

Shame on BCL



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

The day the whole nation expressed solidarity with the demand for capital punishment of Rajakars, a disgraceful incident took place in Barisal that put the nation to shame. Some activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League physically assaulted Prof Shankar Chandra Dutt of BM College when the newly appointed principal went there to take charge. A principal of a reputed college of our country was assaulted and humiliated publicly by his own students! Shame! Shame on you, BCL; shame on all of us that we let this happen.

We don't care who these men are; we don't care which party they belong to; we just want them to be punished. They may have done many other horrid things in the past, but they must not get away after disrespecting a teacher. As a nation we must respect our teachers and punish those who do not.

Shahriar Kabir
Dept. of EEE, BUET, Dhaka

Shahbag protests

The dream and aspiration of the nation has been expressed through the present movement. The protest against the war criminals and Jamaat has never been so bold. The movement has spread all over the country and abroad. Equal participation of men and women is taking the movement forward.

Aziz Ahmed
Katasur, Mohammadpur
Dhaka

Electricity from municipal waste

A front page interesting news was published on 10th. February in only one local English daily about setting up of two 50MW municipal based power plants in Dhaka. It is a very welcome piece of news. Although the power generated will be sold to the grid at Tk.8 per kWh, which may appear high, it competes well with the price that PDB pays for power from liquid fuel-fired rental power plants.

It is a very important breakthrough, where for the first time; at least a sizable quantity of local fuel will be used for power generation! I believe, it has immense future prospects and it will be an effective solution for the disposal of municipal sanitary wastes. It was also good to know that in subsequent years both the power plant capacities will be increased to 50 MW each!

Unfortunately, no further details about the process, start up and completion dates of the project were given. I am sure all readers will be pleased to hear of this very productive step taken for municipal waste handling. We will request you to please follow up and print detailed information about the matter for our knowledge and information about this very worthwhile endeavour!

