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Why this callous indifference to fire incidents?



PHOTO: AFP

Surely everyone should know how to behave in a fire. Should not every organisation, apartment block, business and school have fire practices? I remember how the hundreds of pupils, in the first UK school I taught in, took great pride in being able (with lots of practice!) to get the time down to 3 1/2 minutes from the fire bell ringing, pupils quickly and silently walking to the lines outside, the class directories of names having been collected and every child checked! Is that not peace of mind for parents also?

In 1915, the pleasure cruiser 'Lusitania' crossing the Atlantic with 1,959 passengers was sunk and 1,198 lost their lives. In a similar, later, accident, the only ones who died were those lost in the original explosion. The reason? In the second ship, all those on board were soldiers and knew how to be disciplined in an emergency. It is often

chaos that kills.

The fire officers in a theatre where I worked backstage for an interesting year, were legally entitled to come in at any time, including during a performance, and, if there was a single lapse in fire safety regulations, they could close the theatre - and with the low profits it made, that could cost us all our jobs - never name the public outcry of disapproval! Result - scrupulous respect for the fire regulations! (All the scenery had to be painted with fire retardant!). Fifty years later in Bangladesh, why cannot the same rule apply for garment factories too?

Will someone explain to me why Bangladesh among other countries is still not serious about accidents, however frequent?

Angela Robinson
Baridhara DOHS, Dhaka

Ensure congenial atmosphere for study on campuses

News and photos of campus violence have become the stuff of newspapers. Brutal killing of Bishwajit and a 10-year-old innocent boy Rabbi broke everyone's heart. Besides killing, BCL cadres are involved in tender manipulation, admission business, etc. In fact, universities have become a haven for crimes and criminals.

A group of political leaders and university authorities are behind them. But we should keep in mind that a terrorist should not be given any indulgence. Universities were established to shape the future of the nation. None has the right to destroy these institutions. We would request the government and university authorities to ensure an environment congenial for education on all the campuses.

Md. Tanvir Mahmud
A development worker

Please rein in the BCL boys

The terror and chaos Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student wing of the ruling party, have been creating are appalling. The have been committing crimes like beating up general students, teachers, extortion, shooting and killing. These are unacceptable and

punishable under law.

Recently, some BCL men attacked and splashed battery acid on teachers and students of Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur when the latter brought out a protest procession demanding the removal of its vice-chancellor. Then came the turn of Islamic University where some 30 teachers were injured by the Chhatra League activists. After that, the factional groups of the same student body at Bangladesh Agricultural University snatched away a 10-year-old boy's life. And now Patuakhali is experiencing the wrath of BCL. But so far we have seen no action from the government to rein in its student front.

Once people respected this student body but now we shudder with horror seeing the activities of BCL. Much of the success achieved by the incumbent government has been marred by the violent activities done by this student body. Those involved in crimes should be expelled from the student body and punished for their misdeeds. Otherwise, Awami League has to be prepared for the result awaiting it in the next general elections.

Md. Sairul Islam
Lecturer in English
Jahangirpur Girls' School and College
Mohadevpur
Naogaon

Encourage students to watch and play cricket

The BPL is in progress in the country now. Though cricket is a very popular sport in Bangladesh, the galleries in the stadiums are seen to be vacant. The situation is like this maybe because Dhaka International Trade Fair is going on at the same time. Other reasons are: fewer foreign star cricketers and costly tickets.

I request the cricket bosses to issue free tickets for students. This was done in Sri Lanka. It will encourage students to play cricket more which may bring out our future cricket stars. As a result, Bangladesh will improve in world cricket.

Shafkat Rahman
BIAM Laboratory School, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

Probe causes of frequent fire in garment factories

Exporting readymade garment products is our highest foreign exchange earning business. Our garment products have a large market in USA, Europe and the Middle East. It may make some countries jealous. It is believed that rivals always try to beat their opponents. So, these fires may not be mere accidents. The government should check any possible conspiracy behind these conflagrations. Frequent fires in this industry are inflicting huge loss to property and life. In addition, these casualties are harming our reputation to the buyers.

So, please ensure workers' safety at the factories and also investigate if there was any conspiracy behind the fires.

Tashrif Billah, Dhaka

Border killing by BSF not discussed!

