

'(Un)welcome to Shahjalal Int'l Airport!'



The environment at the airport is usually the first indication of what to expect in a country. Enough has already been written in your columns about Shahjalal Int'l Airport -- the dirty atmosphere, inordinate delays, surly staff, chaotic transport, lost luggage, etc., to put it near the bottom of the “welcome” chart for any traveller.

Last Monday, my wife and I went to receive our daughter-in-law and 7-month-old grand-daughter who arrived at 8 pm after a long flight from Kenya. Five (5) flights arrived simultaneously and the scenes of mayhem inside can best be left to the imagination. We had glimpses of a frail mother trying to cope, with her restive child, hand baggage, purse, etc., while complying with the incessant demands of Immigration. Finally, I approached the “keeper at the gate” to allow me to relieve her of the child at least. I was brusquely dismissed and rudely told to return to the visitors' enclosure. Arrival of unaccompanied women with infants/children is a common sight at all airports, but Dhaka treats them as "terrorist threats." Is having a little supervised corner at Shahjalal, to relieve harassed women of their children, more complicated than the Padma bridge and an affront to women's rights? Oh! Yes!, during the 90 minutes I waited outside, I had a grandstand view of many people just strolling in and out of the 'sanctified' inner sanctum. My mistake was to ask for permission!!

Sikander Ahmed
Gulshan, Dhaka

Please do something

Our capital city Dhaka has become a garbage dump because of the unbridled corruption, inefficiency and negligence of the city corporation. Please do something. Dr Md Faruk Hossain
On e-mail

Is Bangladesh a democracy?

The definition of democracy is said to be "Government of the people, by the people, for the people". Then there are countries that have tailored democracy to the benefit of their people so that their basic human rights are protected, while at the same time they can elect or vote their leaders out of office. Is Bangladesh a democracy?

In Bangladesh, democracy has somewhat degenerated into a license to deeds evil: killing innocent people in broad daylight, committing outrage to innocent schoolgirls including children, and to do whatever one's distorted mind wishes to do with impunity. That is democracy in Bangladesh. This democracy is not what we gave lives for. This democracy is not what we want for our progeny. Where is the Rule of Law?

How is bail being enlarged to the murderer and rapist of the 5-year-old girl? This is my message to all the fathers and parents of the victims of rape and murder: Get hold of the murderer or rapist, gather all the people of the village, hang the man from the tallest tree, and leave him there for all to see. Let him hang there until everyone knows what he did. There is no Rule of Law in Bangladesh, and we are, unfortunately, living in a 'mock democracy'.

Nilufer Ahmed
Dhanmondi

Prevent crimes before they occur

The incident of gang rape of the 23-year-old Indian girl has raised concern and outrage among the public not only in India but also in Bangladesh. We all, irrespective of our political and ethnic identity, have come forward and raised our voice to stop such kinds of heinous crimes against women. But my question is, where had all we been before the girl was violated? Had we witnessed this sort of crime for the first time? Why do we always raise our voice and protest against any kinds of social maladies like rape, domestic violence, corruption, enforced disappearances, extortion, etc., only when they take place? Or do we wait for a chance to create hue and cry on the issue so that we can come to the limelight? If not so, why can't we nip them in the bud? Have we all forgotten that prevention is better than cure?

Md. Ripon Ahmed
Lecturer in English
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Tupperware items: Are those environment-friendly?

This refers to my letter published in these columns on December 24, 2012. One of my cousin's wife expressed her dismay for particularly referring to the plastic products of Tupperware in my write-up raising question whether these products are environment-friendly.

She highlighted the positive sides of Tupperware plastic products, made of virgin plastic, and also informed me about the noble mission of Tupperware to empower Bangladeshi women through their unique social sales promotion system. Incidentally she is an active associate of the women sales guild of the Tupperware.

Well, while appreciating the noble mission of Tupperware, I would most sincerely say that I particularly referred to Tupperware to emphasise a point: when plastic wares have already proved to be harmful for the environment and pose a greater health risk, why did we start importing and promoting costly Tupperware plastic products in our country? There is no doubt that plastic products, both local and foreign, are not environment-friendly.

What I feel, Tupperware should establish their own production unit in Bangladesh instead of marketing imported Tupper products from abroad. When the Tupper products will be manufactured locally, the price of the products will automatically decrease and job opportunities will be created for the Bangladeshis.

Meanwhile, I heartily appreciate Tupper's social marketing system and sincerely wish their success in accomplishing the noble goal of empowering Bangladeshi women.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Dean, Faculty of Agriculture

Storage of winter clothes for the poor

Every year, generous people and organisations distribute warm clothes and blankets to the shivering poor but surely we should be asking, “Who could provide storage facilities for the ultra-poor during the hot and wet season so that such items do not become useless - or stolen - before the next winter?”

