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# Resilient Japanese

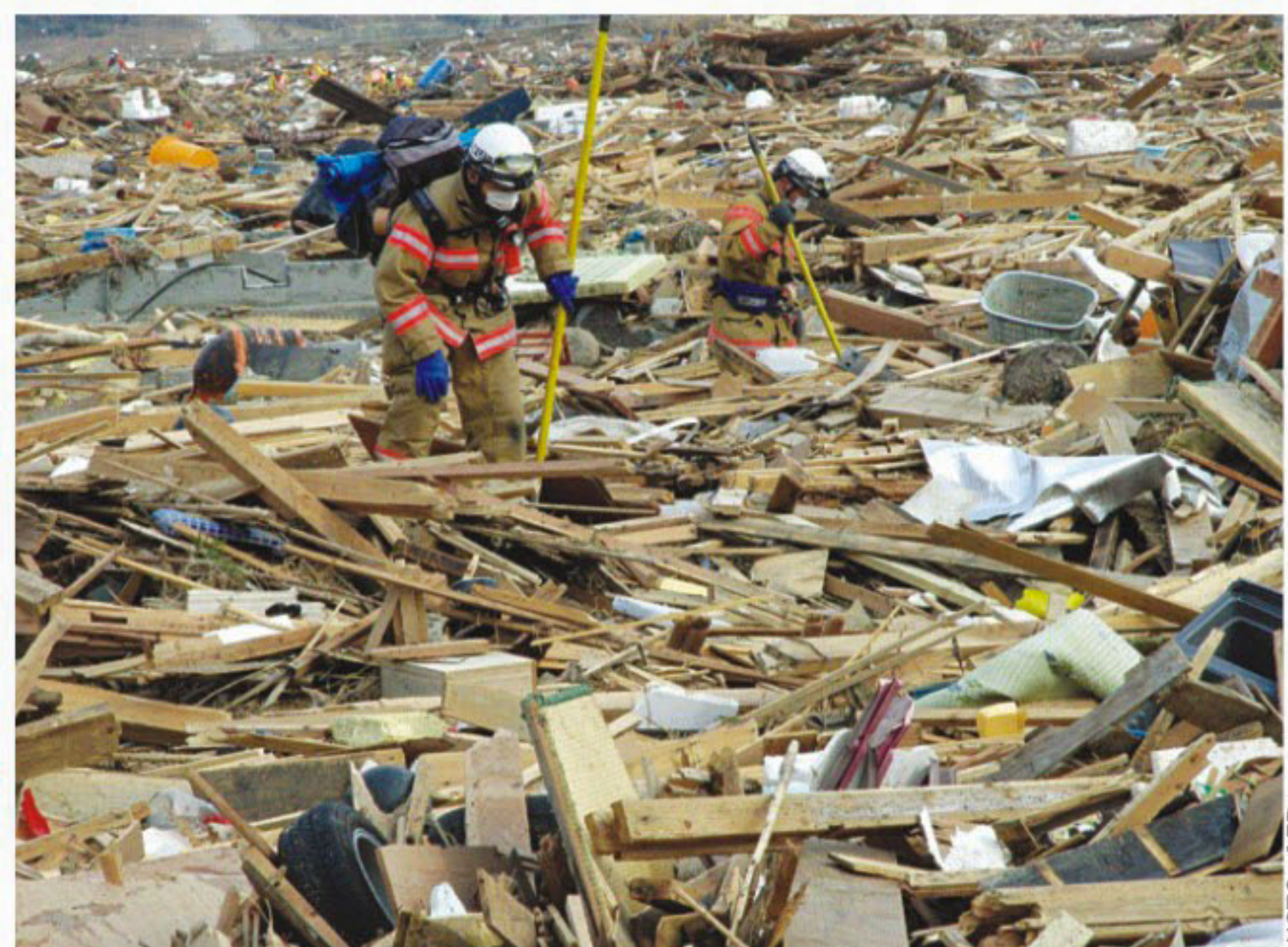


PHOTO: AFP

I stood dumbfounded watching on TV the severest temblor (8.9 on the Richter Scale) to hit Japan during the past 140 years since it began keeping record of tremors.

