

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.

Death of a leopard

The death of the leopard at a village in Kurigram marks the saddest day for the wildlife lovers in the country. This proves that the absence of a separate wildlife department has created a vacuum in the minds of the public. They have developed a negative attitude towards the wildlife. I wish the govt would create a separate wildlife dept and give them the responsibility to save the wild animals of the country through a massive public awareness campaign and through an integrated management system.

During my last 40 years of field studies I have never seen a leopard in the wild in Bangladesh. None has photographed the animal alive in Bangladesh.

I wish the life of this leopard could have been saved.

Dr Reza Khan
A nature lover

Higher education

Over the last couple of years Bangladesh has been moving forward with the establishment of a large number of higher educational institutions, publicly and privately. In the recent past a number of public universities have been established, particularly in the headquarters of greater districts including a few medical colleges.

On the other hand a large number of private universities have also emerged.

It is certainly praiseworthy to have many higher educational institutes in a country. But I am against those who are really sucking blood and hard earned money from the students enrolled in the private universities. Many of them do not have appropriate educational facilities, adequate qualified teachers, moderate infrastructure for classes and research work and resourceful library for students.

Many national and multinational companies circulate their vacancy announcements clearly stipulating the name of universities from where they prefer to fill up the positions.

We expect that all private universities would follow the specific standard practical curriculum.

