

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.

We protest

We didn't stop dreaming. Though we knew one day it would be over. One day we would just run after money and glory concealing our dreams like thousands others. One day we would run after job, we would run after positions or we would end up becoming a very ordinary flatterer.

We, however, never ceased to dream. Dreams continued returning to us in several forms and shapes, sometimes in a feeling of rebellion, sometimes as an inner cry of human soul and sometimes when we thought that we have a companion like Professor Anu Muhammad with us.

Our campus returns to ourselves, returns with dreams. We still feel proud of our university and the most magical period of our life.

And very reasonably we become concerned and enraged when we see our teacher Anu Mohammad lying under boots and batons of law enforcers. When we see the man who inspired

our dreams suffer injury on the street, we do not feel helpless anyway, rather feel inspired once again to write and question the honourable prime minister, "What is happening out there? What is wrong with the government?"

Anu Muhammad was always there to speak out. Anu Muhammad was there to be a safe shelter for the girl who did not dare to go to the campus out of fear of harassment, he had the ability to get inside a movement and bring students back to classroom with assurance of due punishment to the culprit.

So, an apology from the home ministry is not enough.

We want a clear explanation of what has happened.

Najmul Hasan Rahat, Salahuddin Suvra, Shahtub Siddique Anik, Emran Hossain
Former students of Jahangirnagar University



STAR

Snakebite

It has become a great concern as at least seventy thousand people become victims of snake bite every year, of whom six thousand die every year in Bangladesh. Most of the people die in the rural areas where people barely know how to be protected against snake bite as well as how to treat it. Also the health complexes keep no anti-venom injections.

In the rainy season and during floods people get exposed to snake bite.

The authorities concerned should look into the matter with a view to saving precious lives.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-journalist and social worker
Gopalgonj

Change?

I would like to ask our honourable prime minister only one question which is bewildering since the AL govt took power in its hands to bring "CHANGE" in the country for the betterment of this poor country. What does this very word change mean? Though the government has made some qualitative changes in many sectors, the change spree is to a great extent anti-democratic, anti-people and unethical. Why does the government need to replace people in high positions with their own people? Every now and then honest and efficient people are asked to resign to make room for the people of the ruling party's choice, who may be less efficient. Did "Obama" government make such changes in the administration? In our country, the politicians are eating up the very core of democracy, "respect people's will". Please stop it.

Nowadays the Chittagong city is abuzz with the news that a certain private university is going to be closed soon. It is under pressure from certain vested quarters in the ruling party to do 'certain things' or face the consequences. The guardians of the university are very much worried. The academic future of thousands of students will be in jeopardy if the rumour becomes true. I would request the authorities concerned to look into the matter.

Sultana Zaman
East Nasirabad, Chittagong

A useful all-rounder

At first I would like to thank number one ODI cricket all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan for his great performance and also his great achievement. During your captaincy Bangladesh cricket team has gotten its real confidence.

You are the backbone as well as pride of Bangladesh cricket.

Mohammad Jamal Uddin
Dept. of English
International Islamic University Ctg.

Alarming report

The report that almost 50 per cent of the country's population now live on less than \$1.25 a day, the rate of urban households living without access to improved sanitation is about 52 per cent, hardly one per cent of the citizens currently have access to the Internet and it takes over 75 days to register a business in Bangladesh manifests the poor performance of the government.

The only silver lining is that Bangladesh is among the top 10 remittance-receiving countries. The way things are, people can see no let-up in the deteriorating law and order situation and price hike in the near future. Will the government rise to the occasion?

Tinku
Lalpur, Natore

Teachings of Ramadan

The month of Ramadan teaches and reminds us of a set of superior things; for instance, persistence, patience, compassion, love, collaboration, sharing the feelings and eliminating our sins and wrongdoings.

Ramadan is a wonderful month that enhances our sympathy, endurance, acceptance, communication, togetherness and harmony.

Consequently, we shall benefit from every single moment in this month in upgrading and improving ourselves at all levels, especially at the spiritual level.

Let us start by avoiding all forms of arrogance, jealousy, hypocrisy, lying, laziness, backwardness and disunity among ourselves.

Undoubtedly, the change is very achievable and it must be initiated at the individual level.