The country technically well-equipped against these shock waves could not protect itself from destruction. The horrible metaphors of the scenes of devastation - a 10-meter (33-feet) high wall of water swiftly roaring and sweeping away vessels, households, automobiles, and whatever came in his way.

The enduring nation immediately set itself to work and the train service began on Saturday afternoon. Around 50,000 Japanese troops have been involved in the rescue action. Partly water and power supplies were restored and about 125,000 survivors were provided with temporary shelter. There are many more outstanding and amazing tasks commenced by the nation within a short span. All these actions show how resilient the Japanese people are.  
**Muhammed Jamil Ather**  
Karachi, Pakistan

## Pepper spray as a self defense mechanism

Stalking, harassing and killing of girls continue unabated despite condemnation and concerns expressed by many. The girls and their parents are completely helpless in the face of such harassment despite assurances for help by the law enforcers.

In many countries of the world Pepper spray are widely used as a self defense mechanism to deter aggression or attack by hostile forces. Pepper spray has proved to be a reliable method of self defense mechanism in many parts of the world. I am optimistic that it shall have the same result as well in Bangladesh if used properly. Pepper spray is available in convenient size canisters which can easily be carried by the girls in their bags.

The government being well-wisher of the people should consider importing Pepper spray through TCB or any other agency in an effort to help stop harassment of the girls and their parents. While dispensing Pepper spray, the authorities must ensure that it does not fall in the wrong hands or else it shall cause more harm than good to the people.

**Nigar Chowdhury**  
On e-mail

## Bizarre attitude

There is a proverb, "Nijer naak kete porer jatra bhango kora." I think nothing could be more appropriate concerning what is happening with Nobel Prize winner Prof. Yunus.

The whole nation became euphoric when Dr. Yunus received the Nobel Prize; but now what our government is doing is so bizarre. The government's attitude towards him is unusual and many questions are arising in people's minds. They are wondering what could be the reason behind this onslaught which is demeaning the whole country and making us a laughing stock to the world.

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong

## France and Italy should save Libyans

Any American intervention in Libya will raise the accusation that the imperialist Americans are trying to control Libya's vast oil resources. As such, President Barack Obama has been wise not to intervene militarily, despite the Libyan rebels are being slaughtered by Gaddafi's African mercenaries. But if all other nations stand by, Gaddafi will crush the opposition in the same way Burma's military junta crushed the popular revolt in that Asian country. As such, the international community will have to find a way out from this impasse. One solution will be to prod France and Italy to send a joint military contingent to stop the massacre of Libyans by Gaddafi's forces. A joint Franco-Italian contingent will be enough to defeat Gaddafi's mercenaries. Once Gaddafi is defeated, the United Nations should organise a general election and help the country to build democratic institutions. This way, Libya will be liberated without any American intervention.

**Mahmood Elahi**  
Ottawa, Canada

## Libya scene

While the battles rage in Libya, calls are growing on the international community to impose a no-fly zone to cripple Gaddafi's air force, the reality is "there's a lot of, frankly, loose talk about some of these military options, and let's just call a spade a spade. A no-fly zone begins with an attack on Libya to destroy the air defenses." (Secretary of Defense Robert Gates)

It is not merely Libya's sweet crude oil the globalists are itching to get their hands on. In fact, physically capturing Libya's oil plays a minor role. They are interested in not only destabilising the entire Middle East, including the crown jewel Saudi Arabia, but also sending the world economy into a death spiral. \$200 a barrel oil price will surely do more damage to the world economy than any other single event.

