

Rushanara Ali's triumph

Rushanara Ali takes back the Labour seat to become MP for Bethnal Green and Bow in what is called an "historical moment" for East End. She made history on 7th April when she was the first Bengalee to make it to British parliament. Not only that, for the first time a Muslim woman has been elected to the House of Commons, setting a new history for the ethnic minorities in Britain.

And it marked the second triumph for Labour in Tower Hamlets after Jim Fitzpatrick won the seat for Poplar and Limehouse. In a passionate speech delivered to a crowded count room, she said, she was proud of Bangladesh and England where she was brought up and educated.

She added: "It is a victory that has not been won by me but many thousands who chose hope over fear and unity over division. You decided it was time to pay your last respects to Respect. You said goodbye to George Galloway, but let me say one thing that I would want to welcome back many of his former supporters."

Rushanara Ali was born in Bangladesh in 1975. With her family, Rushanara moved to the East End of London in the United Kingdom at the age of 7, where she attended Mulberry School and Tower Hamlets College. Growing up in Tower Hamlets, she studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at the University of Oxford.

From Bangladesh, we congratulate Rushanara Ali.
Mohammad Shahidul Islam
National Tourism Organization



Rushanara Ali is the first Bengalee who has achieved the great honour of being the member of British parliament. There is no doubt that all the Bangladeshis are proud of her. She has won the election at Bethnal Green Bow in East London on behalf of the Labour Party. All the Bengalees living at Bangla Town, Bricklane and White Chappel in London are celebrating this victory.

I congratulate Rushanara on behalf of all Bangladeshis.

Md. Belal Hossain Riad
Sir Salimullah Medical College
Dhaka

Gender bias

Gender discrimination starts from birth and continues throughout life in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a highly patriarchal society and gender discrimination is evident across all levels. Women are dependent on men throughout their lives, from their fathers through to husbands, brothers or sons. The perceived lesser value and limited roles of girls and women are embedded in the socio-economic system.

As the statistics illustrate, majority of girls are not receiving an education of an acceptable standard. Reaching the 10 per cent of girls who never enrol in school remains a challenge. The exclusion of nearly 1.5 million girls is a violation of the fundamental and basic right of every child to education. Despite having achieved gender parity in primary school enrolments, Bangladesh still has a long way to go to achieve gender equity, access to quality education for all girls, completion of basic education with acceptable competency levels and relevant life skills and equal roles for women in society.

Shapna Mondal
Uttara Model Town
Dhaka

NGO activities

Being a third world country, Bangladesh is burdened with many problems like overpopulation, poverty, pollution, poor education and health facilities etc. The present govt. has adopted many strategies and policies to overcome this situation doing their level best with the co-ordination of many NGOs across the country. But the recent activities of many NGOs are not much satisfactory to boost the socio-economic and infrastructural development as they are busy collecting funds from donor countries. But they have inadequate capacity to

implement the programmes. However, it is true that NGOs play the most important role to empower women to make them self-reliant launching many projects like micro-credit programmes and they have already attained many success in the rural areas of the country. But the problem is that there are many NGOs which have no registration at all but they are still running their network countrywide. Innocent people in villages may be cheated by a group of dishonest persons who sometimes show their fake documents to grab money and after managing that they move away. So, there should be accountability and transparency in the NGOs' activities.

Eng. Md. Mehebab Haque
BUET

Investigators

not investigated!

The Chief Investigator (CI) of war crimes lost his creditability to lead the team. But I do not think the adviser to the prime minister will get any credit for his public and panicky announcement of the background of the CI, rather he should be asked to explain why he failed to advise the prime minister before selection and appointment of the controversial CI.

If we just follow the just concluded Saarc summit and its "Charter of Democracy", I expect that those who were responsible for the selection of the CI would resign. Ignorance can not be any excuse. In my view lack of transparency in the selection of the entire team has put a dark shadow on the whole trial process including the sincerity of the government to hold a fair trial. The total team could easily be screened through a special cabinet committee or by the parliamentary standing committee on law and expert opinion could be solicited.

