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## Victory Day

16 December is a day that takes me back to the day when I stood with other freedom fighters in the then Race Course, Dhaka and witnessed the surrender of the last colonial commander on our soil. We believed on that day without any reservation that, hence the good people of this long subjugated country would be the sole owners of this land and shall govern themselves. With that hope, I returned to Dhaka Medical College to continue my studies to become a physician.

But, 36 years later, I wish I were as young as I was then, because that wish and dream was not redeemed! Further struggle is necessary for that 'tryst with destiny' of this nation to come true.

One after another, all those leaders who held the banner of freedom high, Bangabandhu, the slain four National Leaders, Zia, Khaled Mosharraf, Monzur, Taher and many more freedom fighter officers of the Army were eliminated by the conspiracy of the establishment that remains as of today pro-Pakistan. The war criminals ascended to the pinnacle of power in this country that we fought for and brought into being. Bangabandhu was too soft and kind, he did allow the whole civil administration to function with the same officers (CSP and EPCS, PFS etc) who only the other day took orders from Yahya Khan. He allowed, the repatriated army officers to join the ranks of the Army that was raised through a freedom struggle. Fidel Castro in the Afro-Asia summit expressed his surprise and dismay to Bangabandhu on this issue. Our great leader

did pay dearly and the nation continues to pay for that. Pakistan did not allow any of the 95 thousand soldiers who surrendered in Bangladesh to rejoin their ranks, actually ex-captives are never taken back in any army of the world. Soldiers who fought in the Western Front against India in December, 1971 and who later spent two years in Pakistani custody could not have understood the essence of our freedom struggle.

All the Advisers in the present CTG were young enough to join the freedom struggle. They wish to set up National Security Council as a watchdog body over the government and Legislature, they wish to remove our leaders and want their chosen people to be elected, they make and publish lists of "corrupt" people without following the due process of law. This is not understood in Bangladesh and therefore unsustainable in the long run.

But as a freedom fighter, thousands of miles away from home, I am still optimistic. The torch is being passed on to a new generation of Bangladeshis, who were born and raised as Bangladeshis, inspired by the freedom struggle, disciplined and experienced by the hardship of dictatorial rule, that still lingers on as a hang-over from the colonial era.

On the eve of 16 December, I truly and firmly believe that the essence of our glorious freedom struggle will blend with the spirit of Bangladesh, in my lifetime.

M. Hussain  
On e-mail

## The prince and Rupali bank

Why is a Saudi prince so adamant on buying the state-owned Rupali Bank? Can you release more details about this prince? Who is he and what is his rank in the royal family? Does he wield a lot of influence? Is his interest purely financial and to earn a profit or is it more complicated? I urge the government of Bangladesh not to rush into this sale.

People just don't buy banks to make money only - they use the financial power to pursue other goals! Just look at Pakistan and Afghanistan... Rafat Husein  
One-mail

## VCs

During the last BNP-jamaat rule, public university VCs were chosen or handpicked from the bona fide cadres of the party supporters. These party loyalists turned the

public universities into party organs. Corruption reports of crores of taka siphoned off by these party cadre VCs appeared as headlines in the leading national dailies. But so far no investigation has been conducted by the Anti Corruption Commission in this respect. Perhaps the Commission is busy with the political leaders!

The higher education sector is in a mess and unfortunately none of the previous governments went for any reform in the education sector. Public University management, Acts and Ordinances should be thoroughly overhauled and partisan policies curtailed to save huge wastage of public resources. Acitizen  
One-mail

## BBC World and brothel in Mongla

While I was in the UK, my letters used to get published in your daily quite regularly.

Now I am in Hong Kong, I don't

know if my place has made my letters less attractive. I believe my discussions and presentations are much realistic. Most of the times I discuss topics, which are most relevant to development of Bangladesh.

However, today I am going to ask a couple of important questions on an important but often neglected topic. It is important because we have been regularly facing natural calamities, which are blamed on 'Global Warming' or on 'Barrages on Natural Flows of Water of Major Rivers in a neighbouring country'. Today, I happened to come across for a couple of minutes BBC's coverage of a brothel in Mongla. Whatever they have discussed, my question is, 'Don't we have anything better to present to the world?' and 'Why in the first place we are maintaining brothels to please alien sailors or customers from within the country?'

Fortunately, in Bangladesh the profile of AIDS-related problems is still better than that of many coun-

tries. To respect and recognise the labour of hard working women, especially in the garments sector, we should not let any woman go into that track on the plea of poverty. To put it also in a different perspective, we should not allow men and women to put any woman into that track by exploiting her social situation or condition.