On 28th January the home ministers of Bangladesh and India have inked an extradition treaty. And later in the press conference both of them spoke about warm relation between the two countries. And they reiterated their wish to help each other. But it shocked me that the border killing issue was not discussed in that home minister level meeting. Repeated border killings are a matter of great concern. What sort of friend is India? I respectfully recall the assistance of India during our Liberation War in 1971. But I have to rethink if India is behaving as a friend seeing what BSF has been doing on the border. More than 1000 innocent people have already been killed by BSF in the last ten years. So, to stop killing along the border, both the governments should take proper measures.

Rasel Osman, Honours final year

Benefits of eating avocado



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Avocado is a fruit containing so many health nutrients including potassium, vitamin E, B, and folic acid. Avocado tree (*Persea americana*) is native to Central Mexico which is now cultivated throughout the world. Avocado is a climacteric fruit that requires ethylene and respiration bursts to ripen. A recent study has found that intake of avocado as fruit or with salad improves lipid profile in healthy individual and decreases both LDL-cholesterol and triglycerides in individual having an elevated bad cholesterol level along with increasing good cholesterol (HDL cholesterol).

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

Awarding police for beating up opposition lawmaker!



PHOTO: STAR

Home Minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir is a very exceptional person. He does and says things which are so incredulous. Harun-ur-Rashid, DC of Lalbagh division in the capital and 66 other police personnel were awarded Bangladesh Police Medal and President Police Medal on January 22, 2013 for their outstanding role in maintaining law and order in 2012. But we have not seen any improvement in law and order, rather it slid downward. So how could they receive the medals?

DC Harun got the medal for beating up opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abedin Farroque on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital on July 6, 2011, when he was leading a group of opposition lawmakers during a hartal enforced by the BNP.

We saw on the electronic media how Zainul Abedin Farroque, bleeding profusely from the merciless beating, was trying to run away from the attackers. It was a ghastly scene.

DC Harun was also present at the place when Bishwajit Das, the innocent youth, was hacked to death by the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League, but he did not try to save him, but just looked on.

If these could be the criteria for receiving medals, other policemen will be emboldened and try to please the home minister by their unjustified ruthless actions and compete with each other to be more violent.

Nur Jahan, Chittagong



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Jamaat banks on aggression

Half-day hartal today in Dhaka, Ctg; full day in country; BNP backs it (January 31, 2013)

Truth Teller

BNP leaders are just being foolish in supporting the anti-Liberation forces like Jamaat-Shibir. People of Bangladesh do not like it.

Shakoor Jilani

The real face of BNP is exposed now.

Barkat

Every political party in the past resorted to violence and destruction. Why just blame Jamaat? AL is committing the same type of violence through its student wing BCL, state

police, etc. The crimes committed by BCL cadres in broad daylight across Bangladesh are more dangerous than Jamaat's activities. Jamaat men have at least been brought to justice, but rowdy BCL elements are getting away with impunity.

Citizen

Once again BNP took its position in favour of the war criminals. This will definitely leave a big scar on the face of BNP and its alliance. Young voters are progressive. They support the war crimes trial. The pub-

lic support that Jamaat still have will soon evaporate in consequence of recent atrocities by Shibir. For the security of general people, government should take strong steps to stop these hooligans. The government should consider arresting the top leaders of Jamaat and raiding their houses and offices to recover huge arms and ammunition rumoured to be stacked there to create anarchy and stop the trial of war criminals.

Naabaj

It's a shame that this defeated force of our War of Independence is getting support from BNP. Traitors should be dumped by the people.

Misbah Uddin Sumon

No conscious citizen will support hartal or any kind of vandalism because it hampers the economic development of the country. But in Bangladesh, hartal is a democratic right. If any political party is suppressed by the govern-

ment in any way, ultimately they call hartal. But hartal should be called when there is no other option left before them to protest.

Selma

Jamaat should not resort to violence since everybody outside Awami League knows that the trial is unfair with many shortcomings.

Sujon

Hang all Jamaati and Awami terrorists.

A reader

The trial of the war criminals must be completed soon. The Jamaat-Shibir men are getting so aggressive day by day. The verdicts of the trials should also be implemented immediately to teach them a lesson that the nation will not tolerate the war criminals doing politics in the country. If we delay the trial, Jamaat men will get stronger which will harm the nation more. So try