Engr. S.A. Mansoor

Reversing aging by immortality gene

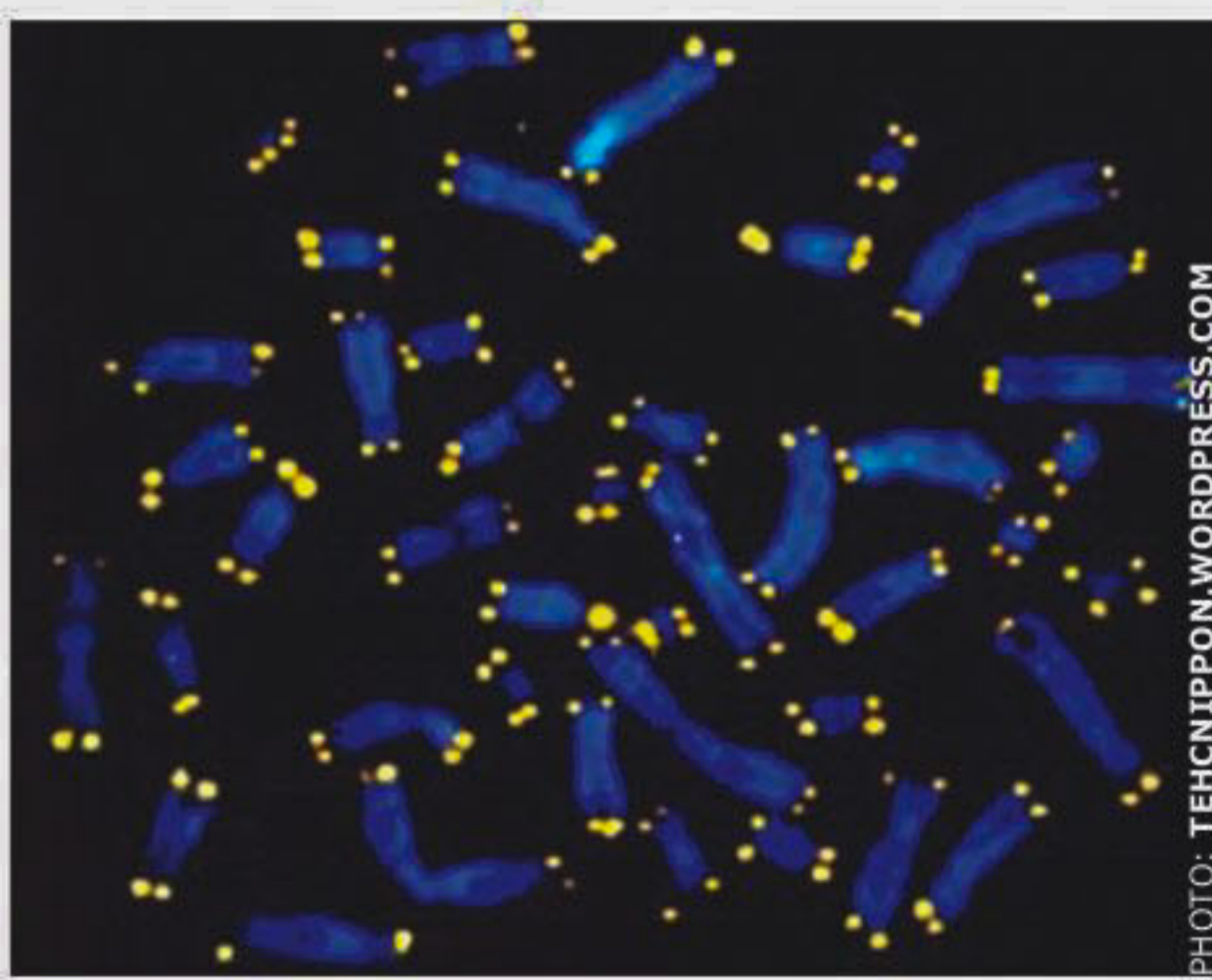


PHOTO: TEHNIPON.WORDPRESS.COM

A few months back an article of mine on immortality gene was published in these columns. Since the discovery of the immortality gene in 2009 for which three scientists were awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine, researchers in different countries have been working to find out ways and means to switch

on the immortality gene in human cell. Perhaps, due to Nature's universal control over life and death, the immortality gene is permanently switched off in each and every single human being on planet Earth. The immortality gene produces a very specific "life-extending enzyme" that has the ability to stop, prevent and even reverse the aging process.

Meanwhile, a group of researchers at the Dana-Farber Institute of Harvard University Medical School figured out how to switch on the "immortality gene" of course not fully but partially, or in other words they succeeded in artificially producing the life-extending enzyme that is produced by the cell containing the immortality gene.

They conducted the investigation on mice which naturally possesses the immortality gene capable of producing the life-extending enzyme. The researchers bred a strain of genetically manipulated mice switching their life-extending enzyme production off. As a result, the mice quickly grew old with physical and biological collapse. Then an artificially produced life-extending enzyme was administered to the mice after switching back on their immortality gene. The tissue damage reversed and their every biological system tested showed reversed aging. Miracle indeed!

In case of humans, administration of the artificial life-extending enzyme made of rare herb too showed signs of reversed aging. Scientists are now hopeful that if not for ever but humans can live 10, 20, or even more years longer and in good health with normal biological functions of organs!

The research for switching on the immortality gene is continuing.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Dean
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Quader Mollah verdict and question of AL-Jamaat deal

I would like to thank Md. Mahmoodul Haque for his letter (published February 15th) in response to my earlier letter. I had considered the possibility of government influence or an alleged AL-Jamaat deal with regards to the Abdul Quader Mollah verdict before writing my original letter, but I dismissed these ideas as I could not figure out why the AL would think either option would be successful in reducing Jamaat violence.

The AL had several key Jamaat leaders in custody and a reasonable expectation of favourable verdicts which would weaken their rivals. At the same time, Jamaat was alienating the public with their publicly declared campaign of violence that also put the BNP in an awkward position. The AL would seem to have been in a strong position and if they wanted to reduce the level of violence in the streets the answer was providing the police with more resources in order to deter and arrest their Jamaat attackers. Offering an "olive branch" through a lighter sentence at the tribunal or accepting any sort of deal under those conditions could only be seen as a sign of weakness and an admission that they were losing control of the situation.

After launching their campaign of violence, Jamaat had little to gain by ending it at that point. Even if they had stopped, hundreds of their members would be sought for their roles in the violence that had already occurred. Having one of their leaders spared the noose, but still in prison for life would be far short of their demand for immediate release of all their prisoners. I cannot see why Jamaat would settle for that.

I am not saying that it was impossible that the government interfered or made a deal, but to my mind it does not make sense for the AL to believe these would be successful strategies. For that reason I was optimistic the war crimes tribunal functioned the way it was supposed to.

