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Stop domestic violence



Gender inequality is deeply embedded in the structure of the patriarchal society of Bangladesh. Male dominance and female subordination are the basic tenets of our social structure. All Bangladeshi social institutions permit, even encourage, the demonstration of the unequal power relation between the sexes and try to perpetuate the interests of patriarchy. Bangladeshi families offer instances of the display of male dominance in intimate relation in the form of marital violence.

The media and NGOs such as Mahila Parishad, BRAC, Grameen Bank, Proshika, Women for Women, Ain O Shalish Kendra, Nari Pokkho, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) etc have brought to light numerous cases of domestic violence in the country and the senselessness of such acts.

Data from one of the study indicates that one of the most common causes of violence is wives not doing their housework properly, especially if the food is not prepared on time or properly.

Apart from physical abuse (common in the low income class), psychological abuse is also prevalent, particularly in middle class families.

The news of violence against women published every day in the newspapers is by and large about domestic violence. According to one estimate, among the total number of reports on violence against women published in the major dailies in 2004, there were 293 incidents of physical abuse, 978 murders, and 408 suicides. Of them 92 incidents of physical abuse, 650 murders, and 386 suicides were the result of domestic violence. Even outside the country, domestic violence has reared its ugly head.

Domestic violence is not recognised as an offence in Bangladesh. The absence of a specific law to deal with it thus often results in misuse of law. For example, women are often advised to file case under the dowry law, as there is a law on this issue. But the fact remains that dowry

Great win against India

It was undoubtedly a brilliant performance on the part of Bangladeshi cricketers at the Queen's Park Oval against the Indians. We enjoyed the night with great enthusiasm. Though I am staying far away from my country, I glued myself to the television set. The most pleasing thing is that we won in every department of the game--- bowling, fielding and batting. Just imagine what a great performance it was! Bowlers took the wickets, batters got the runs and fielders took the catches like birds.

Soon after watching the emphatic victory we burst into joyous tears. Even in the midnight I, along with my close mates, marched towards the Altaf Ali Park (East London) to celebrate the big night. Thousands of Bengalees gathered to share the feelings.

Don't treat our win as an upset. If we do so that will amount to a total disgrace to our dare devil players. It is the victory of real industry and discipline. Well done, Tigers!

Saumitra Sarder Piklu
London University
London

Indians lose

The poor performance of star cricketers of India in their first World Cup match against Bangladesh raises a big question mark on the wisdom of various state governments having showered hard-earned public money, prime land and other costly benefits for individual performances of cricketers in selected matches like was done for Dhoni when he received Rs 5 lakh cash-award and a plot of land in Ranchi from the Jharkhand government for his unbeaten 183 runs in Jaipur one-dayer! Affluence of cricketers due to such rewards and money-minting advertisements is one of major reasons for general poor performance of our cricketers after their initial successes. Their main concentration shifts to minting money, rather than practicing for the game.

The cricket board president, coach, captain and chairperson of the selection-committee should be held accountable for the poor performance of cricketers. One-man one-post principle should be there for all individuals and institutions so as not to allow a Union Minister or some other over-occupied person to become BCCI president. India should opt for a computerised selection of cricket-team on the basis of data of possible team-members at least on trial basis. Cricket has become a national craze for Indians.

Therefore, software should

incorporate public views about team-selection. It may be noted that 'audience-poll' is only rarely wrong in popular TV quiz KBC!

Madhu Agrawal
Delhi, India

Congratulations!

My heartiest felicitation to all the players who made it possible. Credit goes to the young cricketers and the way they dismantled India. From bowling to fielding to batting they were ahead of India. The Indian team looked like an ordinary side. I hope this is just the beginning and from now on Bangladesh cricket team will be a force to reckon with.

The Tigers are prowling and this is a warning to the cricket world.

Munna, Dhanmondi

It was a dream five-wicket victory in their opening ICC Cricket World Cup match. Our target has been achieved through the brilliance of some of our players like Tamim Iqbal, Mortaza, Saqibul Hasan and wicket-keeper Mushfiqur Rahim etc. The world has simply been rendered speechless by what they've just seen, I believe.

In fact, the absence of doubt, or praise otherwise, is the greatest compliment that Bangladesh has yet received as a Test nation. The general feeling after the first win in the World Cup 2007 is that the Tigers' efforts deserve greater recognition. In the opener, the best of Bangladesh was showcased.