Nothing has been done to be transparent. The government needs to recognize its serious weakness in the top decision making process.

We have not yet heard the law minister and the prime minister on the CI issue.

We are seriously concerned about the rare documents handed over to the investigating agency. Are they secure and safe?

Quadir
California, USA

Power generation

I would like to add a 'post script' (p.s) to a 'letter to editor' published in the pages of a local English daily on 3rd May. As stated by the writer, both solar and wind sources of power generation does not need any conventional fuel, rather the fuel for this form of power generation is Allah's gift to mankind, available forever! However, we must have back up batteries and inverters to store this power and put it back to our grid from the stored sources to supplement power supplies, when there is no sun and wind! This is where the use of another renewable source can and should be exploited for all times!

Come wind, sun or moon, be it night or day, the compulsory healthy bodily function of discharging 'urine' and 'excrement' has to be carted on regardless! This 'excrement', like cow dung, also produces methane gas. We can generate the gas in a 'biogas plant' built with bricks, cement and sand, and the methane gas (biogas) can run a gas engine coupled to an alternator (generating set), producing normal electric power round the clock!

This is the same conventional source of power that we distribute to every household and industry today. The fuel (methane,) contributed by the waste of human beings, can be the free source of power forever! In terms of volumes, it will go on increasing, as our

population grows, and more power will be needed, while availability of geological fuels like coal oil, or natural gas (methane) is finite and limited!

We should seriously go for 'excreta' based power generation projects all over Bangladesh. To begin with, Wasa's sewage line can be the first source of fuelling this project.

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Carmichael Road

Carmichael Road which connects Khandar with Seujgari is one of the main roads of the district town of Bogra.

As there is a big kitchen market at the centre of Khandar, the residents of this area have to communicate through this way every day.

Besides, as there are a few kindergarten and primary schools, Mission Hospital, Brac Hospital, Shaheed Chandu International Cricket Stadium, Wonderland (Children park) and Swimming Pool here at Khandar, thousands of people including children and adults from near and far come and go by this way for various purposes.

But a huge amount of waste, collected from this vast area, is being kept on the way just on the west side of Bogra Christian Mission which spreads bad odour and pollutes the fresh air of the area.

It is a cause of suffering, especially for the commuters.

The condition deteriorates during the rainy season. So, before the rainy season starts the issue must be addressed.

As one of the residents of the area, I would like to draw the kind attention of the department concerned to the matter.

Kshitish Chandra Milan
Assistant Teacher
Bogra YMCA Public School
Bogra

The root problem

Your two Op-Eds of 30 April had the headings: Solving the Wrong Problem and Treating the Disease. Both were similar in that they mentioned various problems or disease that needed curing and of course the fact that most of the time it was the wrong problem out of a plethora of problems which was being tackled.

Samuel Heinemann, the inventor of homeopathic medicine system, foresaw such problems of a diseased body, and advised that a physician must not concentrate on various manifestations (symptoms) of diseases and get bewildered, but must systematically find the root cause and eliminate it by medication to cure not the disease but the diseased person.

Herein lies great wisdom and I would say that the single root cause of the problems of Bangladesh is overpopulation. If only this can be eliminated, all other problems would be manageable and could be solved with ease without any bewilderment.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

Arsenal

Barclays Premier League is one of the most exciting leagues in the world. People from all around the world, who love football, watch this league. Supporters of Arsenal are quite disappointed by the ordinary performance of the team, especially at the last stage of the league. They lost three of their last four matches, and the teams were moderate level ones.

Arsenal's coach, Arsene Wenger should consider buying some good players next season or else his job will be at risk. Arsenal is trophy less for the last six years and if this drought continues they will be losing lots of television viewers next season. Arsenal is completely unpredictable, when you expected them to fight for the championship, they lost 10 points in the last four games.

