

Ensure safety of bloggers



PHOTO: STAR

The bloggers of the Shahbag movement are being threatened by the Jamaat-Shibir activists. These bloggers were the main driving force of the Shahbag movement which has not ended yet. The youth of Shahbag have been observing various programmes regularly in favour of their demands. Already we have lost two of the brave bloggers. Other bloggers have also devoted themselves to the movement sacrificing their personal interests, for creating a new Bangladesh. The government should give protection to them. Proper safety of the bloggers and death penalty to the war criminals are our national demand now.

Tuhin Shuvra Das
Faculty of Computer Science & Engineering
Patuakhali Science and Technology University

OIC summit ignores Rohingya issue

We have learned that the 164-paragraph Final Communiqué discussed all the contentious issues facing the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in its 12th summit held in the first week of February in Cairo recently. It is said that the summit focused on five areas: conflicts and disputes in the Islamic world; ways to combat religious intolerance and Islamophobia; humanitarian issues in the Islamic world; economic and trade cooperation between member states and promoting scientific and technological cooperation between Islamic countries.

However, we expected that the plight of the Rohingyas in Myanmar would be included in the agenda as a humanitarian issue but unfortunately it was ignored. Though the 4th Extraordinary OIC Summit held in Makkah in August 2012 dwelt on the issue and adopted a separate resolution on the situation of the Rohingyas calling upon the Myanmar regime to cease all kinds of discrimination against the minority community and ensure human rights. But it appears the resolution failed to make any significant improvement in the affected areas.

It is observed that Myanmar is not responding sincerely to the calls of Bangladesh in this connection.

We want a strong OIC which will play an effective role in solving crises in the Muslim world including the Rohingya issue.

Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road, Gopibagh
Dhaka

Islamists incite violence



PHOTO: AFP

Watching 22nd February's news footage, it appeared as if Bangladesh is going through a civil war. To counter the mass demands for capital punishment against the 1971 war criminals, Jamaat-e-Islami and allied groups destroyed two Language Movement monuments, assaulted police, burned vehicles, and vandalized stores. As these religious party activists view the ongoing International Crimes Tribunal as a ploy by the ruling Awami League to eliminate the opposition, they have a right to peaceful protest. They do not have the right to terrorize society.

In Dhaka, the police seemed to retreat at times as the militant procession attempted to reach

Shahbagh's neighbourhood. Astonishingly, the militants hurled bombs at police from inside Baitul Mukarram. This is not only a terrorist act, but also an affront to the national mosque. The cube-shaped mosque is a national monument that belongs to the nation; it is not a fortress for terrorists. This nationwide terror campaign was a pre-planned assault on the government and citizenry. Where were the paramilitary border guards during the Baitul Mukarram assault? They were deployed across the city, but were not seen on camera assisting anyone. The Rapid Action Battalion is usually ready with their submachine guns, but it seems that these violent demonstrations were left solely for the police, who appeared frantic, blowing into whistles, sporadically lobbing teargas shells and firing rubber bullets.

Why is the government high command not giving orders to the paramilitary and law-enforcement personnel to fully engage and eliminate these violent attacks on the nation? Is there anything to gain by treating criminal religious activists with kid gloves? Whatever the gain is, the people are suffering and will continue to do so as the fire rages through the nation.

Tamim Choudhury
Bowie, Maryland, USA

Tackle religious radicalism judiciously

As I am leaving Bangladesh in May, I am going through hundreds of articles from The Daily Star that I have carefully cut out and filed over the last 12 years or so in which I have been reading it.

I must congratulate you, especially, on the sheer quality of what you have been publishing on the religious life of this dear country - as well as everything else. You have encouraged me, as a Christian with degrees in History and Theology - to listen with much respect to the thinking of some fine minds and the feelings of some warm hearts as they share their devotion to, and thinking about the beliefs of Islam as well as the behaviour of Muslims... Incidentally, you have proved that intellectual debate and liberal thought is the very opposite of 'atheism'. I now read these articles with an increased interest, and find them still edifying. I have one before me of Ziauddin Choudry of April 24th 2008 concerning the 'disturbing happenings' in Baitul Mukarram Masjid Square. It could have been written yesterday - and urges prompt action lest things get worse. Nearly 5 years later, they have. Let me quote:

A law and order concern is addressed when the law-breakers are contained and order restored. But a potential threat by religious radicals cannot be stopped simply by police action. This needs, first, a full awareness of the potential threat, an acknowledgement by all that it exists, and engagement of all righteous sections of our society in opposing such ideas and ideology.

I think we have reached that point now, haven't we? I wonder how long it will be before the authorities agree - and take long overdue action?

Angela Robinson
On e-mail

Accept Agri-Business Management graduates in jobs

Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU) and some other public agri-varsities of the country are producing agri-business management graduates. These graduates are equipped with a wide range of knowledge and training on various aspects of business management and agricultural sciences. An agri-business management graduate is taught different subjects of commerce and management plus business communication and English language. The BSc Agri-business Management (Hons) degree is equivalent to any technical degree like BSc. Ag. (Hons), BSc. Engineering degrees.

