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## High risks on highways

Mr. Rahman's important lead front-page article on the subject, published in your October 19th issue, should be compulsory reading for all top officials including the Hon. Ministers concerned for Communication and Finance; who have a very important and necessary role in eliminating this un-called-for hazard, if they act on it!

If say Tk.20,000/- is all that stands between un-necessary loss of life of unwary travellers, then it is indeed due to criminal negligence on the part of these two ministries, and they cannot shirk their responsibilities about it. Say Tk.300,000/- can be easily spared

every year to eliminate fifteen such traffic hazards. In say five years, we could possibly eliminate all such hazards in our highways, where the loss of life and materials every year is more than taka three lacs for Bangladesh, by any count.

After all, nothing great is involved in cutting down some trees and removal of the large ugly hoardings that are an eye soar in any case! It seems this is all that stands between the life and death for many innocent travellers, and vehicle drivers. It is also very sad, that the Roads & Highways (R&H), Road Design and Safety Circle (RDSC), possibly lives in its own circle of ignorance, without seek-

ing the help of the Accident Research Institute (ARI) of BUET, both funded by the GOB! Quite possibly, many of the senior engineers of R&H are themselves BUET graduates! What a shame, indeed!

I would earnestly urge upon Hon. Prime Minister, to give a few hours on this matter, which I am also sure will earn her the gratitude of many travellers who travel on these highways regularly. She may press upon the

RDSC, MOF and BUET to endure that the matter is resolved forthwith.

**Engr.S.A.Mansoor**  
Dhaka



### Stalking

This time it is Mizanur Rashid, a chemistry teacher of Lokmanpur College of Bagatipara upazila in Natore, who has fallen victim to the sub human treatment of the ruling party's golden boys, who have removed from their way another stumbling block in the shape of a bold teacher, who protested the stalking of the college girls.

When I came to know that the Natore district unit of the Awami League was sheltering one of the accused and had asked the police not to arrest him, I got confused about the real beast- whether it is the stalker or their mentor and protector or the government at large. This govt. came to power flying the flags of change for the better. The neon light of publicity dazzled and fuddled our view about Awami League.

Will the people wait for another more formidable beast to contain the present one or deal with only one of them is the million-dollar question.

**Abdus Subhan**  
One-mail

### A stigma on AL's face

Inter and Intra-party clashes and political killings are so rampant and common in our country that we are fairly accustomed to hearing such news off and on with incurious nonchalance. But the fashion in which the Upazila Chairman of Boraigram in Natore was beaten to death in broad daylight on the national highway is simply awful and stunning. It is alleged that a group of Awami League (AL) activists equipped with firearms and other lethal weapons swooped on the peaceful BNP procession led by Upazila Chairman Sanaullah Noor Babu, also the president of the local BNP unit, and beat him

indiscriminately without any provocation. Babu was profusely bleeding and lying unconscious on the road for almost an hour, while the hooligans and the police were watching, possibly enjoying the whole situation. Thus the rowdy ruling party activists murdered an elected representative of the people in the most ignominious and barbarous way.

This shocking incident is indicative of the deep polarization of our politics along partisan line. This extreme partisan approach to politics is bound to damage the future of democracy in our country. The irresponsible and arrogant AL activists are perhaps not aware of the great harm they have caused to their party by involving themselves in such a tragic, abominable and inhuman act. They should know that the peace-loving common people of Bangladesh always hate such criminal activities from the core of their hearts.

Boraigram tragedy will remain in history as an ineradicable stigma on AL's face.

**Md. Mohsin Ali**  
Nutan Courtpara, Kushtia

### An nightmare

A news entitled "Nightmare for a 12-yr-old" published in The Daily Star on 25th October drew my attention. The event that occurred in Rupganj was merely a sign of barbarism and cruelty of Bangladesh Army. A Rab official forced a twelve-year-old boy at gunpoint to wash the blood of bullet-hit persons from a bridge. Will the teenage boy ever be able to forget the nightmare? We saw a photo of a little girl in the newspaper weeping to see her father. Will our state ensure a normal life for her?

Many villagers are missing. The law enforcers still don't know their whereabouts.

I dream of a world where

human rights will not be violated. A child will never be parentless and homeless. Can we make such a world?

**Bikash Majumder**  
Jagannath Hall  
University of Dhaka

### Health and poverty

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has established the most widely recognised targets. These aim to halve the proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015, with extreme poverty defined as living on less than US\$1 per day.

According to the World Health Organisation, if those living in absolute poverty (less than 1 dollar a day) are compared to those who are not poor, the poor are estimated to have a five times higher probability of death between birth and 5 years of age, and a 2.5 times higher probability of death between the age of 15 and 59.