Nasarullah
One-mail

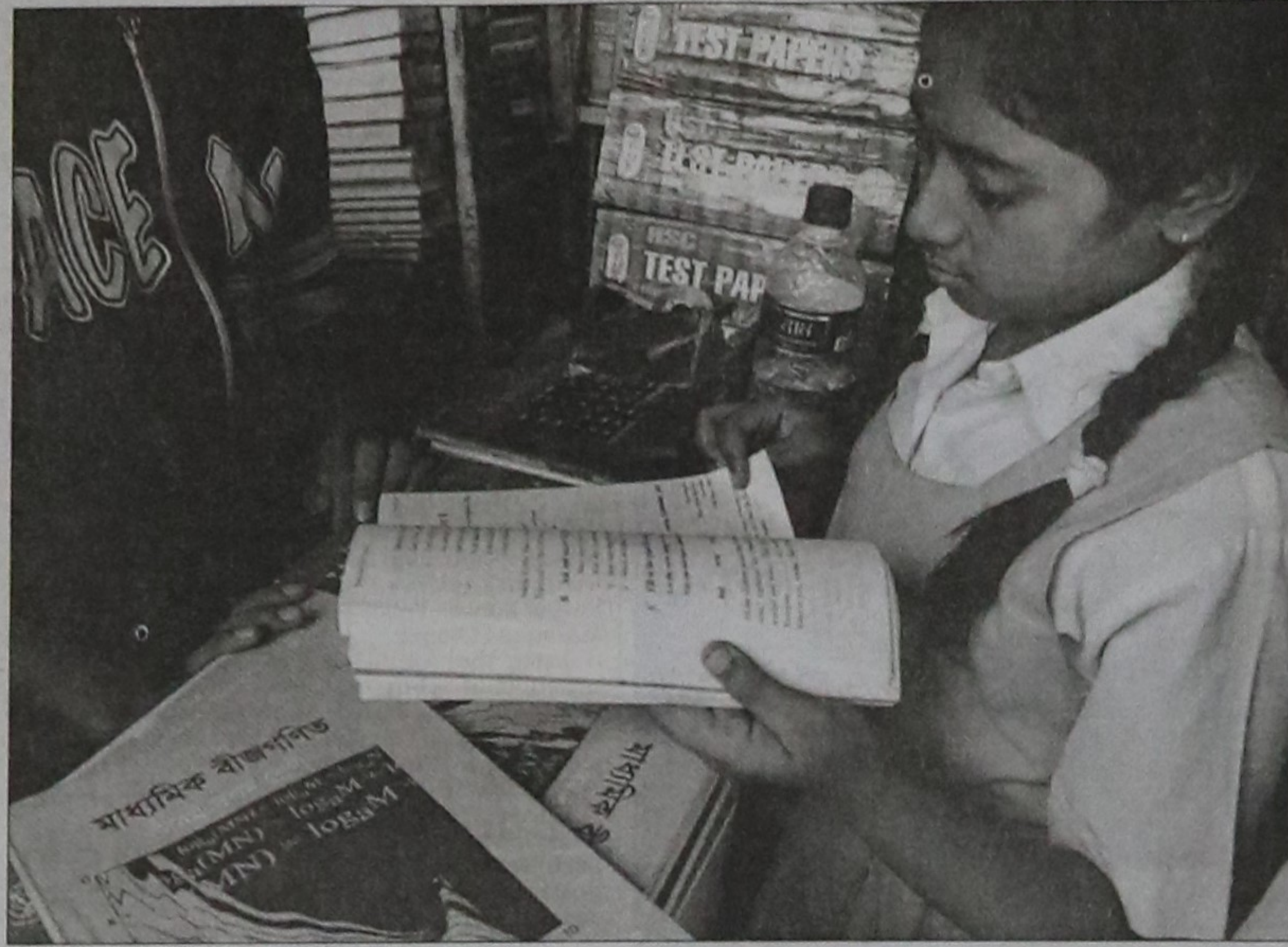
Recent violence

When I read about the oath taking ceremony of the opposition and how the BTW ignored it by not telecasting it live, I felt a strong sense of anger and chagrin. Why should callous and malicious actions be allowed after we have gone through so much and presumably learned our lesson? Or is it that the politicians have not learned enough from the recent events and the election? It is absolutely absurd and unacceptable to resort to such behaviour; this exposes the authorities and reveals the depth of intolerance and immaturity on their part. I hope the government will take stock of it and ensure that such stances are not repeated. Such actions only taint the image and invite condemnation by the public. We hope that the new inspiring mandate will help the politicians understand that the electorate wants results and not mudslinging and blame-game. This election should wake the people up in charge of running a democratic government and make them realize that the country cannot afford to once again slide into corruption, incompetence and moral turpitude. So, to make sure that partisanship and bias don't become obstacles the government must stay awake with eyes wide open and remain alert at all time to what's happening around it.

Everyone is also troubled by the recent spate of campus violence, which is reminiscent of the not very distant past. The big question is, are we again backtracking? This reeks of the bad old days of violence in the campuses and streets of the country. The new government should rein in the runaway violence and restore peace and stability. Violence should be dealt with sternly and the campuses must be purged and cleansed of all activities, which are impediments to the smooth running of educational institutions and the peaceful and sound progress of studies of students. The environment must be conducive to development and progress. Violence is dragging us behind and not letting democracy take strong roots. We cannot waste time and stall anymore.

Ali Hamid Khan
Uttara
Dhaka

Scarcity of textbooks



SHAFIQUZZAMAN KALOL / DRINKNEWS

It is reported that there is a scarcity of textbooks for the school-children. We all know how eagerly children wait for their textbooks to start their classes. If they do not get books in time, their interest in education to some extent receives a body blow.

According to the reports the NCTB and the people involved with book business are blaming each other for the delay in the distribution of textbooks. As the syllabuses from class six to class ten have been changed, the whole situation has taken a turn for the worse. It is reported that there is a shortage of supply of

paper, which is why the process of publication of books is going at a snail's pace.

Whoever might be responsible for the delayed printing and distribution of the books, it's the children who have to pay for the sheer mismanagement on the part of the NCTB.

Zabed Wali
Pahartali, Chittagong

I was talking to my younger brother who is reading in class six in a village school. I asked him how his classes were going. He told me that only two classes were held that day and each of

the students has got only three books. There are no books without these three books in the market.

Every year we see repetition of this problem. The students of primary and secondary level didn't get their books in time. We know that there is a syndicate in book market, which creates this problem.

We request the government, especially the education minister, to solve this problem and thus ensure better education for the children.

Md. Mahfuzur Rahman
IER, University of Dhaka

A R Rahman : Mozart of Asia



journey from the ad jingles to Jai Ho for which he received the award, has been terrific, as he has given us revolutionary music throughout his career. Since the day when this musician was approached by Mani Ratnam to compose music for Roja he has not looked back and performed in a fantastic way. The Chennai born music composer is the first to draw international attention.

His maiden stage production Bombay Dreams received warm response from the viewers in 2002. Besides, he composed background music for Oscar winning movie The Lord of the Ring.

It is just another feather in his glorious cap, where many more feathers are to be added. Hats off to A R Rahman for what he has done.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam
A tourism worker

Upazila election

The Upazila election held on 22nd January after one and a half decades is a success of EC. Although there were incidences of sporadic violence here and there in some places, the overall situation was good and election was held quite fairly all over the country "except a few centres".

This "except a few" has tarnished the image of the new government because the ruling Minister and MPs were reportedly involved in influencing the election results. While the Prime Minister was trying to build confidence in the public minds, some of her ministers are reportedly trying to undermine the whole efforts. This cannot be condoned or dealt lightly.

I believe only public trial of involved minister(s) and MPs, severe punishment and expulsion from party may restore confidence on Sheikh Hasina because the people have, in fact, voted her and not her AL.

Shafiqul Islam
NY

Ransacking railway offices

The ransacking in railway offices occurred simultaneously in Dhaka and Chittagong but in such a short time the link between the two events may not be established. The matter definitely needs in depth investigation; however within a reasonable time.