But as the BSc. Agri-business Management (Hons) is a new degree, different public and private organisations are hesitant to accept agri-business management graduates for jobs relating to business management, marketing, finance and economics, etc. I would request organisations concerned both in public and private sectors to please accept Agri-business Management graduates in related jobs.

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

Scavenging garbage for food amid affluence



PHOTO: WRITER

Darkness prevails at the other side of light. Every year, the number of rich people is increasing in Bangladesh. But what is the condition of the marginal people? The man in the above photo was eating from dustbin. He is not a psychiatric case. This picture was taken at noon Feb 16, 2013 in front of Chevron, Chittagong (O. R. Nizam Road), an area where only the affluent live.

Md. Shahidul Islam, M.D., Ph.D.
Stockholm, Sweden

Reduce fees in pvt varsities

The fees and other charges of private educational institutions are very high. People of middle income groups are facing tremendous difficulties to pay exorbitant fees for their children's education. The education minister recently asked the private universities to fix their fees and other charges which would be affordable to general people. I would like to urge the government to take immediate measures regarding this matter.

Md. Ashraf Hossain
Central Bashabo, Dhaka

Should Jamaat-e-Islami be banned?

Jamaat-e-Islami's main strategies to recruit its activists and spread its ideology are financial incentives and propagating distorted version Islamic ideals to incite religious fanaticism particularly among youngsters. They have long-term strategy gain strength in order to grab vital public institutions. Under the existing liberal democratic environment, Jamaat has been gaining ground with support from various sympathetic organisations, from a mainstream political party in particular. It is very likely that Bangladesh one day may become a violent country like Pakistan. It is time to ponder whether Jamaat should be banned or not. Following are the arguments for banning:

1. If Jamaat is not banned, it will continue to gain strength. Its support support base may grow from 3% to a higher one. At a stage, it may even become a deciding factor in future elections.
2. The present secular and democratic character of the country will be lost.
3. The harmonious and peaceful co-existence of all people of different religions will be lost and communalism and repression on women will increase.

If banned, Jamaat will initially become very violent. At some point, they will reorganise and form a new party in the light of Bangladesh constitution.

The government should consider all these points before banning Jamaat.

Abu Shahjalal Azad
Texas, USA

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's *The Daily Star* news report headlined "Alert people to instigation"

Sengupta, Canada

The ruling government is sitting idly in the capital. They have much more to do -- going back to their constituencies and make the public aware about false propaganda by evil forces.

Rashid Ahmed

We have liberated this country so that everyone can speak freely and express their political views without being attacked by police. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tried to introduce one party system by creating Bakshal. People rejected that idea. Sheikh Hasina is also trying to do the same.

Fed-up

Madam prime minister, people now think that the government has no real plan to deal with the terrorists about whom they have talked so loudly from the beginning of coming to power. The country is already facing a situation where democracy is at stake and terrorists are operating with licence of valid political parties. Please do something substantially to stop the terrorists from destroying Bangladesh and its democracy before it is too late for any action.

Labu Khan

Finally, some good sense from our prime minister who realised that banning Jamaat is not a good idea and therefore asked ministers and party leaders not to publicly speak about banning Jamaat as it would not do any good to the government. It is really funny that she is so worried about Jamaat, the party which won so few seats in the parliament.

Fida

Banning any religion-based party will create violence. All the pro-liberation forces should do is to go to mosques and keep eyes and ears alert so that Chhatra Shibir can not launch any propaganda. All progressive forces should guard schools and colleges so that Chhatra Shibir can not attract poor students by giving them some tutoring jobs, lodgings, etc.

Al

Jamaat-e-Islami should be banned just like Hizb-ut-Tahrir. They are a party of terrorists.

Khaleda Alam, Canada

We are waiting to see the highest punishment of war criminals and banning of Jamaat-Shibir and their business organisations. I am sure if AL changes its present position, they will fail in the coming election even if BNP does not take part in the election.

Hafeejul Alam

We don't need the government intelligence to understand that Jamaat along with BNP is instigating religious sentiments to thwart the youth movement at Shahbagh. It's now everyone's talking points as to how a few bloggers became atheists all on a sudden! The people of Bangladesh are not as stupid as they think. They are well aware of the smear campaign by these anti-Liberation forces as they are sufficiently aware of the corruption and dishonesty perpetrated by both Awami League and BNP during their respective tenure.

Asad Zaman

By giving such directives to create awareness among all the citizens about religious propaganda against the Shahbagh movement organizers or the government, the PM has certainly made a mature and wise decision. However, if any "anti-Liberation party" (PM's term) burns and tears the National Flag, vandalises Shaheed Minars, attacks the law enforcers and journalists, the PM must not wait to consult all the legal advisers, constitution experts, cabinet members and lawmakers in order to take a solid decision on banning the party.

Md Sheikh Fuad

It is high time the government stopped Jamaat's politics in this country who are burning our national flag. Jamaat is considered to be a threat to our sovereignty.