

# Lost in the gutter



SHAFIQUIL ISLAM KAJOL / DRINKNEWS

Every morning while going to school I see children of my age collecting garbage from the big garbage cans. While my morning starts with a healthy breakfast, their morning starts with collecting garbage. This crude reality makes me very sad when I imagine their lives in poverty. People are totally indifferent to child labour although the government has enacted certain laws regarding child labour. I also found out that the child labours are paid a meagre amount of money for their work only because they are children! What are the authorities doing? In The Daily Star and many other dailies I read how the DoE fines factories for pollution and grabbing and how BSTI penalizes eateries for unhygienic food etc but I have never heard or read that any balloon factory or brick factory has been penalized for letting children work there.

According to UNICEF, there are 7.4 million working children in Bangladesh, but the authorities concerned are oblivious about the matter! In the children's day I see hypocrites talking big about child rights and the next day everyone forgets about these children! I urge the authorities concerned to take actions like setting up mobile courts to save the child labourers or do at least something so that these children can get out of this nightmare. We should remember that every child is special and that children are the future of the country. If no action is taken we are sure to face a bleak future.  
**Shafeen Mahmood**  
*Class IX (commerce)*  
*Little Jewels School*  
*Chittagong*

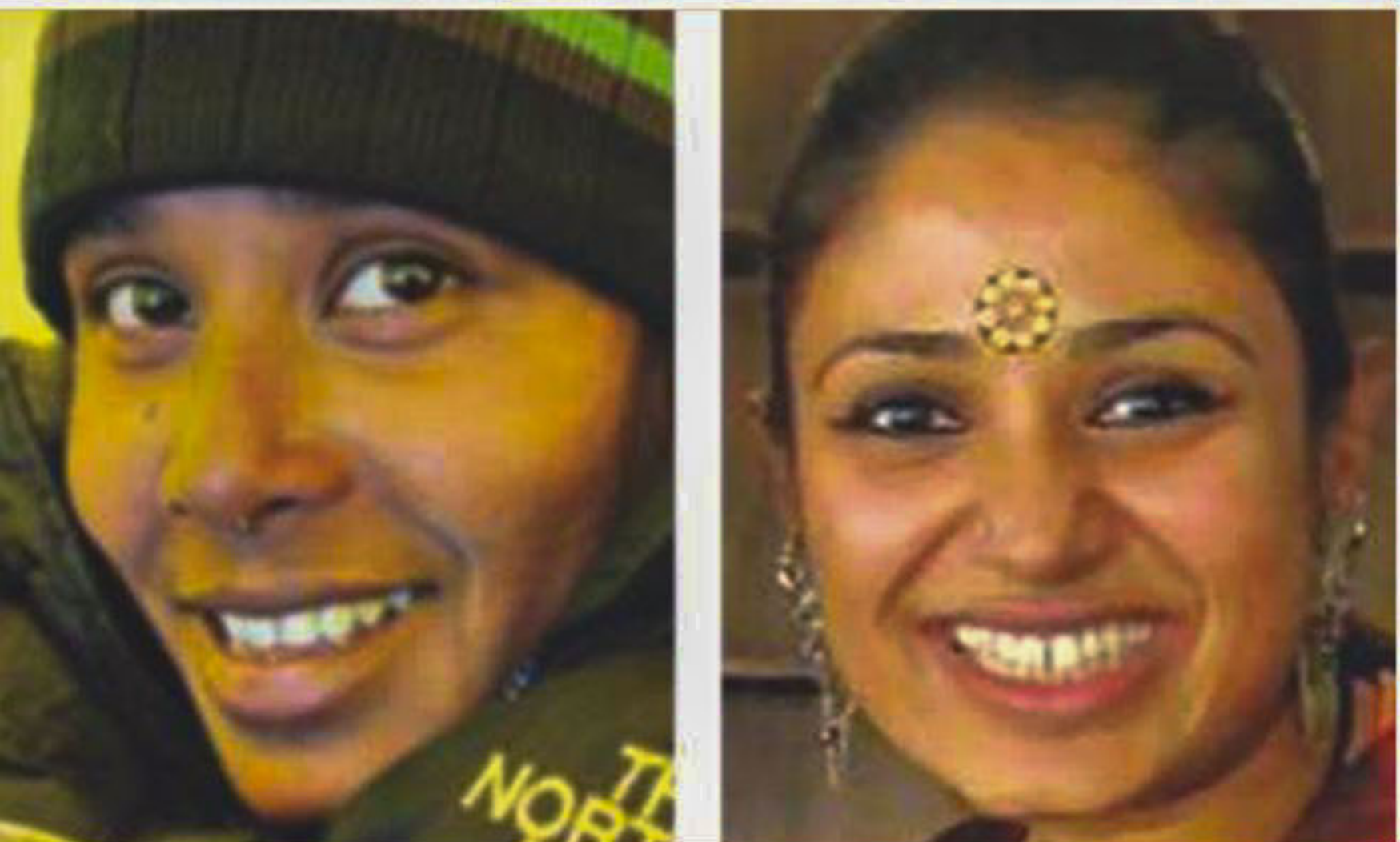
# Tribute to a war hero

I went to Dowarabazar upazila of Sunamganj for doing a field work from ICDDR,B in January 2012. Laxmipur is one of the remotest unions where we went to collect data on water and sanitation. I was searching for houses where there were children under five years for a short interview with the mother of the children.  
During my search I unknowingly went to a house where there was no child under five but a living legend to whom the whole nation is indebted. She was Kakon Bibi, Bir Protik, who was entrusted with the task of spying in that area during the Liberation War. She talked to me for some time and showed me the awards she received from Bangladesh government and from different organisations. She also narrated how brutally she was tortured by the Pakistani army when she was arrested. Hearing the horrific description of the torture perpetrated on her I became emotional and could not hold my tears. Just after her release from the Pakistani camp, the spirit of independence made her fight again. She started to help the freedom fighters as usual forgetting the torture she had to undergo, which was very surprising to me. After the independence, Bangladesh govern-



