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Bangladesh has set an example

On January 21, 2013 we made a history and it would not be an exaggeration if we term this day as another Victory Day for Bangladesh. The first verdict given by the International Crimes Tribunal has helped the nation has been relieved of the burden of conscience it had been bearing for the long forty-two years. The trial of the heinous war criminals of '71 is essential for the establishment of rule of law. It will do justice to the victims of the War of Independence. It can be said that the impartiality and credibility of the proceedings have maintained international standard. This is because the trials held by the Tribunals give the accused the right to defend himself in the court, right to appeal etc.

Now it is time to rejoice. But this is not the end. All of us, regardless of our political and personal views, should get united and help to ensure the trial of other perpetrators of crimes against humanity. **Md. Nazmul Hasan Chowdhury**
Department of law
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PHOTO: AFP

Punish killer of BRAC's female doctor

It is indeed great news that BRAC, a Bangladeshi NGO has been nominated as top NGO among 450 such organisations around the world.

BRAC has been campaigning for poverty alleviation, emancipation of women, ensuring women's right for a long time. Unfortunately, it failed to ensure safety to one of its own officials. Sazia Afrin, a female doctor, was murdered in a private clinic operated by BRAC at Dakkhinkhan area of the capital last November. She was murdered just two weeks after joining the clinic. The caretaker of the clinic later admitted that he killed the young doctor after failing to molest her.

One single incident should not take away all the gloss of years of hard work of BRAC. But charity does begin at home. BRAC now should put some serious efforts so that the murderer gets exemplary punishment. **Saif, Dhaka**

A commendable move to ensure food safety



PHOTO: AFP

The recent initiative of food minister to set up Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) with a view to preventing food adulteration and ensuring food safety is a very positive move. The widespread use of formalin and chemical preservatives in all types of food stuffs has been posing serious health hazards. Producers and marketers apply this harmful substance to preserve and forcibly ripen fruits. Food adulteration causes cancer, kidney disorder, skin disease and birth defects, etc. We know from newspapers that BFSA will have five divisions such as Surveillance & Enforcement Division, Food Safety Laboratory Division, Quality Assurance (CODEX) Division, Risk Assessment & Communication Division, and Resources and Support Division. We do hope that these divisions will work very sincerely and ensure adulteration-free food stuff right from the production to consumption. Regular meetings and dialogues with the producers and marketers and mass people could be very useful as their involvement in the entire process is really important to make it a success. Finally, I would like to thank the food minister for taking such noble steps to save the people of Bangladesh from this menace.

Md. Musfikur Rahman Jony
Senior Research Officer
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Free the footpaths from parked vehicles, vendors

I live in Pallabi Extension, Mirpur. I have to drop my son to his school in Eastern Housing every day. The school is hardly 15 minutes' walk from my home. We use the approach road of Pallabi Extension and Eastern Housing to go to his school. Usually we try to walk but it is really tough to walk on the roadside. The footpath and half of the road is occupied by parked vehicles and vendors. We urge the authorities to free the footpath and the road for pedestrians' use. **Iqbal, On e-mail**

Outmoded transport system of port city

I am a resident of Chittagong. In Chittagong city not a single seating service bus exists. The buses which are now plying the roads are very old. At office time it becomes very difficult to get on a bus because all of them remain overcrowded. If a bus has the capacity of carrying maximum 60 passengers, it often carries 100 passengers and stops frequently at any point of the road for taking more passengers. This often leads to quarrel between passengers and the driver and the helper, but to no avail. As a result, it becomes difficult to attend office in time. I draw the attention of the authorities concerned to take necessary action regarding the issue. **Mahmudul Hasan**
Senior officer, Abl, Chittagong

National Agriculture Policy

Several months back, the draft National Agriculture Policy was finalised by the Ministry of Agriculture and it was supposed to be made public after due approval of the cabinet and passage in parliament long ago. Unfortunately, the National Agriculture Policy is yet to get through different channels for final approval and release.

It may be mentioned here that a technical working group formed by the ministry of agriculture worked hard for the last few years to prepare the final draft of the policy after holding several meetings, incorporating suggestions from all the stakeholders, answering the queries of ministry of finance, Bangladesh Bank and other related concerns. So many officials of different organisations including officials of agriculture ministry worked as members and resource persons in the technical working group. This writer and Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque, Project Director, PCU, NATP are the oldest members of the technical working group and are still associated with it.

Recently, an official meeting was held which was chaired by Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid, Additional Secretary, and Ministry of Agriculture. Mr. Hamid is also the Chairman of the Technical Working Group. He informed me upon my query that the draft is now on the desk of the related parliamentary committee and the agriculture minister is determined to release the National Agriculture Policy immediately.

