicians again tried to implicate Bangladesh.

What Bangladesh and its citizens expect from India is a show of understanding and magnanimity. We acknowledge India's role and assistance in our struggle for independence. Bangladesh is not a threat to India in any way or form: economically, militarily or otherwise. We have got more than our fair share of problems. All we want is a level playing field and a fair go. But India has to take the lead in improving bi-lateral relations. India

can afford to make concessions in its dealings with Bangladesh without hurting its interests.

Ashraf Matin, Sydney

Rajen Sen from Mumbai loves his country so much that he can't see how we, the Bangladeshis, are always suffering from BSF bullets, flood caused by Farakka etc. I do not want to repeat. The Indian media resorts to propaganda against us and the Indian government comments on our internal matters that do not help to build a good working relation.

How can Indo-Lanka and Indo Bangladesh relations be measured in the same way while we share a vast border with India. There are cultural and historical aspects that make the matter totally different. I agree that there is a negative mentality about India among Bangladeshi people but it is only actions of India that make us think so. But India never helps to remove those confusions and we on the other hand are showing a sense of greater responsibility by allowing Indian channels, goods etc in our country. Investment from Tata is not found suitable for our country and so it is not allowed. Do you think India will allow any controversial investment that may make them suffer in the long run?

So if it is the time to break the ice, as a bigger and more responsible neighbour India should act positively.

Md. Jamal U. Tanin
CMC, Chittagong

Life of eunuchs

Humans, by a divine order, are of two kinds male & female. Yet there is another group that does not belong to any of the above two they are eunuchs-- Humans of third kind. The other day, while watching a TV programme on them on a private channel, I came to notice, to my utter dismay, the enormous pains & sorrows of these humans.

They were expressing the pains and sorrows that they encounter at every turn of their life. Society doesn't recognise them, community doesn't recognise them and so doesn't the country. They don't have a profession to earn a living; they don't have a legal identity in the society that they live in. They are harassed throughout their lives at every level. Listening to them was a heart-wrenching experience. It was really saddening a fact when they being asked to express their wish or demand to the people or the nation they just expressed or wished to be treated humanely by all around them.... it seemed to me that they are destined to suffer and was wondering who will stand for them?

Before I conclude, I would like to urge the government to take some humane measures to add something to their life. The NGOs and

the civil society should also come up to help these people.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

American plan in Middle East

Mr. Bush, the President of the all powerful US, is pursuing a definite plan in Middle East. It started with the imaginary search for WMD in Iraq and the subsequent invasion. Mr. Bush and his British lackey Mr. Blair knew it for certain that there was no weapon of mass destruction

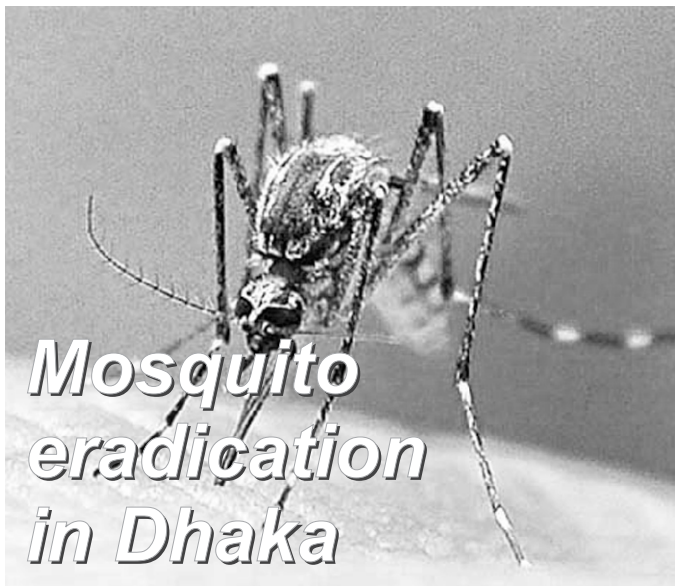
Lebanon to demolish Hezbollah along with Hamas. In both the fronts children and women are the prime victims. The Arab and Muslim nations are silent spectators. Mr. Bush has another agenda with Iran. Here the plea is nuke proliferation.

But the poor planning of Bush is faltering everywhere. His name is already written in history as a war monger along with Chengez Khan and Hitler.

Musa Huq, Uttara, Dhaka-1230

Adult sites

With the evolution of Internet tech-



During my recent trip to Dhaka, I noticed absence of mosquitoes. I am guessing that this effect is not natural but a product of the government's mosquito eradication programmes. It appears to have gone unnoticed by the media.

The people's fight against malfeasance, misrule, and corruption in government might be more effective if their complaints against the bad apples are matched by their recognition of the good ones. In the case of mosquito abatement, I would think that there must be some dedicated and hard working individuals in an otherwise bloated, underpaid, and corrupt bureaucracy that have delivered a valuable public service.

Their achievement should be acknowledged.

Cha-am Jamal, Thailand

In Iraq, Now the other phase started. President Yasser Arafat was poisoned physically or psychologically. Seizure of his office for weeks without electricity and water and continuous bombing in the surrounding areas were surely psychological pressure which could shatter anybody of his age. So called moderates were brought to power. But Palestinian people opted for a more radical party, this time it's HAMAS. In Lebanon American ally Mr. Rafiq Hariri was killed in a massive explosion. Americans and their lackeys blamed Syrian leadership and forced the Syrian forces to vacate Lebanon. Now Israel invaded

nology and its new inventions and application of software, the world has become much smaller. But it is not an unmixed blessing.

At home, our kids need to download certain materials for their home work. But if parents are not careful then they can get easy access to the adult sites which will have ill side effects on the young kids.

We, therefore, are requesting the authorities to issue a legal notice and implement it through all the Internet service providers.

Waliul Islam
Apollo Hospital, Dhaka-1229