Mahmud  
Star Mansion  
TST, KLN, HK

## Remembering the valiant

In the month of December we gained our freedom. Our well-deserved freedom was won after we defeated the Pakistani colonial army. More than three million people were killed by the Pakistanis. And a huge number of people lost everything in that war. The Pakistanis committed crimes against humanity.

Can we show a little respect to those who made this freedom possible through sacrificing their lives?

I think the issue is not getting due attention.  
Hasnat Ahsan Jyoti  
Dhaka

## Relocate Kamalapur station

The idea of having a modern railway station at Kamalapur was conceived in the early sixties and delivered in the mid seventies. At that time, the requirement suited to that of a growing provincial capital. At that time we were told that the Kamalapur Station would be the largest in Asia. The Bengalees believed whatever they were told. However, after independence, when opportunities came for us to travel abroad, we soon realised that the story was far from true. Since Independence, with the sudden transformation of the city into the national capital, the population increased more than twenty-fold. The movement of passengers as well as goods has increased tremendously. The railway runs through the heart of the city and traffic movement comes to a standstill at more than dozen crossings causing serious impediment to the city dwellers.

The present caretaker govt. has taken a number of bold steps to mitigate public sufferings. I shall request the authorities to immediately relocate the Kamalapur Railway Station to Tongi and to convert the existing railway track from Banani to Kamalapur into national highway. This will provide the city dwellers with an alternative road and help remove the traffic congestion to a great extent.  
Dr. Shamim Ahmed  
Gulshan, Dhaka

## Rangs Bhaban tragedy

The very night when the Rangs Bhaban tragedy took place, I listened to the Al-Jazeera TV news. It said that in that pathetic accident 7 persons were killed and about 200 people had been missing. Our electronic media at that time confirmed the killing of only one person.

So far they have confirmed the death toll to be four. My question is, how one foreign television channel has confirmed the death toll to be seven? Perhaps the number of those killed and missing will rise after proper investigation. We want to know the real situation. The people responsible for the tragedy must not go unpunished.  
Shaikh Abdul Kabir Molla  
Mirpur, Dhaka

# Birth of Bangladesh

"It was best of the time, it was worst of the time." It was turmoil, fragility, uncertainty and bloodshed. Black clouds hung over our heads, shaking gunfire engulfed the Dhaka city and people including teen youths were escaping from their birth soil.

A baby-bearing mother could not escape from the danger, from the horror and from the butchery. A baby came to the earth and took the air, light and mom's affection. The mother had to reside here and there in fear of alien evils to save her newborn baby.

The father who did not get the chance to see his newborn baby marched to fight against the butchers. The only days-old baby could not, however, get the opportunity to see, to touch, to smell and to smile to its dad. Its father sacrificed himself for a great mission such as, in lieu of his own life, his only baby could be reared up on the soil of the freed country.

Bangladesh as a free state was born after the nine-month long struggle against the evil occupation forces. Like the frightened baby-bearing mother it had tried to save its children. It paved the way for her children not to live like slaves.

Thirty-six years after, my motherland is celebrating its glorious independence flying balloons, firing gunshots in commemoration of the forefathers' sacrifices.

Happy Victory Day to all.  
MAH Nazim  
Dept. of Political Science, DU



## 'Tales of the Biranganas'

The feature article 'Tales of the Biranganas' (The Daily Star, December 14, 2007) again brought tears to my eyes and evoked a sense of rage. Indeed, the Pakistan army could not commit such atrocities without the active help of their Al-Badr and Razakar war criminal slaves. On the other hand, Bangladeshi people and governments in the last 36 years created the 'eighth wonder of the world' by not trying these killers and by rehabilitating them in every sphere of life.

A snake is a snake even though it sloughs off its skin. Sympathisers of 1971 war criminals should be locked into (late) Tota Mia's 'snake cage'.  
M. Enad  
Oxford, UK

## Bangladesh exhibition in Paris

I have been shocked to see the protests in your newspaper by some well-known personalities about the proposed exhibition of Bangladesh antiquities in Paris. I have recently attended a remarkable exhibition of ancient Indian art in France and saw how others like me viewing these objects were moved and engaged by what they saw. It is a great pity that we are not giving the same chance to others to learn about Bangladesh and our rich culture.

Can we be told why this is happening and who are the people responsible? Why do they oppose showing our cultural heritage to the world?  
Sarwar Riaz  
One-mail

## "Bangladesh 1971"

It is immensely pleasing to see the successful holding of the first ever seminar held outside Bangladesh on the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistanis in Bangladesh in 1971. It is even more satisfying to see that the whole idea of organising such a seminar and proposal for initiating the scope of academic research on Bangladesh genocide and introducing the same as a Post Graduate course in Holocaust and Genocide Studies programme at Kean University is the brainchild of young Bangladeshi Arif Rahman, born after liberation. I must thank and congratulate Arif Rahman and his team of young Bangladeshis.

