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## Remembering the martyrs

The auspicious month of December has come. After nine months of fierce fighting, the valiant sons of this soil, not caring for their lives, liberated this country. Victory has been achieved on 16th December 1971, and history has been made. With their supreme sacrifice, they wanted to make us secure. People's joy knew no bounds; their eyes sparkled with happiness, hope and contentment.

But now everything has changed; fear, despair and anxiety have gripped the people. Crimes of all sorts have gone up alarmingly; people are suffering from acute shortage of water, power and gas. Prices of essentials are going up day by day, and ruling

party men are engaged in many deplorable activities. In addition, our political parties are at loggerheads. The freedom fighters might have never imagined that one day the country would be in such a condition, that the people would have to face so many troubles.

We urge the politicians to shun the politics of vindictiveness and work unitedly for the welfare of the country. People should also work in the interest of the country which is a gift from the valiant freedom fighters, and by this we could show our deep gratitude to them.

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong

shrines - all in the name of Islam. The Taliban and their acolytes hate the US, India and Israel but they hate their fellow Pakistanis even more, as evidenced by their slaughter of fellow Muslims.

As the Pakistani journalist Ehsam Waheed wrote in Lahore's Daily Times, "It is important to curb the extremist mindset amongst naive minds if we want a peaceful future. Terrorism cannot be eradicated from Pakistan unless and until we work towards a tolerant mindset, which is free of bogus myths."

Unless this hateful mindset is corrected, Pakistanis will continue to slaughter each other as they are doing now. Pakistan needs its own Gandhi who will teach them love and tolerance instead of the doctrine of hatred and violence being promoted as jihad.

**Mahmood Elahi**  
Ottawa, Canada

### Allegations against Dr. Yunus

I would request the minister who commented 'Yunus is corrupt' to apologise not only to Dr. Yunus but also to the whole nation. He should look at himself and his party-men and only then comment about someone who at least brightens the name of the country. The newspapers that ran the headlines, 'Yunus siphoning off money' should also be held to account because there were no hints in the news under those headlines that Prof. Yunus pocketed the amount.

Prof. Yunus tried to organise a third force in 2008 - that's what made our politicians angry, afraid and antagonistic towards him. One question for the politicians - can all of you claim to be honest? So far you have not submitted accounts of your property; some MPs gave false statement just to get allocation of a piece of land in Purbachal and Uttara projects.

Also, there must be some mechanism to discipline journalists who practice yellow journalism.

When PM says Dr. Yunus is sucking the blood of the poor, or he takes high interests, we do not see any alternative ideas from her to counter the programme. The govt has a 25% stake in GB, and representations in the Board

## South America takes the lead

For Palestinians, this week there came some good news from South America when Brazil and Argentina officially recognised Palestine as a state on the basis of the pre-1967 war borders. More Latin American countries, such as Uruguay and Peru will soon make their declaration of recognising the future Palestinian state. Brazil also demanded Israel return all occupied lands as per UN resolutions.

It's a milestone that the Palestinians have achieved in their 60-year old struggle for independence. Now it's the turn of those countries to make the Palestinian issue and their right for an independent state, a corner stone of their foreign policy. Shedding tears on the Palestinian plight may not be sufficient to avert the situation on the ground. Unless some practical measures are taken, Israel will continue with its

expansion policy of illegally occupying Palestinian land and suppressing any form of protest, with violent means.

The real friends of the Palestinians should not look for US' approval to act because both the Israeli and Americans are condemning what these South American countries have done. As per Ileana Ros, a Republican member of the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, such a step by Brazil and others is equivalent to sabotaging the efforts being made by the US for peace and security in the region. Recognition of Palestine by Brazil and other South American countries may not change much on the ground, but it is a litmus test to identify the true friends and sympathizers of the Palestinians.

**Muhammed Jamil Ather**  
Karachi, Pakistan



PHOTO: AFP

of Directors of GB, why not she insists on reducing interest rate?  
**M M Mortayez Amin**  
Dhaka

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A news has been published in different media about world famous Nobel laureate Dr. Yunus' involvement in fund anomalies. This allegation has been made based on a documentary shown on Norwegian television. What has surprised me most is the comment of a leader of the student wing of a political party in our country. He has said that Dr. Yunus is exploiting the poor, that instead of poverty alleviation, GB's micro credit scheme is making the condition of the poor even worse.

Dr. Yunus has been fighting for poverty alleviation by implementing his theory of micro credit for a long time. He and his Grameen Bank have brought the highest honour to our country. What I think is that several persons and organisations have been pretty envious of his success, and out of desperation making such detestable comments. We must show respect while

criticising an eminent personality like Dr. Yunus.  
**Tashrif Billah**  
Student, EEE  
BUET

### DU and JU admission

Recently I came to know about two verdicts of the High Court on the issue of challenging the legality of new admission rules disqualifying the undergraduate applicants who did not studied 200 marks in English. That's why a good number of students from Madrasa Education Board were disqualified for the admission test of Dhaka University and Jahangirnagar University.

The two verdicts of the High Court on the same issue are different, one went in favour of the students in case of DU admission, while another verdict went against the students in case of JU admission.

It's not the fault of the students but of the education policy. Why did not the Education Ministry introduce 200 marks in English in Madrasa Education? The students are suffering for the

fault of the government and policymakers. Education Ministry should take effective measures in this regard.

**Mithun Dip**  
Dept. of IR  
Jahangirnagar University  
Savar, Dhaka

### Use of air-conditioners

We welcome the decision of the Power Development Board to resume power connection but on certain conditions and using air-conditioners only with prior permission.

