

No moral stand on Ramu outrage



Hearing about the attack on the shrine and community at Ramu while in the UK on my annual holiday, I have waited in vain for news of a clear moral stand taken by either political or religious leaders.

After the events of September 11th, 2001, when the circumstances around the loss of around 3000 lives in the collapse of the Twin Towers risked dangerous reactions world-wide, four men stood before the cameras in London - the Archbishop of Westminster for the Catholics, the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Protestants, the Head of Mosques for the Muslims and the Chief Rabbi for

the Jews. They said, “This has nothing to do with religion. We are all brothers.”

What a pity that such action can hardly be imagined, in this dear country! However, I trust some of your readers, sir, may ask, “Why not?”

In the circumstances, the minority faiths cannot be expected to take the initiative for such action. The ball is at the feet of the majority faith. Laying the foundations for the attitudes needed could take a long time - but, look around the world and ask, “What are the alternatives?”

Angela Robinson
Baridhara DOHS, Dhaka

Voters should elect honest leaders

The worst problem that the nation has been facing for decades is that our unpatriotic politicians never think about the country. Their only aim is to grab power and earn money quick and fast through corrupt means. The country can never progress as long as these greedy politicians are in power. The voters need to be conscious in electing people who will lead the country.

Miton Kumar Gupto
Phulbari Technical & BM Institute

Retd. Army chiefs shouldn't be in dubious business

The post of Chief of Staff of Army, Navy and Air Force has a very special meaning to the members of these forces. No post in the government can be compared to this post. Other posts are executive posts but this is the post of command. To be a commander one has to earn respect of all ranks, about his professionalism, integrity and loyalty.

We get hurt when we see our generals in political quagmire or when they allow their rank and good reputation to be misused by corporate houses. We were especially hurt when we saw our ex-chief being dragged to court and jailed on corruption charge. He was an honest man.

His reputation has been grossly misused by his employer. So chiefs, please do not disappoint us further.

Lt Col Quazi Salimuiddin psc (retd)

BSF's hollow promises, misleading claims

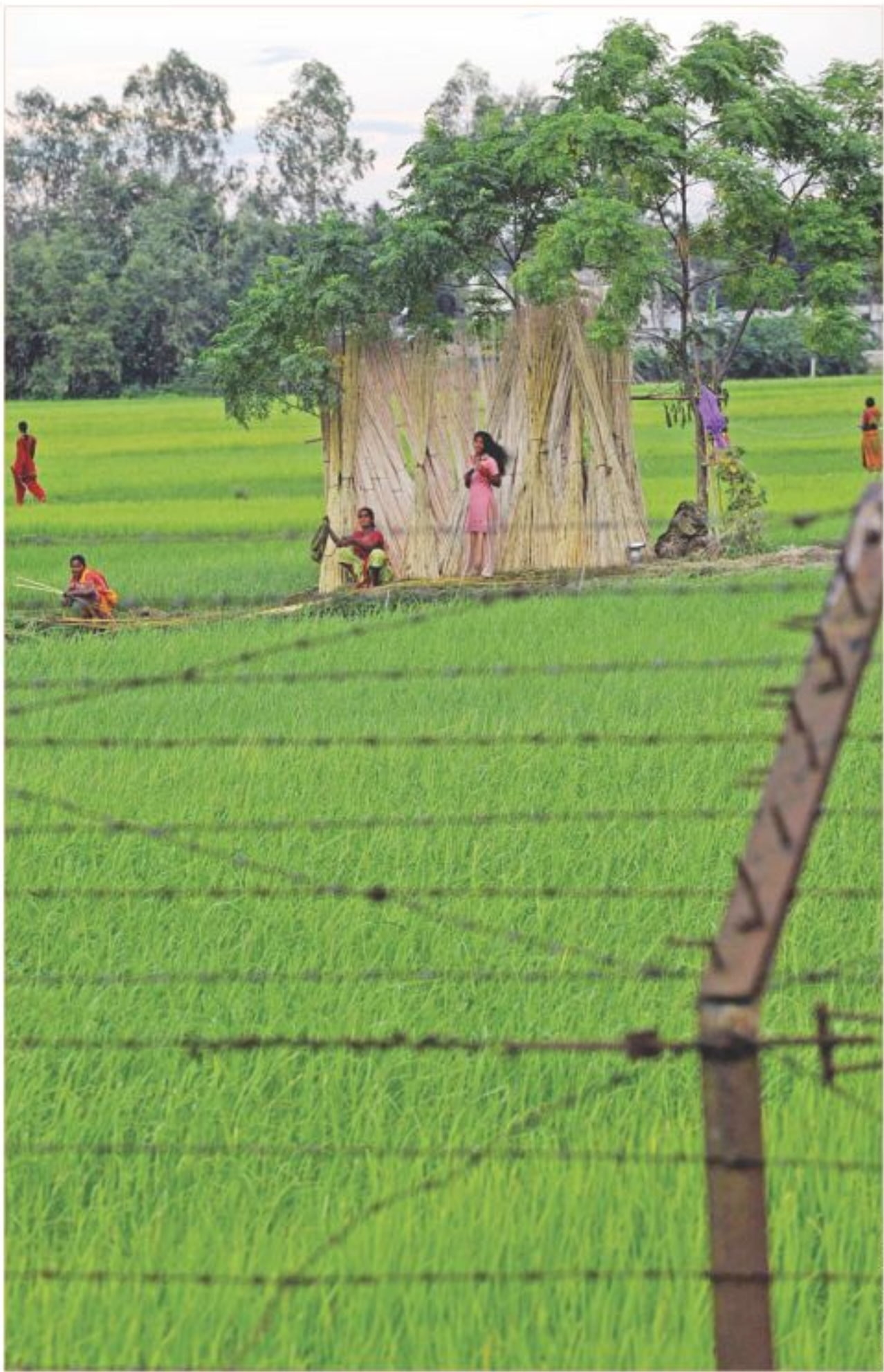
Just a day after BSF's DG UK Bansal assured Bangladesh of bringing down border casualties to zero, a Bangladeshi cattle trader, Abdul Hannan died after being tortured by BSF soldiers near the Shingnagor border in Chapainawabganj on Sept 30. At the DG-level conference between BGB and BSF which ended in Dhaka on Sept 29, UK Bansal also claimed that BSF personnel use minimum necessary force to save their lives.