Shohag Mostafiz
MBA (Strategic & International Management)
DU

The flyover fetish

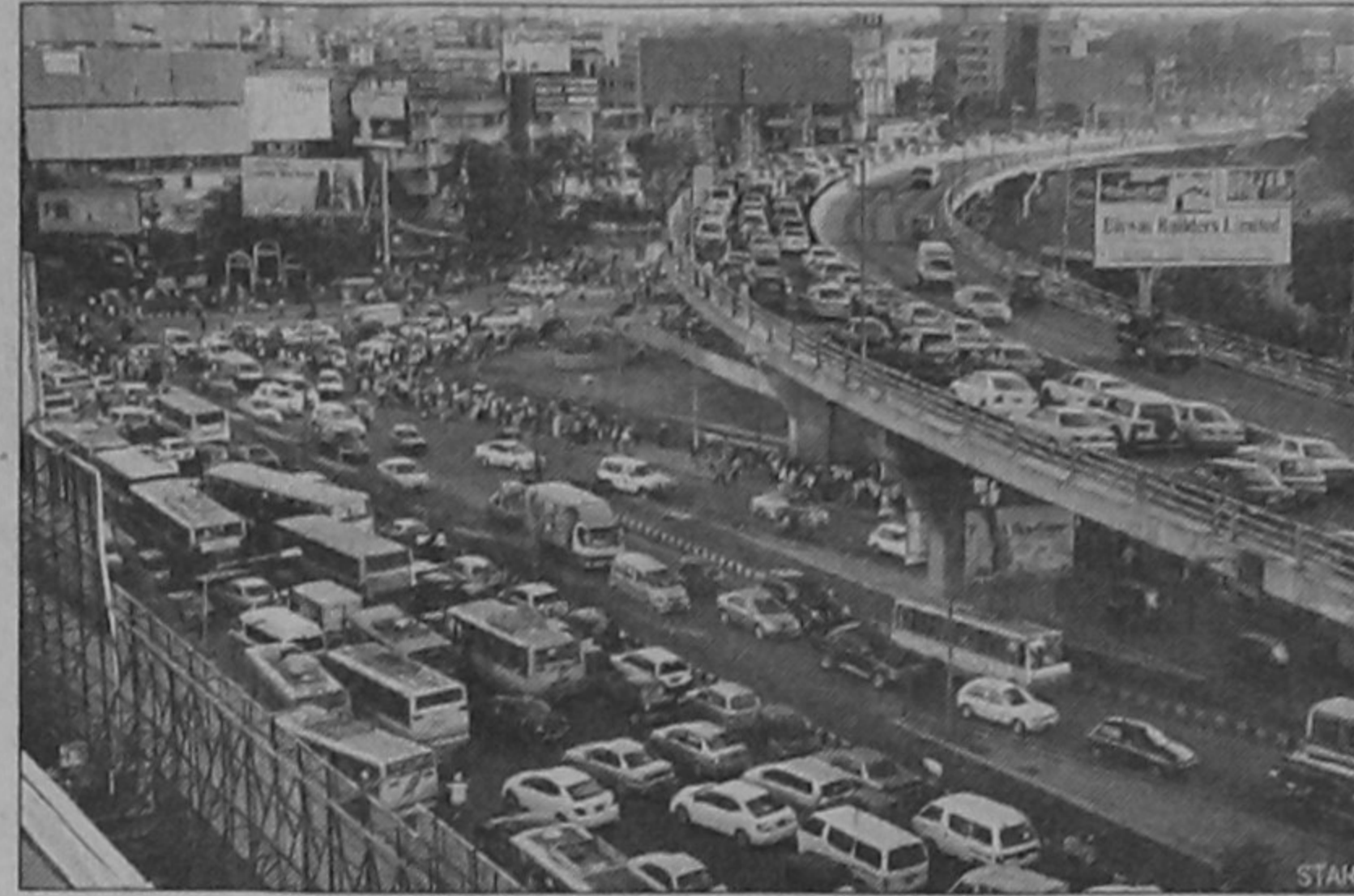
Dhaka city's traffic problems are a case-in-point of the prevailing mentality of the government. Attended to the symptoms half-heartedly when the problem becomes unbearable, never ever address the root cause of the problem, always blame the previous government, and talk about expensive projects that do nothing to address short-term problems. When these solutions are finally delivered a decade later, late and over-budget, they won't do anything to solve the problem (e.g., the Mohakhali flyover).