In this connection, we would like to suggest that the use of air-conditioners may be discouraged as far as possible, and restricted to one or two air-conditioners maximum for an office or a residential house. Simultaneously, installation of a separate electric meter may be made compulsory and rate of electricity tariff may be raised by 100 per cent for use of air-conditioners in the interest of public service on account of acute shortage of power supply in our country.

**O.H. Kabir**  
Wari, Dhaka

### BNP's philosophy

The recent tilting of high-rise buildings in Dhaka and Chittagong reminds us of the weak foundation of the BNP. It is tottering at the very foundation under its current leadership. Many of its top leaders have deserted the party, or have been thrown out. (Syed Badrul Ahsan's col. in the DS of 24th Nov)

This dilemma is due to the cumulative negative effects of our political culture, now mainly based on dynasty rules. This umbrella effect is not in public interest. While abroad, many Bangladeshis

feel shy to admit they are Bangladeshis, as we hold the record of being the most corrupt country in the world four years in succession.

Our established institutions have been destroyed or eroded. Bangladesh is a rare country where fare meters are installed in public vehicles, but are not operated. Good political governance is a Herculean task in emerging countries due to the prevalent have-not attitude. First the self, then comes the public service. Voluntary retirements are rare, encouraging misuse of position and power.

The question arises as to

why such deplorable leadership is imposed on the masses. Our economically marginalised people have no power to resist oppression and immoral activities like bribery, corruption and nepotism. We see examples of newly independent countries wallowing in autocratic rules throughout the continents of Asia, Africa and South America. Self-control and the ability to resist temptations are lacking, because the spirit of self sacrifice is diluted (the approach is subjective, not objective).

**Abu Abd**  
Dhaka

### Victims of their own hatred

Mahatma Gandhi once remarked, "Those who hate others ultimately end up hating themselves." Pakistanis have proved that Gandhi was right. Pakistanis are supposed to be Muslims and yet the Sunni Muslims are slaughtering the Shia Muslims and vice versa.

The Taliban are supposed to be Sunnis and yet they are slaughtering fellow Sunnis in the name of their version of Islam. They have been bombing schools, hotels, hospitals, mosques and Sufi

## Helmet laws

This refers to the enforcing helmet laws. Everybody agrees that wearing crash helmets is safe. But the reluctance of some two-wheeler riders to wear a helmet does not have to do with helmets per se. It is the implementation of the rule by the traffic police that is the problem.

The police show more interest in cracking down on those riding without helmets than in regulating traffic. As it is, the traffic police are overburdened. They are yet to rein in those who talk on mobile phones while driving, drive without licence, and indulge in reckless driving, and so on. Riders without helmets will accelerate on seeing the police and cause injuries to themselves and other road users.

In view of all this, I think people should be given the option to wear helmets. They can be educated on the need to use



PHOTO: STAR

them. While implementing the rule, care should be taken to ensure that only standardized helmets fulfilling safety norms are sold and the pillion rider wears helmet too. Senior citizens avoid travelling by buses because of the crowd and the risk of being targeted by pickpockets. They

find it safer to ride two-wheelers. Forcing them to carry a burden on their heads in the form of helmets will amount to torturing them. Would it not be wiser to leave it to the discretion of the riders to wear or not to wear?

**Gopal Sengupta**  
Canada

## Chariots of fire

Mr Saleh Ayub's regular letters on a variety of subjects are usually balanced and logical, but his latest effort on Dhaka's rickshaws (TDS, 08 Dec), is very disturbing. This is my 80th letter to the DS on the subject in 3 years, where I have analysed the traffic imbroglio from all angles and suggested solutions to keep Dhaka moving, but to no avail. If I had Mr Ayub's e-mail, I would send him uncensored copies of just 3 out of the 80, sent to DS on the dates mentioned, "Rickshaw-free Capital"-22/05/08, "Facts on Dhaka's Jams"-29/10/09 and "Dhaka sans Rickshaws"-19/04/10.

Sadly, his comments smack of the smug superiority typical of expatriate Bangladeshis who are not averse to comparing the marvels of the developed countries with their wide boulevards, efficient mass traffic systems, disciplined drivers and polite controllers with the chaos prevalent in Dhaka.

None of these are expected within the next decades, not with the quality of governance and greed so pervasive here. By the by, is Mr Ayub and all supporters of gas guzzling monstrosities (GGMs) that haunt our narrow pot-holed roads, aware that the days of fuel driven vehicles are numbered? The billion plus GGMs have already been identified as the worst environmental polluters that may well end life on earth in this century. So, set your polluting, honking chariots ON fire and change your GGM for a solar-powered rickshaw while there is still time!!

**Sikander Ahmed**  
Niketon, Gulshan, Dhaka



### Smoking in public places!

The BSS report published in most dailies on 28th November, suggesting the fine for smoking in public places to be raised from Tk.50 to Tk.10000, seems absurdly high! A rational figure could be Tk.500 for first offence, and for subsequent offence, say Tk.1000 may be a reasonable figure!

Alternatively, two days simple imprisonment without diet for the first time, and five days for the second time should be included. The diet should be the prisoner's responsibility, not the jail authorities', wherever the offender may be imprisoned. However, the effectiveness of this measure will depend on effective implementation. To encourage this, I would suggest, that 10 percent of the fine collected be given to the policemen who catches the offender. In this way, there will be some incentive for the policemen. The complicated way of collecting fines is discouraging, otherwise, even at Tk.50 per head they should easily collect minimum, say Tk.25,000/- daily in some areas in Dhaka alone!

With incentive in place, and a simple receipt book to collect the fine, I believe that all over Bangladesh the fine collected will be at least a few lac taka daily. I would urge the government to consider the proposal and implement it, and earn some miscellaneous revenue too!

**S.A. Mansoor**  
Dhaka