The report from the Chittagong office of a local Dhaka daily stated that records kept in Pahartali Station storeroom was ransacked on two consecutive nights should indicate something more than that meets the eye!

We hope the authorities would be able to identify the reason behind this matter, which at first glance seems puzzling. However, after the occurrence in the first night, why was security not tightened in Chittagong definitely, as well as in Dhaka? Hopefully the inquiry will point out the reasons behind this apparent negligence on the part of the railway authorities.

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

positions to serve people of their respective countries, as religious faith can refrain one from committing any kinds of crimes. Confessing or denying any crimes touching the Holy Quran is a common practice among the Muslims everywhere in our country and it is followed as a last resort when no other alternatives work. Many Hindus and Christians also follow the same practice as and when required.

However, oath-taking in our country do not follow the above practice. From the post of the President to the post of a local body representative, everywhere the practice is to utter some good words. But uttering some good words only are not enough for every person to keep himself honest and dedicated towards fulfilling his commitment. I think the respective Holy Books can refrain most of them from committing criminal activities and I would recommend that the newly elected popular government of Bangladesh brings a bill in Parliament to change the age-old oath-taking practice probably left

by the then British Empire. Together with uttering the good words one should touch the Holy Book he/she believes in The Holy Quran for the Muslims, the Holy Geeta for the Hindus, the Holy Bible for the Christians and so on.

I hope it will be of immensely beneficial for the oath-takers to be devoted towards their respective duties and responsibilities and refraining themselves from committing crimes.

Md. Sirajul Islam Molla
Kanthal Bagan
Dhaka

To foreign minister...

Congratulations on being appointed as our country's first woman foreign minister. It is a honourable and a respectable position. Now, you have been appointed as our foreign minister at a time when the entire world is in a chaotic situation. Conflicts between nations are taking place in several places around the globe. We expect you to play a constructive role in all such matters as our foreign minister.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

Melamine

The High Court's ruling on melamine leaves much to be desired. What the court should have done is:

a) To ask the Department of Chemistry Dhaka University and the Atomic Energy Centre to produce their "raw data" of the first published test results and also return the samples for re-tests by an independent body. It is a normal practice in the scientific world to retain samples for at least six months and at the same time keep the raw data to counter any controversy that may result as was in this case.

b) To make an investigation as to why BSTI failed to test melamine in the first place and seek help of the unknown instrument supplier "Plasma Plus" for melamine testing.

It looks like the Department of Chemistry of Dhaka University and the Atomic Energy Centre have now made good their escape on ground of testing a "different batch of samples". This is unfair and the public has the right to know the inner story. After all these two government organizations put the entire nation to a crisis.

And let us not forget another government laboratory BCSIR, which gave a

ludicrous report that escaped everyone's attention and the report of Plasma Plus apparently came out correct!

Could we expect some investigative journalism please! When the whole world is forging ahead with science & technology, we are going in the negative direction!

Shesir
Joyarsahara, Baridhara
Dhaka

Why new cars?

I am a poor Bangladeshi national full of dreams in mind. After the general election held in 2008 I am starting to see more and more of such dreams. But now I am frustrated knowing that the newly elected MPs and Upazila Chairmen are going to get new cars for their use. I strictly believe this will be a very bad example for Bangladesh's economy and culture.

Everybody at home and abroad knows that Bangladesh is a very poor country. The citizen of this country is living from hand to mouth. They need a great change, which can ensure

them food, shelter, education, treatment and all types of social security. But newly elected MPs and Upazila Chairmen are going to take new cars. Who will give them the money for this?

Most of the leaders of Bangladesh who are MPs and Upazila Chairmen are not so poor. They can easily buy 2/3 cars at a time. Moreover, they have come to serve the poor people. They did not come here to take car and other facilities. If they do so, I will tell them please do not do this. First ensure the demand of the common people of this poor country. They are not able to bear the cost of your cars, fuel and all other things. Please stop now.

Mohammad Sazzad Hossain
Dohar, Dhaka

Dissatisfaction of EC!

Upazila Parishad Election has been observed all over the country last Thursday. The newly reformed election commission (EC) had shown great interest for conducting

this poll from the very beginning. Interestingly, most of the political parties were reluctant regarding this election; on the other hand, EC has tried its best to prove that the mass people want this poll strongly. After rescheduling it has finally been conducted. But we have been astonished that one of the commissioners, by 11am on the day of election, has shown his great dissatisfaction towards the performance. In the afternoon CEC himself had showed the similar reaction. What does it mean?

Moreover, they have remarked strongly against the biasness of the newly empowered government representatives. Now our questions are: Both of you have certified that the election was not credible, neutral and faultless. Then will you declare the results of this election as unacceptable? Will you compromise with the malfunctions of your commission as well as government? Will you sit on the chair only to enjoy the statutory power? Have you started to find out the reasons behind the presence of very few voters in the polling centres? Only showing dissatisfaction of the responsible persons like you are not enough.