Viva Bangladesh!

Sirajul Islam
Pisciculture Housing Society
Shyamoli, Dhaka

Biman's swan song

I am shocked by Biman's using the near-fatal accident in Dubai to argue for the purchase of four new aircraft. As your editorial pointed out, Biman's problems are far worse than just the aging aircraft. The structural ailment of the organisation is beyond cure, and I would argue for withdrawing its life support of government subsidy.

While other airlines have found routes into and out of Dhaka so lucrative that the number of foreign carriers servicing the country has grown manifold over the past decades, Biman has been languishing, incurring unprecedented debts. While on its way down, the organisation seems to be bent on taking others, such as the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation along.

Blaming the aging aircraft, many of which were purchased at enormously inflated prices, which helped line the pockets of many, will not acquit Biman of the allegations of its mismanagement and corruption. A good picture of these was portrayed

in The Daily Star of October 8, 2006.

Biman has one of the highest aircraft to employee ratio, an indicator of an airline's efficiency. To compound the problem, the unholy grasp of some of its union bosses has restricted whatever possibilities the organisation had to reach its potential.

I would like to end with one personal incident illustrative of Biman's customer service. Several years ago, I had gone to the Motijheel office of Biman to reconfirm a return flight to the United States. My ticket was a discounted business class one. Near the employee taking care of the confirmation process sat another person, reading a newspaper. Then he engaged in a chat with another visitor. When I made a request to the concerned person for a specific seat, he commented aloud: "Flies on a discounted ticket, and requests a choice seat!", to which I retorted that perhaps because this was a discounted ticket they should consider seating me in the toilet. Another example of Biman's less than stellar customer service almost anyone who has flown Biman must have experienced: Anytime there was a delay at the starting or transit point, and there were countless in Biman's life,

all Biman personnel would promptly vanish leaving passengers to compare guesses as to when they may start or resume their journeys. Never an apology!

Taufiq Choudhury
On e-mail

BCB

Cricket is a buzz word in our daily life now. We love cricket because it is not only a game but a symbol of our unity. As we expect professionalism from our players, we want the same thing from the management of the BCB. I think the BCB has to be transparent.

People have the right to know how it is run.

Mohammad Anisur Rahman
Pahartali, Chittagong

Make Bangla an official UN language

The UN has its eight official languages, but not Bangla. The UNESCO, UNO declared February 21 as the International Mother Language Day in recognition of the Language Movement in 1952 in Bangladesh.

Now it should consider making

Bangla an official UN language.

Saif Tinku
On e-mail

Foreign diplomats

I agree wholeheartedly with all but one of the points made by Dr. S. I. Zaman (The Daily Star, 6 March 2007). However, if we look at our political history, interference in the affairs of Bangladesh is unavoidable and, frankly, welcome.

The political parties (BNP and AL) always lobbied with foreign diplomats and brought them into our affairs! Our governments do not speak with any authority, on any subject, on the international stage. We look weak and attract interference based on pity. We like to think that the US and EU are very busy trying to rob us or influence us.

Don't be surprised if diplomats want to interfere when our nation puts up an open ended display of the most ridiculous kind of politics. We have to look smart and act smart. Then people will listen to our smart talk.

We can't afford to act like naughty school children!

Ezajur Rahman
On e-mail

A good answer

I remember those who criticised the Test status of Bangladesh cricket team. The win of Bangladesh cricket team against India in the World Cup 2007 has given the answer to their question. Newspapers and other electronic media (including BBC World) should change their headlines from a "surprise victory" to "victory" as this is not a surprise anymore for us to beat Pakistan, India, Australia, New Zealand and so on.

No one should forget that Sri Lanka won the World Cup after 20 years of struggle - a long way to success. We can do what Sri Lanka did. I twas Sri Lanka who introduced pinch hitting in the first 15 overs - the new way of ODI cricket.

Faruk Ahmed
AIT, Thailand

Let politicians learn

Perhaps time has come for our politicians to learn from cricket. Our cricketers delivered results unlike the politicians. Our cricketers now can teach techniques of how to be fast learners.

I am sure there are some ground rules worth applying to every field, no matter whether it is politics or cricket.