I would also like to congratulate Dr. Bernard Weinstein, Dr. Raunaq Jahan, Mr. M.M.R. Jalal, Dr. Nasir, Dr. Sachi G. Dasgupta, Dr. Nurunnabi and survivors and family members of the victims for attending the seminar and sharing their thoughts. Such patronage extended to the young people is highly appreciable.  
Zahid Shafi  
Edison  
New Jersey

## We need a change

What happened in our public universities after the emergence of the caretaker government? Isn't the condition better than before? I don't like this state of emergency but as we see it works better to control those students and some of the teachers. 'Student politics' is nice to hear the term as it is representing the concept of democracy. But its consequence and effects are harmful. Our parents' dreams revolve around our

achievements. And when we lose our precious time in university just for some 'sick' people, we become frustrated. The private universities in our country do not have the facilities like the public universities, but they are doing well!

We want a better future, better environment.  
Nazmus Shaker Nafi  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
International Islamic University  
Malaysia

## Underground railway or elevated expressway

The letter on underground and elevated expressway by Mr. O H Kabir (The Daily Star, 12/12/2007) does reflect the reality of traffic problem for commuters of Dhaka city. I do agree with most of the points given by him. I would like to add a few more points in this regard.

1. If all garments factories can be shifted to a special zone outside Dhaka, then the traffic congestion can be reduced by at least 1/5th (4 million people can be shifted out of the metropolitan area).
2. Restrict issuance of route permits to bus owners.
3. Start a "commuter train" from Joydevpur to Kamalapur during peak office time.
4. Drivers must be made to go by traffic rules all over the city. We should plan everything well in time to keep the traffic situation under control.  
W. Islam  
Uttara, Dhaka

## DU website

I have visited the website of Dhaka University. But I was surprised to see the scarcity of information. Though DU is a leading university in Bangladesh, there is a shocking scarcity of information. The website of DU is still under construction!

Even the websites of the private universities are full of information.  
Inamul  
One-mail

## Fowl's post-mortem!

Recently, in one of our national Bengali dailies, an amusing as well as shocking piece of news was published under the title 'Murgir Moita Tadata' (Fowl's post-mortem).

According to the news, one Raja Mia of village Tarabazid under Sadullapur upazila of the Gaibandha district had scattered boiled rice mixed with poison around his land wherein he kept his just harvested paddy to sun dry so that these were not eaten up by neighbours' fowls. But as ill luck would have it, 15 fowls belonging to Abu Taleb and Masud Mia had to meet with the tragic end of their lives on eating the poison-mixed boiled rice! The incident took place on December 08 and 09. In this connection, Abu Taleb filed a case with the Sadullapur Thana. After primary investigation, the police got the dead fowls' post-mortem done by the Regional Livestock Department Veterinary Surgeon. Well, the matter may sound funny! Still it has some important point. I think, by scattering poison-mixed boiled rice around his land Raja Mia committed a serious offence. He should be given some sort of educative penalty so that people

can realise the importance of adopting precautionary measures before using/applying agro-chemicals!  
Professor M Zahidul Haque  
Chairman  
Department of Language  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University  
Dhaka

## Martyred Intellectuals' Day

Martyred Intellectuals' Day has become a part of formality. Like every December we do not want to hear any more pledges. People now want to see justice. War criminals' punishment is now the demand of the nation. It is high time for raising voice and forging unity for the trial of the war criminals. The crime committed by them is unpardonable. They killed our eminent intellectuals. Over the past decades, war criminals have been patronised by successive governments. As a result, after thirty-six years of Liberation War they dare to insult the freedom fighters. No government bothered to take the initiative to try the war criminals.

As a nation it is really unfortunate for all of us.  
Shahid Solaiman  
Jahangirnagar University Campus  
Savar, Dhaka

## Our teachers

According to Bertrand Russell, the effect of Aristotle's teaching on Alexander was nil.