**Ted Rudow III, MA**  
Encina Ave

**Notice**  
Dear readers,  
We appreciate greatly your contributions to this page. In order to give more space to our valued readers we request you to please restrict your letters / comments / opinions to a maximum of 150 words.  
---- Editor

## Marine environment & organic agriculture

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) recently revealed in its annual Year Book that tons of throw-away plastic and massive runoff from chemical fertiliser are choking the world's oceans. The report stressed on the need for adopting urgent measures to protect the marine environments which has already experienced significant damages due to over-exploitation and acidification caused by the climate change. Time has come when countries all over the world need to take individual initiatives to control environmental pollutions due to industrial wastes and agricultural chemicals. Switching on to organic agriculture can significantly reduce the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides which harm the overall environment including the marine environment. Proper industrial and general waste management, recycling of plastic and other materials can help control the environmental pollution caused by these elements. In all the cases, governments have to design an institutional set-up to regulate, for instance, organic agricultural system, because refraining from the use of synthetic agricultural inputs does not merely mean organic agriculture. It requires an appropriate farming system, certification of organic products, etc. to run organic agriculture.

Let's take some pragmatic measures to protect our dear earth against environmental destruction!  
**Professor M Zahidul Haque**  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University  
Dhaka

Palo Alto, CA

## Four Hadiths

I often remember Imam Abu Daud (R)--one of the six-purest Hadith book writers--who took just four Hadiths as the fundamental code of his life. The four Hadiths are as follows:

1. Accept what our dearest Rasul (Pbuh) said, and leave those things what He prohibited.
2. Avoid all the meaningless things.
3. Select the best for another person, which is the best for you.
4. Always seek well for people.

All of us should materialise these in our life.

**Habibur Rashid Ismail**  
Chittagong

## Taxing the people

I would rather like to term this action of the government as dacoity in broad day light. The party in power has imposed this arbitrary tax on the owners of motor vehicles of the country, which is on top of Motor Vehicle Tax and Fitness Tax, saying that this tax would be adjusted at the time of submitting Tax Returns. The BNP government, did away with this Tax, which was imposed by the party in power when it came to power the last time. This Tax used to be Tk.3, 000 now it has been raised to Tk.8, 000 an increase by Tk.5,000. The government is further contemplating to impose property tax on those who own property, which I believe is again going to be on top of all kinds of existing taxes that goes with the property.

Hypothetically speaking, if some ones income tax is Tk.5,000 then what happens to Tk.3,000 which is taken as advance from the tax payers, since there is no system of refund which used to be there before. Interestingly, there is no protest from the motor vehicle owners, which is a testimony to the fact that Bangladesh is indeed the most corrupt country in the world as has been found by the Transparency International.  
**Saleh Ayub**

On e-mail

## BCS tragedy

"Believe it or not, I qualified in the BCS examination not by reading but by leaking the question papers and by political connection. So I know a little English. Throughout my student life I yielded weapons as a cadre so if you want to learn that, come to me" said one of the government college English teachers to the students without feeling any compunction. I personally know about many BCS Cadres who find comfortable mixing with drunkards and miscreants rather than with the enlightened. Then to confirm my conviction came the report-"A total of 3295 (20.11%) of candidates appearing at the 18th BCS examination (held in 1996-97) got zero in English, even though some of them qualified for BCS posts".

So if this goes on unabated, I shudder to anticipate the consequences. Will the Prime Minister do something to salvage the country by putting merit above 'mama khalu' affiliation in all respects?

**Tinku**  
Lalpur, Natore

## It's not easy for US

The logical and sensible essay by Quddus published on 22nd. February, along with his sincere advice to Obama; is easier said than done! It expresses his thoughts on M-E liberty, but may not coincide with US ground realities. Possibly, President Obama is at a disadvantage, for taking a realistic and rational decision; for more reasons than one. Middle East regimes are clearly either for or against USA; which will give all support for setting up democracy in Syria; but will that hold true for Saudi Arabia?

Possibly not! The essay mentioned that both Republicans and Democrats have provided moral support and weapons to most despots in the M-E; to have easy access to its oil!