It is sincerely hoped that the National Agriculture Policy would soon be made public and put into operation.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
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Misplaced focus of education

Such astonishing claims for ICT were made by the article 'Smart schools and globalisation' (Jan 20) that one wonders how Shakespeare, Goethe and Tagore managed without it! It may help in gaining 'knowledge' but there was no mention of 'wisdom'. To make a country which people want to live in rather than flee, education has to do more than teach pupils to be 'smart' and ignore the greater calling to be 'a good human being'? Of course, every student needs to learn how to 'face the challenge of globalisation' but it may not help to know how to access the good stuff which can lead to friendship and understanding but also what is idiotic, corrupting and destructive and can lead to vicious enmity and prejudice.

What point is there in being 'smart' if we do not also learn how to discern right from wrong and truth from nonsense? 'Smart schools ensure quality education and a congenial teaching learning environment' - really? Some of us are indebted to those who educated us wonderfully because they were gifted as teachers - something that competence in mere technology cannot transmit? How dare he sneer at the education of the 'disadvantaged and poorer segments of society' when the servants carrying the clubs of the English upper classes, educated at such schools as Eton and Harrow, on the golf courses of the Scotland of Victorian times, could converse with them in Greek and Latin having attended a 'mere' village school run by a 'poor' Scottish schoolmaster who, like the best village schoolteachers across the world, was passionately devoted to true education, and gave his pupils a sense of vocation and skills that lifted them above their station in life!

All over the world, some of the most wicked bankers, the most venial politicians, the most cruel factory owners, the most devious businessmen, the most notorious lawyers dispensing injustice in return for bribes - and the countless men and women happily paid by such - are those with nice degrees from prestigious universities.

Without moral content, education just turns devils into clever devils. **Angela Robinson, Baridhara DOHS, Dhaka**

Teachers should be of help to students

It is said that teachers are the conscience of a nation. But this great saying doesn't match with the behaviour of some university teachers. It is only normal that students will go to teachers if they face any problem about their studies. Teachers should listen to their problems and come forward to solve those. To my utter surprise, at present many teachers are not at all ready to render their noble service, rather they misbehave with students very often. How will we learn to respect our teachers if we do not get help from them in the time of our need?

Rebel Khan
Dept. of English
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PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "7 killed"

Asad Zaman

This time everyone must make serious efforts to find out the actual cause of this fire that took place only 2 months after the country's deadliest industrial fire at another garment factory. Yes, accident may happen, but one must not rule out the possibility of sabotage in a country where politics is so dirty.

Roni Rahman

How many lives have to be lost, how many fire incidents have to happen, how many workers have to get injured before this government will act to ensure workers' safety? The government is the only party accountable and liable for these losses of lives.

Misbah Uddin Sumon

Dhaka city is at great risk of fire accidents because of unplanned urbanisation, over-population and lack of proper training for disaster management. Fire training is very vital for any kind of government and non-government organisation. If the garment workers as have the basic training in fire-fighting, then any kind of fire can be extinguished at the initial stage. Sometimes fire fighters cannot come to the spot in due time because traffic jam is so common in our capital city. The roads leading to the fire spots are also often narrow so that the fire fighters cannot move easily with their fire fighting equipment. We need to ensure jam-free roads so that if a fire incident takes place, fire service can come to the spot at due time.

Iftikhar-ul-Awwal

Since Bangladesh government, BGMEA and BKMEA have failed miserably to make the garment factories safe for workers, now the buyers, especially the EU and USA have to step in and do the needful. It is a shame that people are being burnt alive as a result of negligence and lack of adequate safety measures. The insensitive owners get away easily by paying a little monetary compensation but the sad incidents continue to occur again and again. Should we not hold the owners culpable for multiple murders?

Md. Shahjahan

Take punitive action immediately.

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Vote for AL to keep dev going"

Jumana Sarwar

Does development mean the development of the tyrants like AL and BCL? The condition of the ordinary citizens is so miserable! They are waiting to give a befitting reply to AL.

Selma

After all the lootings, the spate of murders, kidnappings and false cases against the opposition, who will vote for Awami League again?

Sujan

Yes, vote for them so that they can complete the incomplete lootings and killings.

Robin

Dear PM, you were given two chances before. There will not be a third chance for you. Your government could not make a dent in stopping corruption. All the corrupt elements enjoyed impunity.

Khalid, U.K.

After four years of misrule, plundering of the country's wealth by her party men, now she has come before the nation with her usual rhetoric. She has only one aim that is to cling to power at any cost. She does not care what people want.

Jibon

Why didn't you talk about rule of law, taming the BCL, decentralisation, saving the rivers, etc.?

Sixth Sense

For God's sake, hold your tongue and let us decide.