If someone is so poor that they lack adequate covering in the cold season, they are not likely to have an airy and dry place to store what they have been given! May I suggest that mosques, temples and churches - as well as individuals of a compassionate nature with spare spaces in their lofts - could offer such places to the poor? Maybe a small sum could be included for good quality wrapping and clear labelling - and maybe access



on fine days for giving them a good shake and airing before replacing them? This would be a great charity to those who live in insecure and damp homes or are frequently on the move, for instance, for seasonal work. I have a photo from an old copy of the DS. It shows some politicians giving rice to a poor woman. They are beaming at the camera to make quite sure the onlooker gets a good impression of them. The recipient is casting her eyes to the ground in shame. The real 'donation' to the poor - and what makes it an act of charity and not an exhibition of the status of the giver - is what is too often overlooked - eye-contact, a smile and evidence of unself-conscious kindness. After all, “There, but for the love of God, go I!”

Angela Robinson
Baridhara DOHS, Dhaka

Public toilet for women

Nowadays women are going out for work in offices, factories, educational institutions, hospitals and so on. But it is unbelievable that there is no toilet facility for women in public places in Bangladesh.

I urge all local government authorities and ministry of LGRD to take immediate steps to solve this problem. Mohammad Ashraf Hossain
Ramna, Dhaka

Make Sunday an optional holiday

As Sunday is holiday in many countries, it becomes difficult to communicate with other countries for business purposes on Sunday as the offices remain closed. And alternatively, as Friday is a holiday in Bangladesh, other countries can not communicate with us on that day of the week. I believe this is a loss of millions of dollars. I feel Sunday should be an optional holiday for such businesses who would rather work on Friday than Sunday. Schools and other businesses can still remain closed on Fridays and Saturdays. I believe this will also reduce traffic jam.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Dhaka

Proper use of social networking sites

Nowadays various social networking sites have become an important way of communication. Today's youngsters are the main users of such sites as Facebook, Twitter, etc. There is no doubt that it is the easiest way to know the world and be connected with friends and families, but sometimes the users abuse these sites.

Some users are making fun of some sensitive, important and international issues which is not just right. Cyber crime is also on the rise. We should use these sites properly and shouldn't abuse those.

Md. Rahabarur Rahaman
Electrical and Electronic Engr. Department
Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined “Boy killed in BCL gunfight”

Kabir

How long should we endure this kind of nasty things? Can't our government ban such kind of student politics?

Barkat

AL government is keeping the opposition's senior leaders in jail on flimsy grounds, but they are completely inactive about the BCL atrocities. Every higher educational institution has been hijacked by the BCL cadres. The government, on the other hand, is giving its blessing to the criminals with inaction and the entire nation is the silent spectator of these sad happenings.

Firoz

A few days back, our PM told the press that she had presented the students with books to study whereas the opposition leader provided arms. Now we know what she actually did as her golden sons have established rule of terror at RU, IU, DU, BAU, JU, JNU and so on. The whole country is falling into an abyss of darkness and she keeps on patronising the BCL for a fresh comeback to the throne!

Mr. Nayim

Killing people without any reason has become a daily affair with BCL. But the mother organisation AL is indifferent to this, even though the notorious activities of BCL alone are enough to capsize their boat in the upcoming election. I do not understand why we repeatedly elect these political beasts.

Md. Raisul Islam Rois

We need an operation by the law enforcement agencies to seize illegal arms. No more bullets into innocent people's heart.

Labu Khan

It is really sad that BCL activities in the last four years will be one of the main reasons for Awami League's possible defeat in the next general elections. Unfortunately, there is no one in the AL who dares to rein them in, not even the PM.

Sham

Here we go again! This criminal organisation should be banned. It is not doing any good to Awami League. Honourable PM, please wake up!

Ahmad Sharief

Our prime minister has presented the world with a peace model. Chhatra League activities are in support of that peace model. So, our prime minister along with BCL and AL should be awarded Nobel Peace Prize and other international prizes.

Rch

This is what happens when goons of autocratic rulers cross the line -- look what happened to Gaddafi, Saddam, etc.

dosto.walla

They have the license to kill. Go BCL, go with the killing spree. The government is always by your side!

Tuhin

This is not real politics and we should ban this type of politics from all educational institutions.

Jibon

Will our prime minister, leader of the opposition and their fellow intellectuals continue to support partisan politics of students in educational institutions? Will the criminals escape punishment as it happened in the past?

Moeen

BCL's recent activities make it look like a terrorist organisation. If Bangladesh government fails to take any steps, some international body should take steps to ban such an organisation of terror.