British policies of the 1930s have forged the establishment of hereditary dynastic despots in the Middle East

# Commodity prices

The recent price hike has certainly irked the ruling party government. The general masses are also suffering a great deal for the upward surge of the commodity price. Prices of oil and rice have already gone beyond the reach of the lower-middle class people of our country. The middle-class is also finding it difficult to keep pace with the market price of the daily necessities. To curb this annoying problem, the government should reform the regulatory bodies to make them effective to supervise the market situation. The regulatory teams should also observe the market closely

and calibrate price lists acceptable to both the customers and traders. Creating a price list somehow or other has not been of any use. Consumers' Association of Bangladesh, CAB, should also play active roles to uphold the interest of the customers. As an average consumer has nearly no clout over the price of commodities, the government must take organized measures to regulate market prices and make the lives of civilians a little easier.

**Shahriar Kabir**  
Dept. of EEE, BUET  
Dhaka



A.M.AHAD / DRINKNEWS

deserts ruling for over eighty years now! Can the balance tilt now, in a matter of say eighty days! One wonders!

Transition to democracy will happen, albeit slowly; possible one country and then another; and not in a domino fashion, in a short span of time as many may think. We can only hope for the best; and pray for peaceful transition.

**Liberal Realist**  
Dhaka

## Ensure pure water

More than ten million people depend on water supplied by Dhaka WASA. In Dhaka, water for construction work, for washing, for bathing, for cooking food, for drinking is supplied by Dhaka WASA. No one can lift water even from nature's gift underground without special permission from and charge given to WASA. It is a government enterprise and managed by a board that is formed by LGRD Ministry. The BSTI and Directorate of Environment of the government over look the phenomena of contaminated water supply by Saydabad water treatment plant of WASA.

A few years back the interim government deployed army at Saydabad water treatment plant and the citizens of Dhaka got pure water. Last year when eight honorable Members of Parliament declared that they would not be responsible if unrest developed amongst the people owing to supply of contaminated water by WASA, the water turned clean.

To have clean water we like to urge the ministry concerned to improve the water treatment plant of WASA at Sayedabad  
**Mohammad Ali Hawladar**  
Tilpapara, Khilgoan  
Dhaka

## Is it the power plants?

On 14th February The Daily Star carried a very pathetic picture - a woman is crying embracing her child. It reminds us about the poor victims of Sidr and Aila in our country. In fact, the recent earthquake of Japan is terrible news for all Asians. Japan is very prone to natural disasters like earthquakes.

Some people say that the establishment of power plants is responsible behind such massacre. If it is true, then it would serve as strong warning for the whole human civilization, because more destruction may occur in other developed countries.

Maybe, very soon our Japanese brothers will overcome the economical and the material loss caused by this earthquake by dint of their hard work, merit and will power. Once again, the people will get busy with life. But the victims will not be able to forget the pain of losing their near and dear ones. Let us all pray for an earthquake-free world.

**Pradip Das**  
Lecturer  
BHPI, CRP

## University degrees in English medium

The print and electronic media carry a large number of advertisements on the courses offered in the schools, colleges and universities. But there is no mention of English-medium university courses.

The English medium schools enjoy huge popularity; and its human resources output have to be channelised. In this global village market, the Bengali-medium graduates would be at a disadvantage in landing international jobs; due to weakness in English.

My niece would pass out of A level examination next year; and she is searching for an English medium university in the Dhanmondi / Mohammadpur locality. For female students, transportation is a problem in overcrowded Dhaka city, for daily travel to distant locations. Now, as per Govt. regulations, the universities are shifting to own campuses outside the DCC zone. The government

# Fatwa based killings



PHOTO: ZAHEDUL I KHAN

Fatwa has now become an ugly word, as it is associated with the recent cruelty causing the death of a young girl, coming from a needy family. The excesses being carried out in the name of 'Fatwa' pronounced by illiterate persons, whose knowledge of Islamic thoughts and philosophy is often extremely scant, needs to be stopped!

The humane saying "To forgive is divine"; has its roots in Islamic philosophy. In contrast, what we see in real life is "Cruelty thy name is Fatwa" as we learn from many news items being published in many dailies; usually coming from rural areas; almost every day!  
**Literate Citizen, Dhaka**