Abdul Hamid
Shahjalal University, Sylhet

Fall of BNP: a reader's view

This is in response to the letter by Ms. Nurjahan from Chittagong on January the 11th. She attributed the epic defeat of BNP to three reasons (1) Corruption (2) The issue of war criminals (3) Price hike of Commodities.

According to her the latter 2 reasons should not have influenced the elections since she feels that Sheikh Hasina too during her tenure as Prime Minister did not address the issue of the war criminals.

Ms. Nurjahan then went on to add quite confusingly that Bangabandhu pardoned the war criminals in 1972 and since the new generation of young voters are unaware of these facts, (which in fact are facts distorted) they voted for Awami League out of sheer outrage towards BNP. This indeed is a rather innovative and twisted perspective.

A great many would agree that the young voters saw through the equation with amazing clarity when they associated Jamaat e Islami the party of war criminals with BNP, and hence decided to vote against it.

As for general amnesty, I presume Ms. Nurjahan is aware that Bangabandhu never declared amnesty to the war criminals in 1972 or ever. Quite the contrary, his government had brought 36,000 war criminals to book, over 10,000 of who convicted with specific charges of war crimes, (murder, rape, loot, arson) and were incarcerated. The rest, not falling in the category, were given the pardon. Ms. Nurjahan is kindly requested

to know her history first and get the facts right before pointing a finger at the young generation. One should not go out of the way to defend the morally corrupt by distorting facts of the nation's history on purpose.

Regarding the price hike factor, the trend had began at an unrelenting pace during BNP rule and lasted though their duration totally unheeded whereas Ms Nurjahan put the blame squarely & solely on the caretaker government.

I would not even go to the trouble of mentioning BNP's unlimited corruption, the nation knows it all thanks to an undaunted media, US Justice Dept, Singapore Government and so on. As I am writing this, the news came on all National TV channels that a team from US, Justice Dept and FBI has actually flown into Bangladesh to recover some 200 million us dollars (Tk. 1400 crore!!) which they say were given to a dozen or so former BNP ministers (including Arfat Rahman) as kickbacks for contracts awarded to foreign companies.

As a member of the general public I cannot even begin to fathom the depth of BNP's corruption; both financial & moral.

Mahjabin Ahmad
Youngest daughter of
Late Tajuddin Ahmed &
Syeda Zohra Tajuddin

Maritime border disputes

The recent maritime border disputes between nations have caught large-scale attention. Appearance of ships from Myanmar and India in the territorial waters of Bangladesh has also instilled a deeper fear in the minds of the people of Bangladesh. Moreover, the treaty of Myanmar with the exploring companies of South Korea, India and China to export gas from the Rakhine coastal region, near the border of Bangladesh, could yet again bring up the issue in the spotlight. It is high time for the newly elected government to go for a tripartite discussion with India and Burma instantaneously so that the concerned countries maintain and stay within the picture-frame of their country. Since we have not much dealt with the issues of maritime borders including strategic sea resources, government should immediately create a team of experts to settle all

sorts of maritime and territorial matters particularly with India and Myanmar. Delay may lead the government to get stranded with the blame for being soft on India and the so-called "India factor" might unnecessarily hit the headlines again. Only political will and leadership of the concerned countries can solve the issues.

Zahid A. Choudhury
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

Israeli aggression

Israeli aggression is a matter of great concern for all the people across the world. Israeli has mercilessly and brutally attacked innocent people of Gaza killing till now more than 1,200 and injuring 5,000. But killing of innocent people, women and children is a work of the terrorists, not of a state. Israeli is doing crime against humanity.

The life of a human being is more precious than the whole world and much more important than a piece of land for which we are killing each other for decades. Verily, the people of the world became delighted and optimistic when Barack Obama was elected US president, understanding that he would stop crime against humanity. America is the country, which can stop this inhumanity, but it is highly regrettable that the international community is doing absolutely nothing to stop the state terrorism unleashed by Israel. And why is Barack Obama silent?

Israel has played the role of a terrorist nation since its birth in 1948. Israel has become a great

threat to the whole Middle East region. We often hear about human rights from the UN. But when it comes to a Muslim country, the UN remains quite silent. Where is the UN?

Where is OIC? Why are not they doing anything offensive against Israel? Human rights violations, especially violence against and oppression of women and children, are a major concern of

Palestine. According to the Holy Quran, "Saving one life means saving the world." So it can cordially be hoped that if we can stop crime against humanity, it would be the materialization of a demand long felt by the people of the entire world.

AKM Anisul Haque
Department of English
Metropolitan University
Sylhet



SHOTO