ment declared her Bir Protik for the brave efforts she made to emancipate Bangladesh. Before I came back from her house, I saluted this war hero bowing my head in front of her.  
**Md. Musfikur Rahman Jony**  
*Baneswar, Rajshahi*

# Secret of Nishat and Wasfia's success



Nishat Majumder and Wasfia Nazreen have proved that in spite of living in an oppressive society like Bangladesh, they have the courage and potential to fulfil their dreams. Indeed, they have set a great example for all the women of Bangladesh. I appreciate their parents for being open-minded and supportive of them throughout their journey. It is disappointing but true that in most of the families girls are taught to be coy and demure and to keep their eyes down. But now we have two women whose eyes were at

the highest point of the world and eventually they succeeded in reaching there.  
When a girl comes of age, she gets rebuked if she shows passion for sports and adventure. The irony is that people appreciate Bangladesh Women Cricket Team but still cannot accept young women playing cricket in the alley. This is a common example of our hypocritical society. I earnestly request all

parents to come out of these archaic beliefs and be supportive of their daughter who is willing to take up challenging jobs. If you can't be supportive, don't impede their steps toward their ultimate dreams. An open-minded, liberal and supportive family like Nishat and Wafia's can work as a catalyst to help women bring the best outcome.  
**Kohinur Khyum Tithila**  
*East West University*  
*Dhaka*

## 'A few foolish(!) men'

My sincere thanks to the DS for doing the follow up story titled "A sacrifice and a family in trouble." Hazrat Ali could do what we normal people don't do. He did not look the other way when armed goons tried to mug three elderly women. Instead, he decided to intervene and sacrificed his life.  
This sacrifice brought only misery to his family. As the lone bread earner and guardian of a family is no more, financial insecurity of the has been lost. In our country when the guardian is absent from a family, only the sufferers know how difficult it is to live.  
Hazrat Ali provided a 'good' news item for the media. Most of the media reports highlighted the news as it would help circulation. Now like the normal people they are ignoring the hardship the family is going through and may be looking for another news that might sell. As the DS has done the commendable job of following up, I earnestly hope that well-off individuals and organisations will come forward to assist the family financially.  
Hazrat Ali made a "foolish" decision and sacrificed his life in a society where corrupt politicians, eve-teasers and armed muggers have the last laugh. But as long as there are a few good men like Hazrat Ali, there is hope. And more importantly, for their sacrifice we can at least collectively claim that we still have some element of humanity left in us.  
**Saif, Dhaka**