Mohammad Zakaria
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

New Bangladesh

Apart from the anti-corruption drive, some other things should be put forward as suggestions to the CTG :

1. The CTG should make an infrastructure of future Bangladesh, because although they are not elected, they are capable and people are with them.
2. The tourist department can earn foreign currency very quickly. Cox's Bazaar should be a good start.
3. The garments industry can get access to western countries provided the government ensures minimum wage for workers and prevent exploitation.
4. The education system should be reviewed. Not only the public universities but good colleges have also been destroyed systematically with appointments of low quality teachers.

People have the right to know how it is run.

Dr Mohammad Karim
Australia

Drive against corruption

From glitzy Hummer to spotted deer, from posh suburban villa to sheets of corrugated iron, from occupied public land to exotic peacocks--the variety and magnitude of the accumulations of the erstwhile men of the people would never cease to surprise the common people of the country and the

world at large. Now that a drive is going on against the corrupt, we have the opportunity to glimpse the abysmal depth to which the morality of those , who had been entrusted with the responsibility of public welfare, has fallen into.

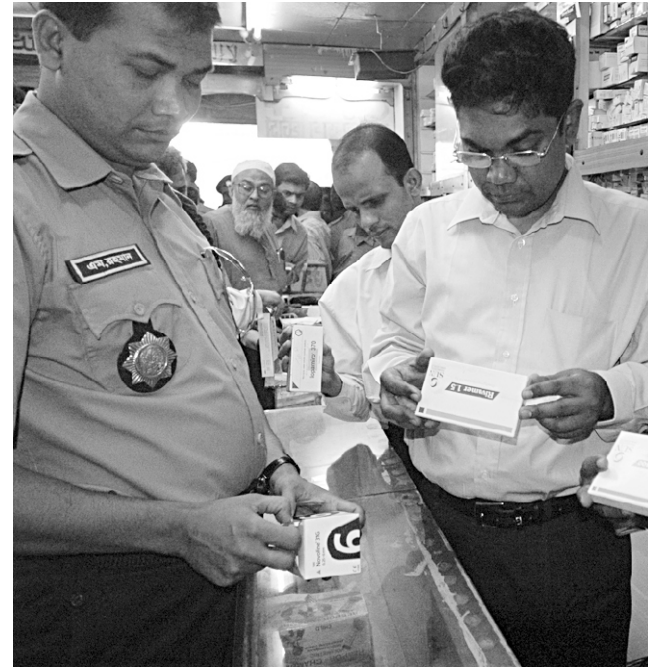
It seems that corruption has spread its tentacles throughout the upper echelons of the whole state machinery, to speak nothing of the malpractice of the subalterns. It is appalling that instead of serving the people the honourable ministers committed acts that amount to pillage and plunder of public money --acts that were unbecoming and unseemly of their dignity. As we read about the misdeeds of the fallen heroes, we feel a degree of

injustice practiced for so many years by these Godfathers of crime and help break this vicious cycle.

Dr. Md. Mostafizur Khan
McMaster University Hospital
Hamilton, Canada

It is absolutely fantastic to read and see the government taking a hard stance on corruption in Bangladesh. I do hope that all of these criminals, once convicted, will be sent to jail for a very long time, so that they do not interfere with the running of the country ever again. After all they are nothing but thieves!!

While the CTG has taken firm actions against the corrupt politicians they must also take the same tough actions against another



Spurious MEDICINES

The whole system, as it is observed with much awe, is adulterated by the unscrupulous businessmen. We have got the faith back as the present CTG has launched a crusade against all kinds of crimes and the criminals, including cleansing of the mess in the food sector. We would like to draw the kind attention of the government to the fact that same sort of drive in the medicine sector is very much required. There have been numerous reports in the media that spurious medicines have flooded the market. A recent discovery that unveiled the horrendous act of making fake insulin at a homeopathic store is indeed a stark pointer to the fact that this sector also demands a serious dealing on an urgent basis.

We urge the authorities concerned to undertake an immediate drive in this particular sector and remove yet another nightmarish curse.

Rafiqul Islam Rime, Agrabad, Chittagong

shame at this demonstration of human depravity and degradation of morality.

Let the authorities carry on this courageous crusade against corruption.

Zabed Wali
Pahartali, Chittagong

We are elated at the recent developments in Bangladesh. The steps taken by the caretaker govt. are not only historic but a fulfillment of the long cherished dream of every conscious and patriotic citizen of the country.