Badal Hasib
SIBT University
Sylhet

Mobile phone

Mobile phone has added a new dimension to our life and to the communication system. With all its advantages, the mobile phone has also some drawbacks in disguise. Criminals are reportedly using it to demand ransom and carry on with extortion.

The law enforcing agencies need to be cautious and put this new type of crime to an end.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Chittagong

Report on seat crisis

Recently, some newspapers ran special reports on seat crisis at Dhaka University. It is true students are suffering terribly in the dormitories due to lack of sufficient space. However, the report, partly, seems to be confusing to the guardians and local people and may have a negative impact.

The report of the daily Prothom Alo on 1st May covered only some first year students. People may think students have to pass their

entire university life in the verandas or the so called "Gonoroom" (a single room shared by many students). But in fact during the commencing period of only six months to one year students suffer most. After that every student can get his or her seat in the room and thereby continue their study comfortably.

Secondly, in the four bedded room eight students live. That is one bed is shared by two students. Although it is not ideal but in the context of Bangladesh is it so startling? Moreover, not all the students have to share their bed for the entire period. Students of Shahidullah Hall, Fazlul Haq Muslim Hall, Ekushey Hall, Johurul Haq Hall, etc., for instance, get single bed from their 3rd year. In addition, there are single room facilities in many halls for the brilliant students at the Masters level. It is essential to look at both sides of the coin.

We acknowledge the seat problem and want to get rid of it. There are a number of factors leading to this problem. Students' number is increasing every year but residential facilities did not increase minimally. Apart from this, shifting the honours course from three years to four years, delay in publishing results, poor management of authori-

ties and the existing political culture make the situation unbearable.

It is expected that the media will play a vital role by not only addressing the problems but also guiding us to find out solutions.

Md. Azharul Islam
Dept. of Psychology
University of Dhaka

ACC and politics

It refers to the ruling party's lawmaker Mahiuddin Khan Alamgir's comment on ACC, the national anti - corruption watchdog, that the country no longer needed the Anti-Corruption Commission, which worked like an autocratic organisation for two years. He came down hard on Professor Muzaffer Ahmad of Transparency International Bangladesh for his remarks over the recent changes in ACC law. He also asked the ACC to offer an apology for its misdeeds during the caretaker government.

Right from the start, the government has appeared somewhat estranged from the reality surrounding the ACC issue. Moreover, it has seemingly treated the issue as a partisan tool, to be employed against political rivals and for their personal gains. Hence, while there has been seemingly endless partisan rhetoric

and politicking about the issue, not much effort has been invested to assess the colossal challenges that the undertaking involves. As such, hardly at any stage, there has been even a semblance of planning and coordination. I have to quote Theodore Roosevelt. It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows achievement and who at the worst if he fails at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

When some high-profile criminal cases draw to a close and the guilty are brought to book, the verdicts help the common man repose faith in the system. But in many cases, the guilty get away. Such verdicts embolden criminals who lose the fear of the law.
Gopal Sengupta
Canada

Education outside Dhaka



A.M.AHAD / DRINKNEWS

Being the Founder Teacher and Trainer of an English medium school at Tangail, Karatia, I had the opportunity to be part of the recruitment process.

For the position of teachers, there were almost 200 candidates and almost 150 had Honours in English.

It is very shocking but true that almost 99% failed in the simple written grammar exam and let me just not mention the pronunciation and reading skills. I was shell shocked, I had no clue how these students got admitted in English

in renowned colleges.

My humble request to the young generation like us, come and let us work for the education system outside Dhaka, let us not be busy with Dhaka centred work only. Let us get started from our home!

Shamrin Afia Adiba
Student

BBA, American International University-Bangladesh(AIUB)
Teacher Trainer, ZHIS, Karatia, Tangail

Nostalgia and nausea

The narrow foggy road, leading my tender legs to walk at dawn to the mosque to pray, has all the potential to be remembered. Joy in playing truant has every reason to be nostalgic about; salami earned on Eid days meant the money adding extra pleasure to the big day. Departure of many known faces from the worldly life caused my extreme desire to know why they had to meet death! With age soaring up and experience being gathered the world teaches what to ask and what not to ask, what can be done and what can't be done. Day by day my experience of how unruly a human being can be started to mount high.

