

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.

### General's assertion

While responding to reporters' questions at the Bangladesh High Commission in London a few days ago, General Moeen U Ahmed made it clear, as he did previously on many occasions, that he has no desire to become president.

We love to believe that General Moeen's assertion is the answer to all speculations.

Pabu Chakma  
West Sheurapara  
Mirpur, Dhaka

### Reform euphoria

Long time ago, US President Theodore Roosevelt said, "All those blatant sham reformers, in the name of new morality, preach the old, old vice and self-indulgence which rotted out first the moral fibre, and then even the external greatness of Greece and Rome."

Is Bangladesh next? Are we to be "rotted out by sham reformers"? Are we to be a pathetic Bangladeshi who say, "I don't know and I don't care"?

I don't think so. I believe we are at the banquet and Bangladeshi are feasting on the political consequences of the last thirty-five years.

They don't like the taste of the political concoctions they've been fed and are demanding and working for change.

Gopal Sengupta  
Montreal, Canada

### Reaz Rahman on Shehabuddin book

This is with reference to the recent letters on Mr. K. M. Shehabuddin's book "There and Back Again: A Diplomat's Tale" (University Press Ltd., Dhaka, 2005)" by the former state minister/advisor of Khaleda-Nizami's government - Mr. Reaz Rahman (September 24, 2007), Mr. Reazul Karim (October 01, 2007), Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmed (October 05, 2007) and two earlier book reviews by Syed Badrul Ahsan

(September 08, 2007) and Mr. Muhammad Zamir (January 17, 2006).

During the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war, the activities of Mr. Reaz Rahman and many like-minded persons betrayed the interests of Bangladesh in general and freedom loving Bengali diplomats in particular. So it is quite natural that the bizarre logic behind not joining the liberation war and continuing serving Pakistan now given by Mr. Reaz Rahman is difficult for many to accept, let alone understand. And one could not agree more with Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmed's comment, "By not joining the most momentous event of our history, Reaz Rahman has not lost anything. He has been rather more than amply rewarded. He rose to the highest position in his foreign service career, the post of foreign secretary, and finally minister of state for foreign affairs. That is why he now has the 'courage' to defend his decision not to join the liberation war and maligns the historical role of K M Shehabuddin as the first diplomatic soldier in our liberation war."

Late Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury could not complete his 1971 memoirs and there are only a few books on the 1971 Bangladesh diplomatic front. I strongly request all living diplomatic soldiers (including the non-diplomats) like typists, drivers etc. in Pakistan foreign missions to pen down their 1971 experiences in detail and let "all the cats out of the bag" to correct the already distorted liberation war history.

### Australian polls

Australia, heading for a Presidential poll next month, has been a trusted ally of US-led terror wars in Middle East that saw the fall of Afghanistan and Iraq. John Howard, the Australian prime

see (except few newspaper photos) of fellow citizens, starving; lucky even to have a scrap of boiled stem of banana trees, shrubs and other wild plants; to stave off the painful pangs of hunger; and that too not daily!

Is this the manifestation of patriotism, fellow-feeling and morality?

It's idle to think; but surely; the worthies at the helm of our country could easily have helicoptered down among the hungry, sparing a few morsels of food for them. It could be done with the funds saved by cutting off all useless wasteful decorations; and empty display of gaiety. Maybe

# Eid & starvation!



MUNIR UZ ZAMAN / ORKNEWS

## Partition of India



The main problems of population migration that arose from the independence of the Indian sub-continent from the British Rule was not the creation of India and Pakistan as such. Jinnah wanted partition of the country into Pakistan and India, mainly on religious grounds, but he also argued fiercely with Mountbatten and his advisers (I read in one

of Mountbatten's biographies that the argument at the final stages of independence went through a whole night), against partition of the provinces of Bengal and Punjab and demanded that these two Muslim majority provinces which had existed for many years with their democratic provincial legislatures and governments must remain in tact and be allocated to Pakistan. Mountbatten was adamant that if religion was the basis to divide the country as a whole then the same principle must be applied to these provinces as well.

If these provinces were not partitioned but in their wholeness of existence as before became part of Pakistan, then India would have remained a Hindu country with large Muslim minority, and Pakistan a Muslim country with large Hindu (or Sikh and other) minorities. Both countries therefore would have been forced to pursue only secular democratic policies acceptable to all factions of populations within them, (like the erstwhile British), whether it was largely a Hindu or a Muslim country.

In such an event independence and partition would have provided a much better opportunity for peaceful coexistence between the two countries with political thinking very much like the British, with much higher potential for development and progress for both India and Pakistan.

But of course Mountbatten was no Solomon! Engineer Shafiq Ahmed  
London, UK

hending if those unscrupulous people in the Directorate of Health under the Ministry of Health & Public Welfare, responsible for last years' malpractice depriving thousands of meritorious, genuine students of their legitimate right are still active.