The recent arrests of the corrupt and crackdown on crimes in different sectors, irrespective of political and social affiliation and status, is a major breakthrough in the country's history and a very brave move by the CTG. These mighty have always been beyond the reach of the existing law by virtue of their connection to power and illegally looted public money and wealth. Many innocent people have been cruelly deprived of their rights, and their hopes and dreams perished and they were subjected to inhuman sufferings. A very conducive environment has now been created to finger point the irregularities and

corridor of corruption - namely the "police department". The police have a very bad record as being one of the most corrupt group of public servants in the country. Allegations of corruption in the police force are very high. They are known for taking bribes for releasing criminals, recording false and fabricated cases without making an official enquiry etc.

While the drive against corruption amongst politicians is very encouraging, the government must take measures to investigate corruption amongst police officials as well.

M.A Malique
Managing Directo, Sarga Group UK

Private college teachers

The caretaker government is doing a tremendous job. The head of the CTG has recently called upon the people to build a just and knowledge-based society. We have come to know that this caretaker government is going to take steps to bring about reforms in the education sector as well, we are ready to welcome any move of this government.

Here we would like to draw the

attention of the CTG to take up the matter of the sheer injustice towards private college teachers done by the past governments. We (from a sweeper to a principal) enjoy only Tk. 100 as house rent per month by which even a place in the footpath cannot be found. Again, we get the increment and medical allowance according to the national pay-scale of 1991. Teachers' promotion and placement in higher scales have been stopped for the last four years. Prices are not cheap for us. But the hard reality is that we enjoy a little of the national pay-scale.

So, in order to promote quality education through the private colleges the CTG should come forward to remove the discriminatory treatment given to us.

We earnestly hope that the CTG will look deep into the problems of the teachers.

Shafiuzzaman Khan
Senior Lecturer in English
Habiganj

Plaques and names

Through your daily I would suggest that the present government remove plaques from all places. There must be some laid down rules on what grounds a plaque can be placed and also when they are naming a public property. It is totally unethical and not acceptable to set a plaque on an individual's name while the total cost of the project/establishment was borne by the government. If all such plaques' total cost is accumulated, we could possibly make an important bridge on a river.

Noor-ul Wahab
Housing Estate, Sylhet

Police Act 1861

Can't believe that our much maligned police fore is being governed by the old Colonial Police Act of 1861 ("Straight Line" in DS 24/2/07).

This is indirect sabotage of good governance by the elected regimes since 1971.

The current CTG may set the ball rolling for urgent reforms of the 1861 Police Act. No wonder the police can't work the way they should.

Alif Zabr
Dhaka

The government's job

I was very happy when I saw the reform work that the caretaker government was performing when it came to power. But lately I have a feeling that it's trying to do more than it can handle. Corruption is such a disease in our society that if you really want to remove it you might have to remove 80% of our politicians, government officers, businessmen & law enforcing officers. I don't think that is possible. We didn't get to this stage in a few days. It started since our independence. So if someone thinks they can clean it out in a year or two they must be living in a dream world. The CTG should have its priorities and should realise it limitations. The goal should be to catch at least the top corrupt ones and file solid cases against them and make sure they are convicted. Publishing 50 names every few weeks will not do anything in the long run. It will only reduce the amount of limited resources we have to prosecute them and without prosecution these guys will come out of jail emboldened and start doing the things they did before. The CTG doesn't have infinite time to do everything so they should set some examples in terms of prosecuting some of the corrupt ones and also make sure they strengthen institutions like ACC that can carry it forward even when the next government comes to power.

Saiful Alam, Texas, US

Violation of human rights

The present drive of the government against the corrupt people has been acclaimed not only by the majority people in Bangladesh but also by the people abroad. But the government has to address the issue of human rights violation in right earnest. For example, the crossfire culture that was started by the previous government has not stopped. The government, I think, is aware of this issue.

Citizens have the right to have fair and equal treatment by the state.

Malik Akram Hossain
Hong Kong

Police force



The government is trying to bring transparency to all the sectors. As part of it, the government carried out a major reshuffle in police force and cancelled all illegal and controversial appointments of SIs and sergeants. Now the police department is also trying to improve its image among the people. The government should take some necessary steps to make our police personnel smart, efficient and well equipped. Side by side, their remuneration and other facilities must be increased.

The money recovered from the corrupt elements can easily be spent for this purpose.

Md Rafiqul Islam
Sir AF Rahman Hall
Dhaka University