The truth of the matter is that the solution of many of the problems in Dhaka does not include flyovers, large projects, or flamboyant groundbreaking ceremonies with flower garlands and politicians. Small, strategic, corrective and preventive measures would solve a lot of the problems in Dhaka.

It baffles the imagination this common collective fetish of the government intelligentsia for large projects.

A concerted drive once every 5 years (or even once every year) to drive illegal cars off the road is completely ineffective in the long term. This is the equivalent of cutting the weeds at the stem, and not at the root. The solution to this problem is enforcement of current laws, which are arguably sufficient to ensure bad vehicles stay off the road. Not just enforcement, but sustained enforcement, even when the ridiculous Dhaka traffic is not on the newspaper or when the prime minister gets inconvenienced.

This approach is monumentally



difficult for the government to implement, however. The reasons for this are manifold. First, the government itself does not adhere to its own laws. Their own vehicles will violate these laws (because somehow people who work in government feel that they are beyond government). Secondly, it is not so much getting started, but the follow-through where we hold the government in question.

The same goes for illegal land-grabbing and encroachment of rivers and lakes, and many of the other problems in Bangladesh. We have an excellent corpus of legal precedent, but we have no enforcement capability. We simply don't need new laws, but merely better enforcement of our existing ones.

These drives to run illegal vehicles off the road, and announcement of major projects like a Dhaka metro rail service or other flyovers are all well and good, and they are necessary, but not essential to

solving the vast majority of problems in Dhaka. Small measures, like improving municipal services like more regular garbage collection, maintaining cleaner streets, consistently enforcing certain laws without them devolving into another way for the police officers to extort money from locals, are all ways to ameliorate the symptoms, and someone with the genuine will to investigate the problem will be able to address them: the problem is not intractable.

But this unhealthy obsession with grandiose projects, which are promised as the be-all and end-all of all the problems, needs to stop. We need to begin having an honest dialogue with our mayors and politicians. People deserve the leaders that they get. We need to begin exacting the change we want to see in our society.

Iftekharul Haque
One-mail

Beauty tips for police!

Recently a press report quoting BBC Online stated that a programme has been taken to make the new recruits in Bangladesh police smarter and fit to serve UN peace keeping missions in different parts of the world by providing instructions on beauty matters. One of the country's top beauticians has been given the responsibility of imparting lessons on grooming, personal hygiene, physical fitness, diet and dining etiquette to the newly recruited police officers, both male and female

at Sharda Police Academy. A good move!

This is a very new concept in our country. The beauty parlour business started in Bangladesh only some years back. Initially some popular TV personalities, one name I can recall at this moment, Anjali Mostafa who began her beauty parlour "Femina" to offer various beauty care services, of course for the ladies. Now there are beauty parlours even in the remotest areas of Bangladesh. Even some beauty parlours for gents have been established. Beauty parlours are also func-

tioning as herbal care centres. Growth of beauty parlour has also created diversified use of agricultural crops - rice, pulses, vegetables, and fruits! Meanwhile offering beauty tips to police officers by beautician is a quite a new practice in this country. I think, such beauty instructions should also be provided to new recruits for similar other service personnel. This will not only make them more presentable and socialized but will also expand beauty parlour business.

One thing, what about the police officers serving in the police section? Wouldn't it be justified to provide some "sun protection beauty tips" to traffic police personnel by expert beauticians on how to protect skin from the sun's ultra violet rays as these people perform their duties in a very stressful situation under direct sunlight round the day?

To conclude, I think, a social-psychologist should also be hired to help develop a good personality.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Chairman
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System
SAU, Dhaka

Who are the 'foreigners'?

It is indeed strange what a sneer there is, in the voice of many Bangladeshis, when they say the word 'foreigner' but I am asking myself, "Is it not the Muslim extremists who are the 'foreigners' in Bangladesh?"

The constitution is very clear about the rights of both racial and religious minorities to full citizenship - a basic conviction of those who fought in the Liberation War. The traditions of tolerance go very deep in many towns and villages where different communities have lived side by side at peace for centuries. Moreover, the results of the last election gave a very clear 'no' to the extremists.