May I fervently appeal to the Adviser in-charge and the honest, dignified and dedicated high officials of the ministry and the department as well, to look into the matter very seriously.

Dharami M Barman  
Tejgaon, Dhaka

### Enforcement of law

It has been noticed that due to the failure of the authorities to enforce any law, public respect for its compliance is eroding fast. People do not seem to show any respect for any law as they can get away with the violation easily. For example, an anti-smoking law was promulgated long ago prohibiting public smoking. But has it been implemented? the answer is a big NO. Because there is no authority to implement this law. Recently, horn free zones were declared for some particular streets and places in the city. But the drivers of the vehicles are not showing any respect for the law and there is no

one to enforce it. As a result, hooting is rampant in those restricted areas. The traffic authorities now have come up with another directive prohibiting use of mobile phone or ear phone while driving. But as usual this directive is also totally ignored in the absence of any attempt to enforce its implementation.

If the authorities are not in a position to enforce the law, then why enact those laws? Such practices greatly diminishes public respect for any law. There is no point in enacting any law only to be disregarded by the public, unless effective steps are taken for its instant implementation.

Mohammad Ataul Hoque  
One-mail

### DU incident

The government promptly set up a one-man judicial inquiry commission to look into the DU incident. Since the commission has started its function, we have seen sporadic comments from the witnesses in print and electronic media reports.

The matter is under inquiry. We do not want to make any comment on the substance or any other aspect of the inquiry. But on the procedural issue, one might raise a question: is it an open inquiry or a closed door inquiry? The type of

enforcement if those unscrupulous people in the Directorate of Health under the Ministry of Health & Public Welfare, responsible for last years' malpractice depriving thousands of meritorious, genuine students of their legitimate right are still active.

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### Sugar crisis

Recently BTV started showing a feature on the bad effects of consuming Indian sugar which is available in our local market. Indian sugar contains ingredients like hydrogen peroxide H2O2 which can cause severe damage to health.

Concentrated hydrogen peroxide (50%) is corrosive, and even domestic-strength solutions can cause irritation to the eyes, mucous membranes and skin. Swallowing hydrogen peroxide solutions is particularly dangerous, as decomposition in the stomach releases large quantities of gas (10 times the volume of a 3% solution) leading to internal bleeding. Inhalation over 10% can cause severe pulmonary irritation.

The general people don't know much about this. I think there should be a wider publicity of the bad effect of the Indian white sugar. Another thing is that the local sugar is not available everywhere. There are only a few market places where the Bangladeshi sugar is found.

Cantara Wall Ruhil, DU

### Europe and India

Regarding the 'independence' of India and Pakistan, I have to mention that 'undivided' India or Bharat was always independent and had outstanding economic, academic and cultural excellence until the 'British traders' arrived. After the British finished 'trading and ruling' the foundation was laid not for 2 but 3 countries India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Unfortunately, B'desh became the youngest child abandoned at birth by a large family although once Bengal was one of the richest regions on earth. Today the European colonialists, once racing to grab the Indian resources, are united under 'EU'. But there is also a mighty shine fiercely emerging from the United South Asian platform under 'Saarc'. MM Rahman London, UK

A local English daily's staff corre-

spondent's vivid front page report

(Oct:17) with accompanying statis-

tics on the desperate food scarcity in

Northern Bangladesh should shame

us all beyond words. It highlights the

contrasts in Eid Day scene; of white

and black; pomp and poverty; hun-

ger and Hummer that are sadly

around us! We are bored seeing smil-

ing handshakes of the top personnel

governing this unfortunate land;

exchanging Eid greetings with well

fed, well dressed and well-to-do

grand ladies and gentlemen around

them. We sometimes hear, but rarely

see (except few newspaper photos) of

fellow citizens, starving; lucky even

to have a scrap of boiled stem of

banana trees, shrubs and other wild

plants; to stave off the painful pangs

of hunger; and that too not daily!

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could easily have helicoptered down

among the hungry, sparing a few

morsels of food for them. It could be

done with the funds saved by cutting

off all useless wasteful decorations;

and empty display of gaiety. Maybe

from these savings the state could

have provided a reasonable meal of

simple "Dhal-Bhat" for the many,

many, hungry and starving children

and grown ups.

Cutting down on all pomp and

glory and feeding the needy and

hungry; would have been a shining

example of humility, service and

honour in the eyes of Allah whom we

praise and remember at the Salat-ul-

Fitr.

S.A.Mansoor

An ashamed person

### NBR chairman

Change of NBR chairman is a

routine function . But it is

news since people feel that the imme-

diate past chairman was talking too

much, which was beyond the

normal discipline of a bureaucrat.

Kumar Prithviraj Nath

Toronto, Canada

### Caretaker government