At all DG-level or minister-level meetings, Indian authorities have always been giving us assurances that killing of Bangladeshi nationals along the border will be brought down to zero. But facts prove it otherwise. According to rights watchdog 'Odhikar', 19 Bangladeshis were killed along the border between Jan 1 and July 31 this year. Last year, said the rights group, BSF killed 39 Bangladeshis at different points along the border.

BSF's claim that its personnel use force only in self-defense is simply unacceptable. It has been seen that most of the unfortunate victims were unarmed cattle traders who in no way threatened the safety of the BSF men.

Indian authorities must realise that friendly relations between our two countries can not be strengthened through such hollow promises and misleading claims.

Md. Mohsin Ali
Nutan Courtpara, Kushtia



Strong case for nuclear power

There had been a lot of concerns in the past about setting up nuclear power plants in Bangladesh, especially after the earthquakes in Japan which wreaked havoc on their nuclear power plants. At present, the way our population is growing, I believe nuclear energy may be our only option. Nuclear power is very cheap and just a little bit of resource can produce a lot of energy. It was mentioned in CNN and BBC that the accidents in Japan occurred due to human errors and not the earthquakes. I believe we can learn from other people's mistakes so that we don't repeat them. If we follow all the precautions and have qualified and well-trained personnel to maintain the nuclear plants, it's very possible to sustain nuclear power in Bangladesh.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka



Name it "Satata Bridge"

If the Padma bridge is ever built in a corruption-free manner following the WB prescription, it should be named "Satata Bridge" or "Bridge without corruption," and it should be a must visit for every Bangladeshi who wishes to live in a country where our lives are not defiled on a daily basis by all pervasive corruption.

It is common knowledge that government departments that award contracts for construction do so only after the contractor has paid a fixed percentage to the department. The money then goes into a pool which is then distributed to every official according to his rank.

As the system is run with the approval of the bosses, it is risk-free and guilt-free as well and many employees involved in this process do not consider this to be corruption but profit sharing with the contractor. You will not find a road or bridge to walk on or go into a government building which has been built keeping the sanctity of public money in mind.

One hopes that once Padma bridge is built, all other subsequent construction will include sanctity of public money as one of the construction specifications. And the policy of 'Tax and Steal' now being followed by this government and had been followed by all governments in the past will end for ever.

Nasir Hamid
Uttara, Dhaka

Reforming RAJUK and DCC

Dhaka metropolis is overcrowded and over congested due to centralisation of power in this densely populated country. It attracts all levels of the society to get their work done. Then there are satellite towns around the capital, which adds to the transportation problems.

It is necessary to review the division of responsibilities amongst the organisations running the city. The panning, and operation and maintenance have to be separated; so that there is no room for manipulation and unethical practices. At the same time, red-tapism has to be curtailed. The field activities in the offices are weak. DAP's activities have to be reviewed. There is serious lack of coordination amongst the various agencies running the city.