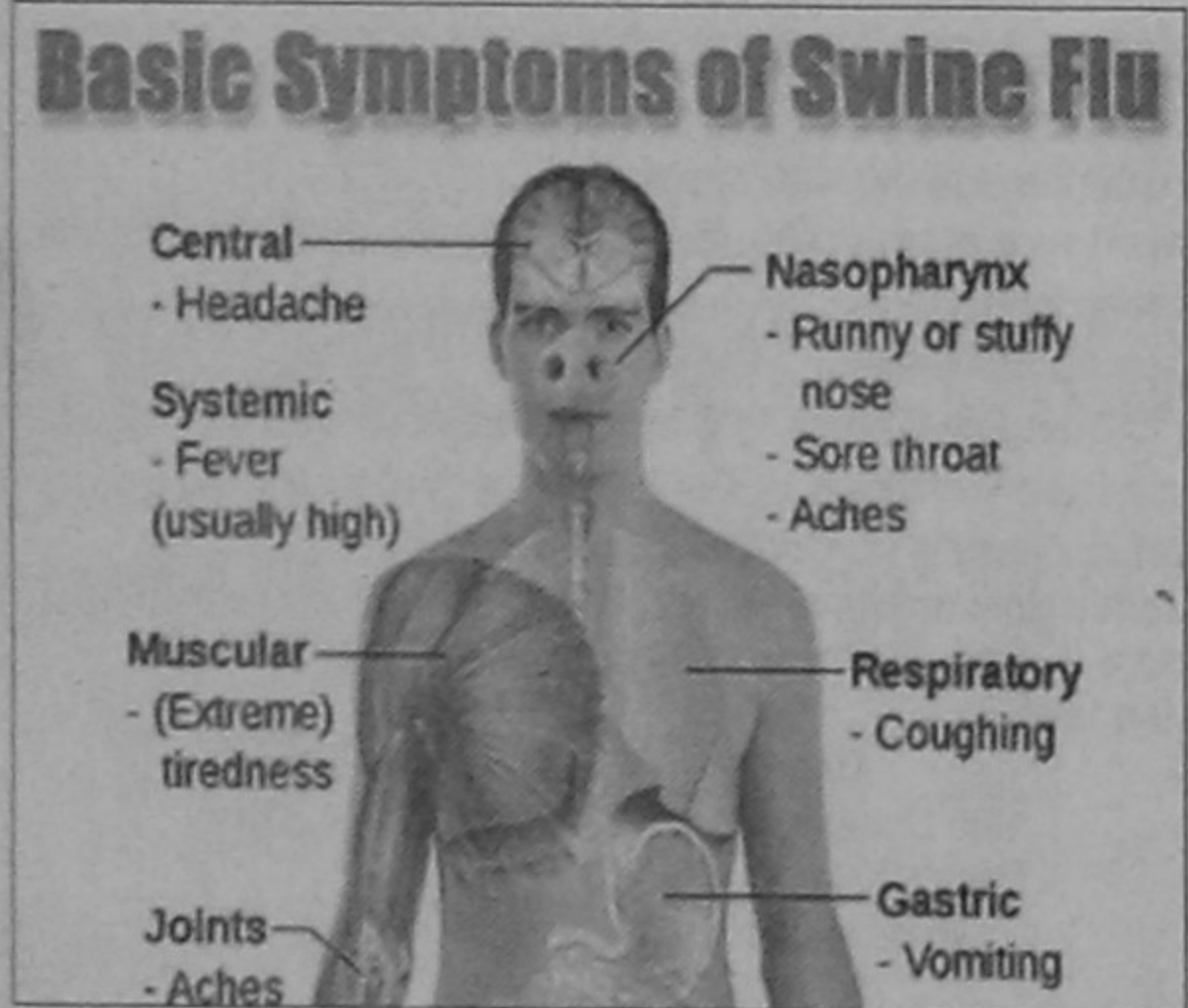
Are not the people who tore down the statues of the bauls the real 'foreigners'? Are they not 'foreigners' who are putting pressure on school managements to dismiss non-Muslim teachers? Are they not 'foreigners' who are encouraging their children to be 'missionaries' spreading the word to their classmates at school that they are not 'real' Muslims if they do not do this or wear that?