Neil Taylor

Slogan chanting ignites spirit of freedom fighters



PHOTO: STAR

Just a few days ago, it was tough for the young people like us to realise the spirit of our freedom fighters. But being a part of the movement at Projonmo Chatter demanding capital punishment for all war criminals, it is now almost crystal clear to me how the freedom fighters felt during 1971. Chanting slogans with thousands of people helped me to understand the spirit of the freedom fighters. I never knew that yelling "tui rajakar" and "rajakarer fashi chai" could give me such bliss. Justice for the war criminals is the demand of time. I, along with all others, urge that criminal get capital punishment for their atrocious and nefarious activities in 1971.

Avik Chowdhury
Bangladesh Agricultural University

Shahbagh against political chicanery

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal is a seriously flawed court system, as cited by The Economist's investigative reporting which revealed that the presiding judge was receiving instructions from Awami League. This seems like more of a sentencing court, rather than a fact-finding one. A defence witness goes missing, allegedly another victim of enforced disappearance. While one defendant, conveniently hiding in Pakistan, receives the death sentence, another defendant, inconveniently still in Dhaka, gets life imprisonment. Most observers of Bangladeshi politics know how permanent imprisonment is. One need not look further than former president/dictator H.M. Ershad, who was jailed after a mass uprising. Today, he's back to politics who stole billions from the nation.

This is what the protesters are standing up against: once imprisoned, the next day scot-free, as the political winds have changed. Could it be that Awami League is simply looking to forge a partnership with Jamaat-e-Islami leaders after imprisoning them? Jamaat's foot soldiers go on rampages breaking vehicles, assaulting police officers, and simply terrorizing society. A comprehensive police action plan is still lacking. Whereas the opposition BNP has done similar tactics, their leaders get the baton and bloody heads far more often. Why the soft gloves for Jamaat?

Only time can tell if this becomes a solid political movement or yesterday's headline like the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Tamim Choudhury

Sydney students are with Shahbag

For the last few days the young generation of Bangladesh as well as the general people have been protesting against the war criminals of 1971 at Shahbag. We highly appreciate them and agree with them. We want proper justice for war criminals. As we are now abroad, we can't involve ourselves directly with the protest. On 15th February, we arranged a get-together to protest against the war criminals and to support the Shahbag movement from Sydney in the Sydney University campus under the banner of Bangladeshi Students Association.

Enamul Haque
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PHOTO: WRITER

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's *The Daily Star* news report headlined "Grief turns into strength"

Naabaj

Jamaat and Shibir have become desperate. They killed Rajib to create a chaos and frighten the peaceful uprising. The frontline organisers of this crucial protest should always move carefully in groups. Jamaat-Shibir will strike again to sustain their nefarious presence in the country. We must resist this heinous marauder to save the country from their unholy clutches.

Sengupta, Canada

Let all promise to work united to end communal politics in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world. Joy Bangla!

Roni Rahman

How can we even know why he was killed before any investigation? This dangerous practice of prejudging and political exploitation of a murder will fuel more fire of political intolerance and violence. We reject all political killings.

Barkat

Deep sympathy to Rajib's family. But it will be great injustice to Rajib's soul if the real culprits are not arrested.

Onlooker

Apparently, it seems Jamaat was behind this gruesome murder. But, if any Jamaat activist did commit this murder, I wonder, didn't he imagine for a moment that such an act would rather be politically suicidal? Were not the Jamaat men aware that a dead body of a blogger at this stage of anti-Jamaat public sentiment would be a political reward to those who are against them? Let's see what the law enforcement agencies dig out.

Syed Kermani

Bangladesh uprising! Let this revolution bring the end of Jamaat, Shibir and similar band of criminal organisations. Let the upcoming March 26 give a new independence for the country.

Freeman

Just hanging the war criminals will not resolve the core of the problem. To address real issue, you have to ban Islami Chhatra Shibir which is the breeding ground of Jamaat-e-Islami, the collaborator of Pakistan in 1971.

Shuel Salique

May Allah bring peace in Bangladesh and grant heaven for Rajib. This uprising will teach BNP and AL and others that real power belongs to people. The message for the politicians is: 'clean your hands and work honestly'.

Bazlur Rahman

Jamaat-Shibir is playing the same role as it played in 1971. So, it is time we banned them constitutionally.

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's *The Daily Star* news report headlined "Jamaat has no right to do politics"

Anna Karenina

Why didn't the PM ban Jamaat-e-Islami's politics 16 years ago when AL first came to power? Why does she want to stop their politics now? Just to get to power again? But now we, the ordinary people, know that Awami League and BNP are the same. None of them think about the people of Bangladesh.

Labu Khan

It was only a week back that our prime minister raised concerns about the security of the Shahbagh protesters. She had feared that something bad might happen and it did happen. I fear that the war has just begun. I hope that this war on war crimes