

Christmas brings a message of hope

Every year on December 24, as the sun sets on the West, Christians all over the world begin to sing, “Silent night holy night, all is calm, all is bright....” and thus begins the celebration of Christmas, the remembrance of the birth of Jesus. This particular Christmas song, composed by an Austrian Catholic priest named Joseph Mohr in 1818, has a touching story. It was just days before Christmas that Father Joseph’s church organ was found broken. Father Joseph was so deeply sad that he could not set up another alternative for the Christmas Mass.

Music was considered a central aspect for the celebration of Christmas. With a heavy mind, while taking a stroll he remembered of a poem he composed years back, which he wrote to explain the wonder of the birth of Jesus to the villagers. He rushed back to his house, got the poem and went to his friend Franz Gruber who was the organist to give the poem a melody. Both of them sang the song on December 24, 1818 during the ceremony. The song was so heartening that the entire Church witnessed pin drop silence and the whole congregation was stunned. Thus from a moment of helplessness was created one of the most famous Christmas carols of all time.

Christmas has a similar message - a message of hope and joy to all those who have lost all the hope of life. According to the Holy Bible, Jesus was born to bring good news to humanity. He laid down his life for the well-being of others. His deeds and messages still inspire many around the world to work for the good of humanity.



The world seems to be passing a crucial time. At this juncture the remembrance of the birth of Jesus has a meaning. Happy Christmas to you all!
Ripon Rozario
Studying theology at the Gregorian University Rome, Italy

Car the only culprit on road!

This is in reference to the letter written by Sikandar Ahmed on 21st Dec 2011 about "Gas Guzzling Cars". I believe his statements are very biased and baseless because he is also pointing fingers at people who work very hard to earn a living. Not everyone buys cars with "black money". It is the public transports owners who don't maintain their vehicles' fitness. They hire drivers with fake licenses who never obey traffic regulations. Mr. Sikandar did not talk about rickshaws that are driven on the wrong side of the road and never stop for other vehicles which have the right to be on that way. He did not talk about illegal road-side shops that occupy most of the footpaths so that pedestrians are compelled to walk on the road. He did not mention how pedestrians cross the road when there is an overbridge available.

Furthermore, raising the price of octane to Tk.200/- will also raise the prices of essentials and ultimately everyone will suffer. What our traffic police need to do is ensure that people don't drive on the wrong side of the road, buses do not stop anywhere to pick and drop passengers, and everyone in general obeys the traffic regulations.

One thing the government can do is ban the import of cars over 2000CC because some cars are getting just too big for our roads. People all over the world own cars, so why shouldn't we? All we need is an improvement in the system. I would also like to advise Mr. Sikandar to think before writing such biased attacking articles.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka

EVM and Digital Bangladesh

Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) is used in many countries of the world. Bangladesh used EVM in the Chittagong city corporation election first and then in Narayanganj city corporation election. Now the present government wants to use this machine in the Comilla city corporation election, too. But Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) opposes the government's move saying that voting can be manipulated by the Awami League (AL) people if EVM is used. But without using the EVM, how can we make a digital Bangladesh? To build a digital Bangladesh, we need to increase awareness among people about the latest technologies.

Md. Meftaul Islam
Dept. of International Relations

The great fighter loses his last battle

Well, worry no more! Christopher Hitchens has passed away by losing his final battle with a deadly nemesis, the cancer. Whether you hate him or love him, he was one of the great literary personalities that one could hardly ignore in the last two decades. It was delightful to watch and listen to this sharp-witted man debating and pulverising his opponents with very precise and lethal arguments. He was the man to debate and test whether you could knock him down with your counter punches.

As an impartial observer, I must say that very few could survive his punches. He rarely lost any debate as far as I can recall. As a former Trotskyite and Oxford educated man, he ended up changing his positions many times over making his friends and foes very puzzled with his contradictory stances. He was unique in the sense that he never tried to please anybody and spoke forthrightly whatever he felt right about the issue without any fear. Right or wrong, you would wish he would be arguing for your side than taking sides with your opponents. That was his charm! He will be dearly missed as a strong and independent voice of our time!

Dev Saha, *On e-mail*



Splitting of Dhaka is unconstitutional

Section 5(1) of the Constitution of Bangladesh says that “The Capital of the Republic is Dhaka.” As the government has recently split the capital into Dhaka North and Dhaka South, there exists no “Dhaka” at the moment. And as no amendment was adopted regarding the aforesaid section 5(1), it is obviously a violation of the constitution.

Some days ago the government annulled the caretaker government system through 15th amendment of the constitution arguing that it is a non-elected body which cannot go with democracy. But the same government some days later appointed two non-elected administrators for newly divided two Dhakas.

People are of the opinion that this splitting will not bring any positive result for the inhabitants of Dhaka; rather it will add new expenditure. Our PM said she would have divided Dhaka into four instead of two if she had sufficient money. These types of remarks serve merely petty political interests. They should rather act with an eye to the greater benefits of the people.

Rashid Harun
Dhaka

Is Khaleda only a mother?

Khaleda Zia did the same thing that most mothers usually do. She reportedly told the BBC interviewer that her son Tarique Rahman was totally innocent. She further said that all cases, including 21st August grenade attack, money-laundering, 10-truck arms haul, embezzlement of Zia Orphanage Fund, filed against him were false and were politically motivated.

And that the present government has filed those cases against him just to harass him politically. I believe she never thought whether the people of Bangladesh would be convinced of her statement.

Very recently, an FBI agent testified in the trial court in a money-laundering case against Tarique Rahman.

Khaleda Zia has taken a wrong path to clean her son. Instead of denial, she could have vowed to prove his innocence in the court. Demanding withdrawal of the cases was also a weakness.

Investing more in education



PHOTO: WRITER

The literacy rate is only 56.5 percent in our country. Only 2.4 percent of the GDP is currently being used in our education sector which is the lowest even among the SAARC countries. Education has become costlier and burdensome for the middle and lower classes of the people and for those who are living in the rural areas. To become a modern and civilised nation, there is no other way than improving our education system so that it may attain international standard.

Building new schools and colleges in every district and upazila is necessary. The NGOs also need to stand by the government in this regard. Every child has the right to go to school.

Imrul Chowdhury
Student, Little Jewels School, Chittagong

Digital cinema halls

The filmmakers of Bangladesh are now making good quality films. Now we need a few digital cinema halls with proper facilities. In India, they have already built digital cinema halls with good sound systems. For low cost cinema projection digital cinema halls are the best. And digital cinema halls are popular all over the world. So, the government should build a few digital cinema halls in the country.

Rowshan Ali
Department of Film, Television and Digital Media Green University of Bangladesh

Ignorance is bliss

Our home minister said that she came to know about the secret killings in the country through reading newspapers. How sad it is! Our ministers often seem to be ignorant of our sufferings. They also appear to be unaware of the news published in the inner pages of the newspapers. They just go through the first and back pages of the newspapers avoiding all other pages containing stories of woes and sorrows of the people.

Respect women

I was speechless while reading the news of Hawa Akhter Jui whose dream was to study and become a lawyer in the future. But her dream was ended by her husband's cruelty. However, I think it will not be easy to keep someone like Jui away from her studies. I don't understand why we cannot give women proper respect and dignity even after 40 years of our Liberation?

Many girls in our country want to pursue study but their parents and relatives won't let them to do that. We have to keep it in mind that women can serve the country too, if they are given proper education and opportunity. So please give women proper respect and help them achieve their dreams.

Rafida Binte Sharif
Viqarunnisa Noon School New Baily Road, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Short-term achievements; hope for long-term gains."

Shuvonkor Dey

Irreparable damage has been done in the power sector in the past three years. Nation will have to pay dearly for this in the future in terms of high electricity prices, inefficient plants and unreliable electricity supply.

Firko

Rid Bangladesh of corruption and you will see that Bangladesh will have no poor people within the next ten years.

MS Choudhury

The Daily Star has again proved that it holds a biased view towards the present government. Does The Daily Star believe that the government has only four major failures? Ask anyone, the major failures of the present government are innumerable. I will list a few: share market scam, failure to check high prices of essentials, failure to maintain law and order, downslide of economy, gross violation of human rights, failure to sign Teesta deal, failure to curb corruption and so on.

Iftekhar Hassan

Bangladesh does not have any other alternative but building nuclear power plants and mass transportation system like Metro rail, Subway, etc.

Upfront

This particular report gives us the opportunity to look at the successes and failures of the government. I think the dynamics of development remains in political cooperation and consensus on national issues, especially on good governance, priority setting, resource allocation, implementation, capacity building, corruption reduction and institutional reforms.

M Hossain

Awami League used these short-term rental power plants to whiten black money and fill its pockets and in the process encouraged huge borrowings from local banks driving up interest and inflation.

Fida Likhon

Give full power to the ACC to investigate the corruption charges against the ministers and secretaries of the present Awami League government. Bring back the sons of Khaleda Zia in the country to complete the legal process and punish them according to the laws.

Bangladesh is poor only because of corruption. Bangladeshi people are hard-working and if Bangladesh can get rid of corrupt practices, it will be one of the most developed nations in the world within 30 years.

Sheikh Monirul Islam, Opee

Failure to address gas crisis is a serious one and the authorities must explain why they have failed to do so. We are well aware of the number of gas fields that have been discovered, and one of those is only 27km from Dhaka. We are capable of extracting gas from this field. If we can add this to the national grid, it would solve the capital's domestic and industrial gas crisis.

Manzoor Ashraf

The Awami League only gave contracts to its own supporters within Bangladesh when it should have given these contracts to international investors. I fear when Awami League will complete its term, companies such as Summit and Orion will have to answer many questions. I doubt whether they have clean funds to finance