What is going on is a real fight for what it means to be a Bangladeshi and what sort of Bangladesh we want. How dare we let some people pressurise us into changing our traditions!

Angela Robinson
One-mail

What is swine flu?

Like people, pigs can get influenza (flu), but swine flu viruses aren't the same as human flu viruses. Swine flu doesn't often infect people, and the rare human cases that occurred in the past mainly affected people who had direct contact with pigs. But the current "swine flu" outbreak is different. It's caused by a new swine flu virus that has changed in



ways that allow it to spread from person to person -- and it's happening among people who haven't had any contact with pigs.

That makes it a human flu virus. To distinguish it both from flu viruses that infect mainly pigs and from the seasonal influenza A (H1N1) viruses that have been in circulation for many years, the CDC calls the virus "novel influenza A (H1N1) virus" and the World Health Organization calls it "pandemic (H1N1) 2009."

Symptoms of swine flu are like regular flu symptoms and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Many people with swine flu have had diarrhoea and vomiting. Nearly everyone with flu has at least two of these symptoms. But these symptoms can also be caused by many other conditions. That means that you and your doctor can't know, just based on your symptoms, if you've got swine flu. Health care professionals may offer a rapid flu test, although a negative result doesn't necessarily mean you don't have the flu.

Like seasonal flu, pandemic swine flu can cause neurological symptoms in children. These events are rare, but cases associated with seasonal flu have shown, they can be very severe and often fatal.

Only lab tests can definitively show whether you've got swine flu. Health departments can do these tests. But given the large volume of samples coming in, these tests are being reserved for patients with severe flu symptoms. Currently, doctors are preserving antiviral drugs for people with or at risk of severe influenza.

Peter C. Rebeiro
Indira Road, Dhaka

Senator Edward Kennedy

A friend of Bangladesh and world humanity - US Senator Edward (Ted) Kennedy died of brain cancer on the 25th August 2009 at the age of 77 at his home in Massachusetts.

The Kennedys were familiar names in the then East Pakistan, but I was surprised at the reaction of common people of Dhaka (Dacca) after the killing of Senator Robert (Bob) Kennedy in 1968 - a feeling of affection, respect and regard.

In 1971, when Bangladesh struggled to survive from the US government-aided Pakistan army and when 10 million Bengalis fled to India to save their souls -- the bold stance of Senator Edward Kennedy against Bangladesh Genocide and Nixon-Kissinger administration, support for the refugees and strong criticism against the secret military trial of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in West Pakistan made him a leading spokesman for Bangladesh cause (probably after Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi).

Each of Senator Kennedy's statements and activities during the genocide days boosted the morale and hope of Bengalis in Bangladesh (and West Pakistan), India and other parts of the world. Bengalis in occupied Bangladesh (and West Pakistan) secretly listened the news from the forbidden radios (BBC, Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro, All India Radio, etc). Unfortunately, Bangladesh bade goodbye to these trusted friends after 1975.

We request Prime Minister



Sheikh Hasina and Bangladesh

government to (1) introduce the "Friend of 1971 Bangladesh" highest honorary award (2) Issue the "Friend of 1971 Bangladesh" series of commemorative stamps honouring late Senator Kennedy by featuring his refugee camp visit photo (and also stamps for the 'Concert for Bangladesh' group George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr, Ustad Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, Alla Rakha Khan; former British MP John Stonehouse etc.) (3) Name major streets in Dhaka and other big cities after the "Friend of 1971 Bangladesh".

Senator Kennedy will be remembered in the USA as the protector and spokesman of the US minorities (black, women, refugees) and in Bangladesh as a friend in need.

M. Emad
Oxford, UK

In 1971, the then American government opposed our liberation war and they acted in favour of the Pakistani junta. But Senator Edward Kennedy, brother of President Kennedy, could not agree to his government's activities. The world heard his voice against Nixon, Kissinger and Yahya Khan. He came to India to see for himself the sorrows of the refugees from Bangladesh. After our independence, Kennedy again came to the liberated Bangladesh. Actually, he was one of our genuine friends. He planted the banyan tree in front of the building of Art Faculty of Dhaka University. The tree is now a very big one. Kennedy's heart was also very big.

The oppressed of this earth have lost their spokesman which is a permanent loss for them, no doubt. Harun-or-Rashid
Sobhanbag, Dhaka