**Mohammad Rajja**  
Gsumc, Dhaka

### Thackeray's call

The Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray's call for a ban on the use of hijab by Muslim women just because a burqa-clad woman stole an infant from a hospital in Mumbai is ridiculous.

This is like calling for outlawing the use of mobile phone if it is misused for unlawful activities. A good thing cannot be banned if some people misuse it. If all good things were to be banished from the face of the earth just because someone misused it, there won't be any good things left in this world.

Thackeray has also suggested a ban on the use of loudspeakers by mosques for calling people to prayer.

Hindus are so used to listening to songs and music played loudly through loudspeakers for many days during their religious festivals. Even on normal days you will hear devotional songs played from temples and this goes on for hours together.

It is ridiculous on the part of Thackeray to suggest that people are disturbed by the Muslim call to prayer (adhan) that after all takes only about 2 to 3 minutes.

**Muhammed Jamil Ather**  
Karachi, Pakistan

### Don't frustrate us

In a country where underhand dealing, favouritism, corruption and perennial quota system dominate the recruitment process, it is a herculean task to get a job. A few hundred candidates came out successful in the 28<sup>th</sup> BCS exams. Hardly does anybody feel the pain of a candidate like me who has lost his mother last month. Maybe a good treatment could prolong her life on earth. But I could not save her life for financial crisis.

It will be ridiculous if the government plans to save some money before Eid again, by not giving us office. Hundreds of crores of taka is being embezzled at many levels. But we are the scapegoats.

We request the govt. not to frustrate us again.

**Abir Kanon**  
Pabna

### MLM and our youth

Multi-level Marketing (MLM) is a well-known term in our country. This specific kind of business is increasing rapidly. Youths are engaged in this business in general and students in particular. Students are wasting their valuable time in quest of money. If they utilise their time properly, it

## Performance of our cricketers

To be honest, we are stunned by the performance of our national cricket team. What makes it more significant is that they have clinched the series without having two key players. It is Sakib who has made the difference by leading from the front as a captain. Credit goes to the whole team. This victory will raise the confidence level of our players ahead of the world cup, which is just three months away.

We believe that it's time to move on with more confidence towards becoming a power in world cricket. We need to perform consistently which we lacked before.

**Zubair Ahmed**  
Department of English  
University of Chittagong



won't be tough for them to get money in future. They should, therefore, engage themselves in extra curricular activities such as debates, social welfare, etc., beside their education, which will help them to be good citizens.

It is a matter of sorrow that we always want to get everything easily in the shortest possible time.

**Shamsul Alam Johnny**

One-mail

### A tribute

After fighting for life for 12 days, Natore college teacher Mizanur Rashid died at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital on October 24. On October 12, two local youths attacked Mizanur, a chemistry teacher of Lokmanpur College in Bagatipara upazila, for protesting stalking of college girls. They ran a motorcycle into him, leaving him critically injured. It is a pity that we could not save such a brave heart. At least, let's not forget him. This is one of many such examples of sacrifice people made to uphold humanity from time to time. It epitomizes the kind of protests people have in their heart sometimes exposed and sometimes suppressed.

We expected more protests from the side of our women rights activists and organisations, especially those who were engaged recently in the movement against eve teasing. The Honourable Minister for Education was also seen a few months back on the television talking tough against the stalkers.

We expect the conscious section of our society would take a strong position against such incidents and demand fair trial of the cases. We are also looking forward to a very positive role of the Minister in this regard. We should not allow the evildoers move free and do the next crime. Mizanur has done his duty. Now it is our turn to do the rest. We should not forget his sacrifice.

**Shahed Chowdhury**  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

### The cabinet reshuffle

The govt. of Sheikh Hasina came to power about 2 years back with a massive mandate from the people. The grand alliance in its election manifesto pledged a lot of things. The progress so far has been very dismal. In my view the main reason behind poor performance is inefficiency of the ministers. Although there has not been much allegation of corruption against most ministers, they are basically incompetent.

The image of the govt. is being tarnished for no fault of the PM. So, if Sheikh Hasina intends to win the next general election, she needs to reshuffle the cabinet urgently. The incumbent ministers were selected more for their loyalty rather for their efficiency. They have already served as ministers for about two years. They have already been rewarded amply for their loyalty. Barring two or three key ministers all other ministers and state ministers are mediocre or even below. It is time that the incumbent ministers packed up and sit in

parliament instead of sitting in ministries. There is no dearth of competent persons in Awami League. Sheikh Hasina should replace the weak ministers with competent ones if she wants to salvage the image of her govt.

**Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury**

DOHS Mohakhali

One-mail

### Reporting the crimes

A story in an English newspaper has highlighted a serious anomaly that needs immediate address by the Home Minister.

Sir Frank Peters told of a young schoolboy Aaqib Tanveer who was mugged on the way to his Dhanmondi school. Aaqib's friend who attends the same school was mugged no less than seven times. Neither of the two youngsters reported the crimes to the police because some greedy police officers that bring disgrace to their uniform would demand bakshesh to record the crime.

In our increasingly corrupt society we've come to accept such goings-on without giving the matter much thought. And that is our mistake...our BIG mistake. It isn't a matter of giving the police a tip if you felt like it, as a gesture of goodwill for a job well done, as in getting good restaurant service, but they won't record the

crime unless they get paid upfront!

If crimes are not even being recorded how can we believe you, when you claim the crime rate is low? How would you know when people are not even reporting the crimes?

It's time, Home Minister, for you to exercise your power and put a stop to this unlawful practice. Punish and sack the guilty officers. This is a great opportunity for you to prove that your govt. is serious about the law and order of the country.

**Shamim Uddin**  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

### Information technology

The Prime Minister has pledged to take information technology to the doorstep of the general people. Taking information technology to the doorstep of the people, when majority of them live below the poverty line! To many, a square meal a day is the prime concern of life.

This is a country where people still dump garbage on the roads, footpaths, rendering them unusable. Almost all the city roads are in a bad shape, yet the authorities are not ashamed of taxing the ratepayers. The water is not drinkable, yet the WASA is not ashamed of taxing the consumers. The environment is

dangerously polluted. Traffic jam is compelling the commuters to get stranded for hours together.

Under these circumstances, taking information technology to the doorstep of the people is nothing but an empty rhetoric.

The PM should rather focus her attention on solving the above and other prevailing problems with a view to mitigating the sufferings of the people.

**Nigar Chowdhury**  
One-mail

### Traffic jam and CNG

The govt. has taken many long-term and short-term plans such as building of flyovers, over bridges and two-storied roads, etc. to reduce Dhaka's traffic jams. I have two suggestions for immediate partial solution of the unbearable traffic jam:

1. The transports which the general people travel by should be provided with CNG all the time.

2. All the private cars and other vehicles which can run by petrol / octane should not be provided with gas.

If the govt. takes this measure, general people will be benefited and traffic jam will be reduced. Let us try for some months initially to see the impact on traffic congestion.

**Miah S Ali**  
Malibag, Dhaka



## Modern warfare

Civilians have borne the brunt of modern warfare, with 10 civilians dying for every soldier in wars fought since the mid-20th century, compared with 9 soldiers killed for every civilian in World War I, according to a 2001 study by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

But it does seem to suggest numbers that are roughly in line with those compiled by several sources, including Iraq Body Count, an organisation that tracked civilian deaths using press reports, a method the Bush administration repeatedly derided as unreliable and producing inflated numbers.

In all, the five-year archive lists more than 100,000 dead from 2004 to 2009, though some deaths are

reported more than once, and some reports have inconsistent casualty figures. Iraq Body Count, which did a preliminary analysis of the archive, estimated that it listed 15,000 deaths that had not been previously disclosed anywhere.

You just can't imagine people in this supposedly civilised age actually going to war. Their whole culture is to blame. A culture that says war is all right, that it's legitimate to tear bodies apart and destroy the lives of men, women and children. You just can't imagine civilised people talking calmly about it.

War is insanity. They're declaring war in the name of peace!

**Ted Rudow III, MA**  
One-mail

## Woes of common people

I fully agree with Mr. Minhaj Ahmed's view, expressed in his letter, published in The Daily Star on October 25, 2010, under the caption, 'Unbearable'. In addition to the load shedding, traffic jam, and high prices of essentials, the scarcity of water and gas is affecting people. Many are becoming sick by drinking unsafe water.



Crimes of all sorts have gone up alarmingly, ruling party men are engaged in deplorable activities and police are sheltering them. Now conflict has arisen between local people and law enforcers in Rupganj of Narayanganj over forced land purchase for housing project of the army. The locals have said that the army is forcing them to sell land for only Tk. 15 lakh per bigha when the current market price is Tk. 40 lakh. We don't know what to say, this sort of news is very disturbing. Conflict arising between army and common people portrays a very grim picture; we shudder to think the consequences of it.

Oblivious to all these serious problems, the government is busy changing names, trying to evict Begum Khaleida Zia from her house, how absurd! Like Mr. Minhaj Ahmed we also want to know- what is our fault, why is the govt. punishing us like this?

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong