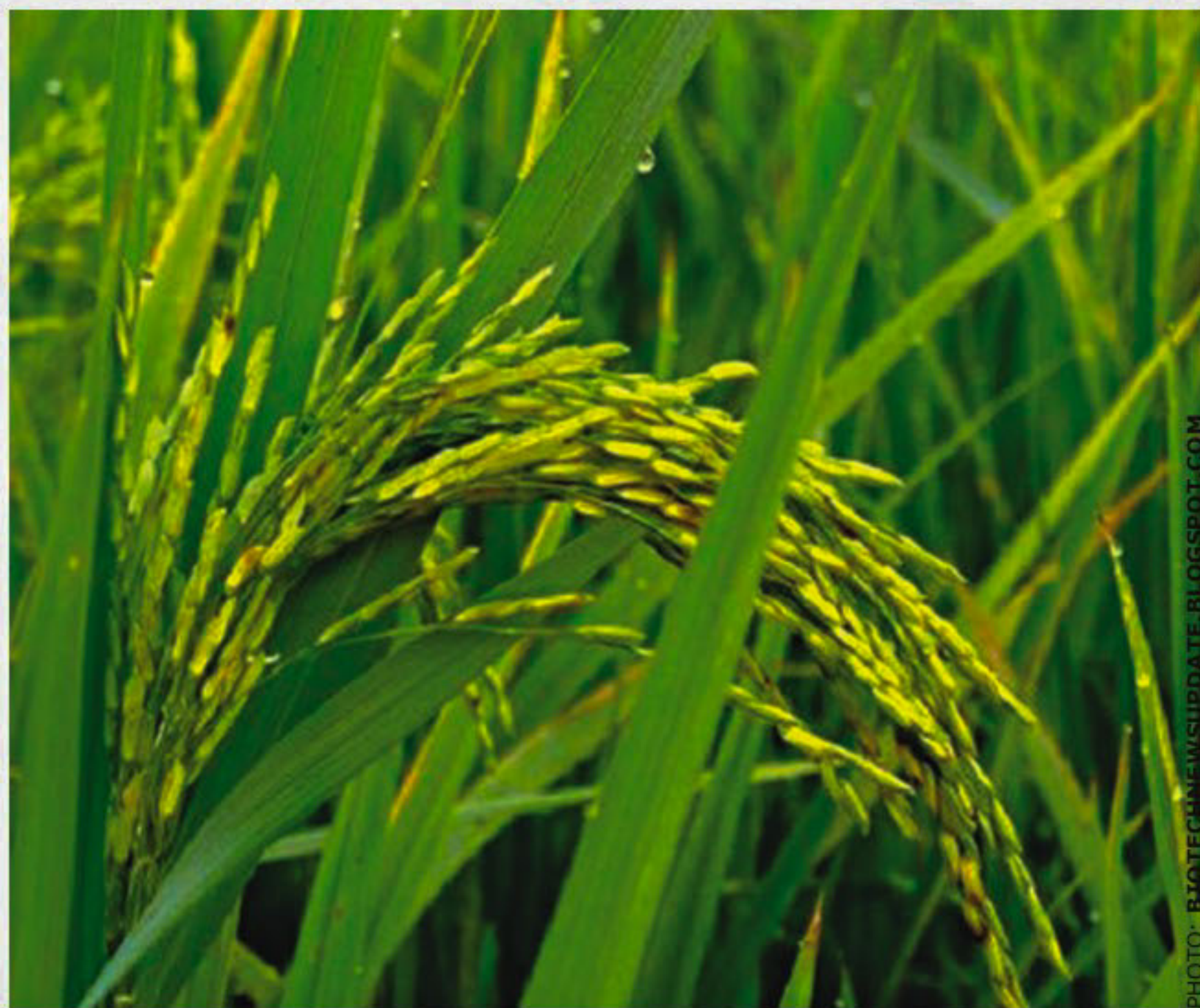


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 200 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# Should Gates promote GM Golden Rice?



Microsoft founder Bill Gates has undertaken a philanthropic plan to end world's hunger by promoting genetically engineered food crops. As a part of his plan, Monsanto and other biotech companies have collaborated with Gates Foundation through forming "Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa" (AGRA) to promote growing of genetically modified (GM) crops in Africa. Bill Gates supports the use of genetically modified Golden Rice which is capable of producing beta-carotene that human body can convert to vitamin A. True, Gates plan has noble intentions.

But in case of GM Golden Rice, according to a Study, a woman would have to consume 16 pounds and a child 12 pounds of Golden Rice per day to get the recommended amount of Vitamin A. Does this sound very healthy and encouraging?

Moreover the Monsanto's herbicide "Roundup Ready" which is sprayed liberally on genetically modified crops contains Glyphosate, which is harmful to both humans and the environment. Glyphosate has been found to be linked to birth defects, endocrine disruption, DNA damage and other health affects.

Mr. Gates, please review your plan for incorporating something better suitable for human as well as for environment. For instance, New Rice for Africa ("NERICA") may be a potential choice.

**Professor M Zahidul Haque**  
Dean, Faculty of Agriculture  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University  
Dhaka

## Local equipment manufacture!

The news report titled, "New company set up to make hydraulic machinery for vessels" published on 6th March, 2012, was the best and the most important news of the day for us in Bangladesh. It was refreshing to know of something constructive coming up, amidst the usual news of problems and politicians' stale talks that fill the pages.

The (50:50) joint venture with overseas manufacturer will produce hydraulic equipment both for inland and sea going vessels. It will add to our expertise and open a new portfolio for export.

Normally, it will start with minimum local components, but being in the private sector, it should incorporate substantial percentage of locally manufactured components, say in five years. Congratulation goes to Western Fishers Shipyard Ltd. for this initiative.

Engr. S. A. Mansoor, Dhaka

## The coward vs the courageous

It is a bad thing to hurt someone or attack someone when he or she is in a vulnerable state. It is easy for the attackers because the victim is powerless in that condition and unable to strike back. Clever people take lesson from their experience and remember the faces and wouldn't give second chance to such attackers in the future. In our country, the fellow politicians do not dare to speak their mind when the two lady leaders are in power. Once they're vulnerable, the opportunity seekers cry wolf for a reformed party. A person having good intention won't do that. If you want reform you should ask for it anytime, why only when the 'cat is in the well'? He, who speaks, speaks all time.

# Shun computer games and save power

Growing up with books all around me, I can see the difference between the people who read books and who don't. Children now-a-days are constantly experiencing new technology, and all this limits the growth of their imagination. Digital interactive entertainment options such as movies and music takes them away from mediums such as books, poetry and prose that will have enhanced their minds, imagination and creativity. I believe that we should again revert back to reading books at home again. Let us ban computer games and save electricity. Let's read for a better future.

**Asifur Rahman Khan**  
F2 Pubali, Circuit House Road  
Ramna, Dhaka



## Bangladesh police from Wikipedia

It now appears from sub-section 10 of section 14 - Contributions to UN Peace Keeping Operations - of the Wikipedia, Bangladesh has been contributing civilian police to UNMISSET/UNMIT since 1999 to till date. The information is not fully correct because Bangladesh had sent civilian police to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in 1999. UNTAET was responsible for administering East Timor during the transitional period to independence. It administered East Timor from 1999 to May 2002. In May 2002, on completion of its mission in East Timor, UNTAET was replaced by UNMISSET with a different mandate for post independent East Timor.

Late Sergio Viera de Mello was inter alia Transitional Administrator of East Timor during UNTAET. It may be mentioned here that Bangladesh had sent women civilian police to a UN mission in 1999 for the first time in its history - the mission was UNTAET. The then-SP Mili Biswas was leading the first Bangladeshi police contingent at UNTAET. The then-Col. Ismail was heading Engineers' Battalion of Bangladesh Army at UNTAET. Mrs. Sarwar Sultana was inter alia Acting Cabinet Member (Internal Administration) of East Timor at UNTAET.

In light of above, it is expected inter alia Wikipedia and concerned others will correct the information at the soonest and re-engineer the present information as deemed appropriate.

**Dr. M. S. Haq**  
Proponent of Gene mechanics  
On e-mail

## Neglected slum children in public hospitals

It becomes a bad practice in our country that like other service providing agencies, public hospital staffs neglect child patients from slums. Especially, the children aged between 12 and 18 years are the worst sufferers. A report was published in this daily on a survey titled, "The context of children in healthcare services in Bangladesh for good governance." The survey was carried out in November last year by child members of Child Parliament, a national-level children's organization, with assistance from Save the Children, said that around 70 percent of poor children are dissatisfied with the behaviour of the doctors and even about 69 percent of those surveyed failed to access healthcare facilities for many reasons.

The survey report revealed that there is no restriction of smoking in the doctor's consultation room. Moreover, lack of clean environment, ventilation and proper lighting at the public hospitals are the clear signs of negligence of the staff.

I urge the doctors and the staffs of the public hospitals to be friendly and attentive towards underprivileged child patients.

In this context, I urge the authority concerned to update the curriculum for medical students enriching it with latest concepts on patient care.

**Mobarak Ali**  
RK Mission Road, Gopibagh, Dhaka

## Respect girls and their rights

The youngsters in our country are badly affected by the satellite channels and the dark side of globalisation. We notice that they are conscious about the western fashion trends, music, movies, and above all the western lifestyle. However, we need to change our mindset to adapt with the modern world. That actually remains unchanged. In this civilised world, girls still face eve-teasing which is a matter of great regret for us. If we become unable to provide a favourable environment for girls, then how can we expect development? When a girl gets a job, financial security is ensured for her family in most cases but she may lose that opportunity when she is faced with insecurity in some cases. But we strongly believe that our liberal minded youth are imbued with ideals of equal rights and respect for all which is particularly needed for the prosperity.

**Subrata Ray**  
Department of Business Administration

## Education a costly commodity

Swept by the all-engulfing waves of commercialization, education has also turned into a very costly 'commodity' especially for the poorer section of the population. Even in the remote villages, a guardian has to meet a long list of expenses. Apart from spending a big amount on admission, purchase of books and school uniforms, he/she has to pay annual school development charges, tuition and periodic exam fees. Though girls are exempted from tuition fees, most of them have to bear extra-cost on transport and miscellaneous needs. But the poor guardian's main burden is the private coaching fees. It is now an open secret that school teachers have unofficially made private coaching compulsory for good results in the examinations.

Education has thus become a 'commodity' which can be purchased only at a high price! This ever-increasing high price of education is the main cause of high drop-out rate in the rural areas. This sinister trend of commercialisation in education may be checked by granting greater subsidies to educational institutions and by introducing higher pay scale for the teachers so that they refrain from engaging in private coaching business.

**Md Mohsin Ali**  
Nutan Courtpara, Kushtia

## The young for positive Bangladesh

The other day I was watching a Bangladeshi TV channel where some youths were sharing their views on our politics. All of them were blaming our politicians for the country's volatile situation.

Statistics shows that 70 percent population of our country are categorised as youth (below 40). So they should participate in the country's decision making, too. They may not depend on some inconsiderate politicians to dictate their future anymore. The followings can be considered to attain the goal:

1. Being politically conscious: Smartness does not lie in hating politics. So do not hate but understand politics.
2. We should not vote without knowing any candidate's background and eligibility. I hope media will help in this regard.
3. We must put pressure on political parties to nominate educated and eligible candidates.
4. To be a responsible citizen, earning money should not be the only purpose of education.
5. Let's change our traditional mindset to get a positive Bangladesh.

It's time to take responsibility, not to blame others.

**G.M. Rezwan Rasul**  
(A hopeful youth)

# Wrong steps by the government

The incumbent government is committing blunders one after another and is getting itself detached from the people. To thwart the opposition's grand rally it took undesirable steps and doing so it was exposing its fear and moral defeat.

The government said that those steps were taken to save the people. We want to ask "save from what?" It needs only a little common sense to realize that the opposition would not do anything to affect their grand rally.

The government's warning did not actually carry any weight. So, the government must act rationally, not do anything to make people suffer.

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong



Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

Sea Limit Row with Myanmar Bay is ours

International tribunal upholds Bangladesh's economic, territorial rights over 200 nautical miles from coast (March 15, 2012)

It's a great victory for us. I think it is the greatest and the happiest news for our country after a long time. Thanks to ITLOS and our government, especially to foreign minister Dr. Dipu Moni for the achievement.

**Masud Rana**

It may open up a positive phase in Bangladesh's effort to development. It requires a long term planning to utilise this economic zone.

**Restadul**

It is good to see a long awaited and overdue case settled on behalf of Bangladesh against Myanmar. What about the dispute with India? We hope this Awami League govt will seek similar resolution with India too and not to give off our legit-

imate rights like the way it compromised with regard to Teesta, Farakka, Tipaimukh and Corridor issues.

**Roni Rahman**

Special thanks to Commodore (Retd.) Khurshid Alam whose sincere efforts in this regard! Now, I would like to request the Government to pay special attention to strengthen our Navy in order to protect the sovereignty and wealth abundant within our maritime territory which is close to our country's territory in terms of area.

**Asif**

From now there are no obstacles to explore resources in our own Bay. Now this is time to utilize this opportunity so that we can alleviate poverty

through exploring fossil fuels in the Bay. Everything will be possible, if we take the right decision. We must do so.

**Dewan Mohammad Enamul Haque**

A wonderful breathtaking view! It is really a great news for Bangladesh after many long time.

**Jumana Sarwar**

Congratulations to Bangladesh. The government should now fight on the same issue with India! Let's see what happens in 2014.

**Moazzem Hossain**

It is a great achievement of the government. We are very much happy to hear the news. But we have the same dispute with India. So, overall success depends on the final Judgement to come out in 2014. We are hopeful to win in the race as we have succeeded this time.

**Mohammad Kaikobad**

We are very happy for this news. Thanks to the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and their colleagues, lawyers and everyone involved in this regard. We hope to have a very successful outcome with India as well. The government should highlight much more on its achievements

and progress and speak very carefully about the opposition. People like to hear more about progress rather than bad mouthing by both the government and the opposition.

**M. Rashid**

This is the best achievement of Bangladesh after our independence. The government of Bangladesh deserves our sincere thanks.

**Ilias Mahmud**

With the maritime dispute resolved, I would urge the government to work harder than ever to improve relations with Myanmar. We need to become close with all the SAARC and BIMSTEC countries.

**Zabi**

Congrats! Please work hard against Indian claims now. Bravo to the team and Commodore Khurshid Alam.

**Rch**

Bravo! Heartiest congratulations to Bangladesh team including Payam Akhavan of Canada who teaches at McGill University and supported Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina when cases were lodged against her during the military-backed caretaker government.