## Reducing frequency of accidents

Every day numerous road accidents are taking place in our country in which a great number of people are being killed and maimed. The fate of an affected family changes forever after the accident occurs.  
We think Bangladesh must be topping the list of road accidents and day by day their number is increasing. To minimise road accidents, the government must make all out efforts. All the vehicles must be inspected to make sure that those are road worthy; fitness certificates must never be given to faulty vehicles in exchange for money; all the drivers must be subjected to driving tests before they are given driving licenses without taking any bribe. All the roads, highways, culverts and bridges must be inspected to see if those are responsible for the accidents. Overloading and over-speeding must be stopped by remaining vigilant about those. Patrol police should be on duty round the clock and their number should be increased. People also should remain alert when crossing the streets and they should use footpaths and footbridges.  
Communications Minister Obaidul Quader seems to be a very efficient and sincere person. We hope and believe that he will be able to make a difference.  
**Nur Jahan, Chittagong**

## We are on the same side

The recent criticism by the government high ups against Prof. Yunus's Nobel achievement reminds me of the Hindi serials. The stories are mainly based on quarrel among family members. Actually, this is the true reflection of our people's mentality. If we look back to our history, we will see that the people always created obstacle in the way of our great achievements. The British knew it very well that if they could break our unity, they could easily establish their rule in this sub-continent. Creating dispute centring personal interests was a technique of the British to divide our nation. The British left our country many years ago. But still we can not come out of this mentality. There are some achievements that the country will remember forever. Prof. Yunus' winning the Nobel peace prize is one of those. We the Bangladeshis should not say anything against him because we are on the same side. We should remember that one can not hide obe's failures by criticising others.  
**Jabunnaheer**

## READERS respond

*Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Nizami, Mollah indicted"*

### Fida Likhon

At first we need to realise the root of the problem. They are Bangladeshis who have been used by Pakistan to kill their fellow brothers and sisters.  
These people were directed directly by Pakistan and indirectly by USA and Saudi Arabia. Even now their followers are guided by these countries.

If we cannot find out the root of the problem and solve it, hundreds of Ghulam Azamz and Motiur Rahman Nizamiz will grow in Bangladesh.

### Khairul Hakim

At present there are lots of problems in our country. I think we are trapped in a vicious cycle. This trial is simply to distract our attention from more serious issues.

### Firko

They committed crimes jointly with the Pakistani occupation army and killed millions of Bangladeshis.  
Their followers are still active in Bangladesh. They will commit the same crimes if any war occurs between secular Muslims and extremist Muslims.  
We should ban Islami Chhatra Shibir and Jamaat-e-Islami to prevent further crimes.

### Mohammad Nurul Hoque, Malaysia

It is an important news for the nation. We have been waiting eagerly to see the trial of war criminals.

### Shah Deeldar

Since these individuals have never shown any remorse for their heinous atrocities in 1971, they should be prosecuted and given exemplary punishment so that history does not repeat itself.  
Religion should not be a shield for these criminals. Anybody who commits a crime should serve time!

# Electricity for free!



Electricity for free! How does it sound? Of course weird, but that's how it is. Here in Houston, Texas, Txu Energy is offering free electricity to the consumers all night long in a bid to win more customers. Well, everything is a matter of supply and demand. Texas is perhaps producing more electricity than its requirement; as a result it is offering free electricity to the customers at night.

On the other hand, the opposite is happening in Bangladesh. In the power-starved nation, the regime in power, headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has offered uninterrupted power supply to the consumers who would be willing to pay more for such services. It is well understood that the electricity produced in Bangladesh is way too less to meet the demand of the people. But it does not necessarily mean that the prime

minister will offer uninterrupted power supply to the consumers who would be willing to pay more, which speaks of her ill-motivation for exploitation.  
It has become apparent from different statements and announcements of the politicians that they have become morally bankrupt and do not care about the welfare of the nation. They are only concerned about self-aggrandizement. If she or any of her cabinet members had the slightest degree of self-esteem, then they would have resigned from their posts en masse. Shame on the politicians of Bangladesh who do not even bother to mock their sole Nobel laureate.  
**Saleh Mohammad Ayub**  
*Houston, Texas*  
*USA*