Nature taught how we, the young generation, can easily be political plaything. Greed of a few for power has wreaked havoc to many unaware of the consequences. The leaders of tomorrow are embracing premature death at a regular interval before being able to lead. Injustice, corruption, false assurance coupled with power crisis, gas crisis, unbearable traffic jam etc. have resulted in nausea to many.

Sarwar Hussain
Dept. of Computer Science & Engineering
University of Chittagong

Lawbreakers

I remember, some time in mid 80s, I noticed a news item in the corner of a daily newspaper which read "The traffic police have banned use of tinted glass in the cars". I immediately decided to remove my car's tinted sheet from the windows. The very next day or only a day after, while I was on my way to garage to do the job, I was intercepted near Kalyanpur by a traffic sergeant. He stopped my car, sidelined it and told

me that I had violated the government order. I tried to convince him that I was on my way to get it done. He didn't care and started to write something in his book. However, after a compromise he released my car. I removed the tinted sheets from my car but many did not. After a few days the rule was ineffective because the ministers and high-ups were using tinted glasses in their cars.

In Bangladesh such rules make-and-break are regular affairs. I do not want to put any more examples but one. A few days earlier I heard from my relatives in Dhaka that the traffic police in Dhaka have installed CCTV in the street corners to catch the traffic rule offenders and punish them. I also heard that they have put loud speakers and are advising the drivers to follow lanes and crossings as per their new instructions.

Today, they are no more there and the Bangladesh free-hand drivers have again returned to their usual practices.

Not only traffic rules, all rules and laws are made but none follows. Policies in education, agriculture, electricity, courts orders, timely attendance in offices, etc. are not exceptions.

Some rules are really required to be introduced to regularise anomalies but in Bangladesh none is used to abide by the rules. There is no cue for big ones, there is no waiting in the cue at lifts for sirs, the hearing of cases of known one is ahead of other files and so many.

If only one rule, the traffic rule could be enforced firmly, there could not have been so much traffic jams or congestions in Dhaka.

Recently, the wife of California governor was sued by the police for talking over her cell phone while driving. The British Prime Minister

Tony Blair's wife was caught for violating a small traffic rule. These are just small examples how the laws and rules are compulsory for everyone to abide by in the outside world.

When will we learn to make and abide by the rules in Bangladesh??

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Some questions

Shahbagh is one of the busiest places of Dhaka. It is very unfortunate that traffic system of this area is very poor.

I had entered into the bus to reach Dhaka University. As the bus reached Shahbagh, I requested the bus driver to stop his bus so that I could leave the bus safely. The bus driver did not pay heed to my request. In reply, he said, "Impossible." He further advised me to leave the bus in its running state. Being inexperienced, I was feeling uneasy to leave the bus. Many passengers saw my condition but did not say anything. Finally taking the risk, I left the running bus.

Now I have some questions for my fellow citizens of Dhaka city. Was the action of the driver right? Was it not his duty to stop the bus? Why do the drivers and helpers prompt a passenger to leave the running bus? Is it not a crime? Don't they have any social responsibility? If any accident would happen, who would take my responsibility and also of my family? Why didn't the fellow-passengers speak a single word? How long would this continue?

Pradip Das
Lecturer
BHPI, CRP

Scourge of dowry



SHAFIQ ISLAM / DRINKNEWS

I was amazed to notice no protest from the readers; despite numerous news reports on housewives being killed by husbands & in-laws, due to non-receipt of committed dowries. Thank you Md. Tanjil, from the dept. of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Chittagong, for writing against this social evil (source: The Daily Star, 03-05-2010). It usually happens among very poor citizens, living in remote villages. There is nobody to listen to them.

I would urge the women's rights organisations and law enforcers to work together and banish dowry, once and for all.

Dr. Lailun Nahar
One-mail