A. Mawaz
Dhaka

Money recovery from scamsters

It's so good to be back home after 3 months with my extended family in Kenya and Dubai! In Mombasa, I had plenty of time to listen to people regaling me about conditions in neighbouring Central African countries, where they travel often. The country most often mentioned was Rwanda, whose airline I flew and wrote about in my letter of 13 July in TDS. Rwanda was totally devastated by the most horrendous tribal genocide ever to take place 18 years ago over 1 million killed = 25-30% of the population.

Sanity has come back to Rwanda with a vengeance. Most common comments heard were “So neat and clean”, “Spotless and efficient administration”, “So safe, you can sleep outside”, “Humming with activity”, “Paradise for eco- tourists”, and finally “Rwanda not only looks like Switzerland but runs like it and in some respects even better.” Could any praise be higher? So how did this happen? As a Bangladeshi, I felt ashamed to receive the simple answer. Leadership, and leadership alone, that is honest, dedicated, committed and brooks no nonsense. Those responsible for the genocide have long gone and instead of wailing on past misery, the entire nation has moved on.

However, back to the subject of this letter, which is very relevant to us in view of the multi-thousand crore scams that adorn our headlines ALL MURK(y), DESH TINY, Padma, Rail, Stock, Sonali and the thousands of big/small looting scams being perpetrated all over. In 1994-95, many Rwandans had also made plenty of hay while the blood was flowing. Was any time wasted with probes, charge-sheets, futile demands to recover the ill-gotten gains? NO!! They were brought to rapid justice. They were ensconced in 7* luxury cells to serve their sentences.

So, where is the Catch? To teach them the deflated value of looted money, the convicts were given everything, but at PRICES. It is said, a glass of water cost Tk. 5,000/- and you can imagine the rest. Within weeks, millions of dollars of looted money flowed back and was put in development projects that have transformed the country. Hunger and thirst are great levellers!! Can we not have something similar here in view of all the 3*, 5* 7* SCAMS?

Sikander Ahmed

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report head-lined “PM flays TIB”

Manzoor Ashraf
Truth really hurts the corrupt.

Translucent
The TIB report reflects the status of the current parliamentarians in a nutshell. It would be great if the report were more detailed. Surely its claim of criminal activities carried out by the members of parliament must be investigated by the law enforcement agencies.

Ashraf Hyder
There is no doubt that timing of releasing this report raises serious suspicion.

Ehsan
Why does the TIB become hyper-active whenever the AL government is in power? We know corruption of MPs reached its peak during the last BNP government. Why was the TIB silent then?

Saleh Md. Shahriar
TIB report is methodologically rigorous.

Nds
To find ill motive behind everything that goes against one's own interest is itself a sort of illness.

Monoar Hossain
After reading this news and also reviewing the actual TIB report, it seems to me that the report should be more informative.

Anonymous
Awami League will not accept any criticism of its members. But the truth is TIB's report is in line with people's perception. People know all of the politicians and their activities.

Jumana Sarwar
The TIB findings may be tasteless to the government but it's not surprising to us.

Truth Teller
As usual, AL leaders are in super denial mode.

Md. Zahedul Islam
I convey my heartfelt ovation to TIB for such type of report. People of the country have come to know what our politicians are doing.

Sam
I just don't understand why the TIB, the World Bank, EU, IMF and as a matter of fact the whole world are all against this ruling government.

Raqi Ullah
Matia Choudhury is not corrupt; the whole nation knows it. But most of the other leaders, both in ruling and opposition parties, are corrupt.

Zerosopher
If none does corruption or crime then where do all crimes and corruption come from? Protecting persons who are involved in corruption and crime is also a crime. TIB does not have to label anyone. Citizens already know.

Iftikhar-ul-Awwal
It is a natural reaction to the blistering TIB report accusing parliamentarians of being corrupt. Rather than hitting below the belt, the government could very well resort to law suits in which it has mastered the art. The motive questioned, as the TIB has said, is to strengthen the centre piece of democracy - the JS. It has not been an exercise to kill the cat before the next general elections which the PM is insinuating.

A political
We all know that TIB is a Berlin-based international organisation. This is a non-partisan and non-government organization. It was not created by BNP and Jamaat supporters. So, we can take it for granted that the report published by TIB is not ill-motivated, as stated by our PM. It was not published to tarnish the image of the AL lawmakers. They have published exactly what is true. Actually this report is the findings of the research TIB has conducted.

Prosanto
This TIB report should be an eye-opener for the ruling party policymakers and ministers who have got used to thinking themselves above the law for the last three years. In fact, it does not matter whether the government accepts or rejects the authenticity of the