We can generalise this to affirm that the effect of education on character is zero - or even negative. In light of the recent events in Bangladesh involving the academic community, it can be safely inferred that with education comes a progressive deterioration in character. What would have appeared culpable to any illiterate peasant appeared not only innocent, but even laudable, to our

teachers and students. After all, it took a massive amount of education to turn French peasants into murderers.  
Iftekhar Sayeed  
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

## Rajuk: deeply irresponsible

The deaths of the labourers in the Rang's Bhaban collapse were due to the fault of Rajuk and they should be held accountable for their actions and given exemplary punishment, there should be a public trial over this issue as it amounts to death or murder through negligence. Any tender which requires the demolition of a tall building would have to at the very least specify that the company must have previous experience in demolishing a high-rise. Why did they hire a ship breaking company without any experience of demolishing a high-rise? This smells a little dodgy to me, did someone once again make a quick buck at the expense of the Bangladeshi people? Also, Rajuk being one of the most corrupt institutions of the country, having extorted huge sums of money from developers and regular people for passing plans now has the cheek to ask these very people for help when they mess up. If I were a developer, I would turn the other way and fold my arms. Some high ups in Rajuk should be made to resign over this atrocity and cases should be filed against them. The acronym Rajuk is synonymous with land grabbing, corruption, extortion, law-breaking and now murder. When will the government restructure this criminal institution and free us from its clutches? I'm also very surprised that the Rehab people did not make a statement on this issue and condemn the actions of Rajuk. It seems that the people in place to pass our plans have no engineering knowledge!  
S. Choudhury  
Engineer, Banani

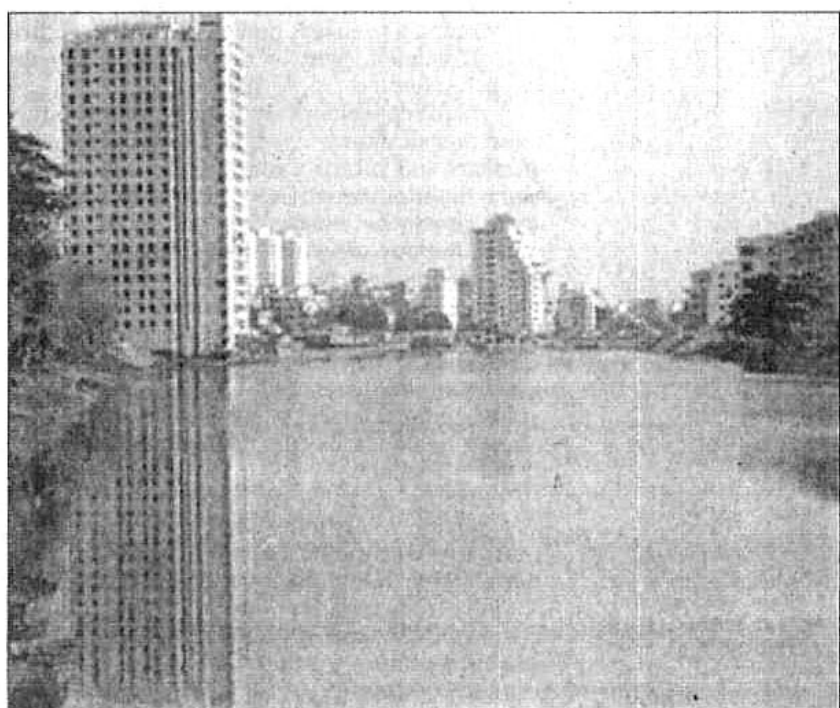
# US game

America is playing complex politics and putting itself in an embarrassing situation with other nations who it calls its allies by issuing fabricated reports on countries of its dislike. Recent revelations of American intelligence report on Iran's nuclear ambitions and its build-up ridiculed it further. Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defence, in an international security conference held in Bahrain said that everywhere you turn Iran is fomenting instability and chaos. Ms. Rice, Secretary of State, after drumming up support of a few Nato states is now trying to gather support from her counterpart Sergei Lavrov of Russia on sanctions to be slapped on Iran. But the Russian foreign minister didn't agree to her plan. We recall that after the twin tower attack, the United States was hell-bent on catching the bomb-



ing mastermind which is al-Qaeda. However, it has since changed its strategy. Now it is trying to implicate Iran in many ways and mobilising support of its allies to attack the country or impose harsher sanctions to economically cripple it. The world must now act with due responsibility and sincerity to counter the whims of America and save the nations from the wrath of the Bush administration.  
Humayun Hyder  
Zigatola, Dhaka

# Gulshan Lake



I have seen around 20 feet of fresh land filling on the Badda side of Gulshan Lake. I am also watching the construction of apartment blocks on illegally filled land.

In five years, I have occasionally seen camera crews and Rajuk employees creating a big fuss on the Gulshan side of the lake, but never on the other side. They have also created a pavement to stop encroachment, but only on one side of the lake. What is the point of this? Do they not realise that the other side has encroached so much that we are now nose to nose? Soon, there will be no lake left, it desperately needs to be reclaimed and the land fillers given exemplary punishment.

I have lost all respect for the work of the joint forces, it seems they were only enforcing the law for cheap publicity and are not at all interested in preserving our city. When will the authorities do something about this?

When will the newspapers pay real attention to this?  
Safina  
Gulshan, Dhaka