

Ensuring protection to minority community



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

The only redeeming feature of the distressing news about the burning of a Hindu temple and of Hindu homes in Bangladesh is the apparent absence of injury to individuals, or worse. These senseless attacks are in greater need of immediate justice than even the trial of war criminals. If we adopt the view of the apparent perpetrators for a moment, we are bound to admit that all minorities, and specifically the Hindus, are dhimmi and fully protected. Nothing can be of greater importance than to reassure the minorities by an immediate and transparent provision of justice to them.

Salim Rashid
*Professor of Economics, Emeritus
University of Illinois*

Save campuses from party politics

Political unrest is endemic in Bangladesh. Political parties use students as their musclemen. When a political party comes to power, student activists of that party turn into demons. They do whatever they like. They vandalise educational campuses, beat up innocent students, insult and humiliate female students and so on. But government does not take any step against them.

For the last few years, we have been watching the activities of Bangladesh Chhatra League cadres. They have terrorised all the universities and colleges of the country and retarded their progress. They beat up teachers of Begum Rokeya University and Kushtia Islamic University. A newly appointed VC of Barisal BM College was assaulted by the BCL cadres. But the government is not taking any step against them. How can the country prosper and go ahead?

The government should take steps against the BCL to save the country.

Maliha Jainab
*Viqarunnisa Noon College
Dhaka*

Importance of fieldwork

I have always wished to study abroad. However, due to some unavoidable circumstances, I couldn't make it and got admitted to a renowned university in Bangladesh. When I started my classes, I was handed a few assignments which needed fieldwork. I found my group members grumbling, "This teacher is so weird, maybe he is a new one. Why go for a fieldwork? Let's just make something. Who will know whether we went to the field for it or not?" I was dumbfounded.

A friend of mine was studying abroad. When I asked him about his group projects, he said they were bound to do practical work. They need to record everything, from group discussions to fieldwork so that the teacher comes to know what actually occurred.

Every year in Bangladesh, thousands of students become graduates, but very few can join good jobs. Why is it so? The reason is they lack technical and practical knowledge but pass the examination through learning by rote. It is high time authorities concerned modernised our education system so that we can compete globally.

Mahbuba Sharmeen

Exorbitant fare of CNG-run auto-rickshaws

Nowadays CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers, in most cases, don't agree to go on meter but on contract demanding 4/5 times the normal fare. They even request passengers to be complicit in their wrongful act if challenged by police. This way, the auto-driver is not only robbing the passenger but also compelling him/her to tell lies. When asked about the reason of such unholy act, the common answer from the auto-drivers is: the auto-owners do not accept the amount fixed by the authorities and they have to pay the owners 2/3 times higher than that. So the auto-drivers are helpless and demand high fare from passengers. The poor passengers can neither speak the truth before the traffic personnel nor can they quit travelling by auto-rickshaws for obvious reasons.

The question is how long this hypocrisy and double-standard will continue. Isn't there any acceptable way to implement the relevant law tensuring cooperation of all the parties concerned?

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



Don't hurt religious sentiment on networks

I think religious belief is one's personal matter. One may not believe in religious customs and it is absolutely one's personal matter, but one should not disrespect the religious beliefs of others. The majority of the people of our country are Muslims. If anyone makes any vulgar comments about religion in social networking sites, blogs or media, it hurts the religious feelings of others. These persons should be punished. If not, one may think that he has the right to say or write whatever he likes which will eventually create violence.

Noor Jahan
Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet

Collusion by Jamaat-Shibir

The so-called Islamic coteries are bifurcating our beloved motherland in the name of blasphemy. The Shahbagh Chattar demonstration was not against Islam. But some Islamist groups are deliberately trying to spread rumours against the young generation that they are atheists and against Islam. Another party of our political arena claimed that this movement was not impartial and fuelled by AL. And, no sooner had the Jamaat-Shibir tried to save their leaders by calling strike than the demonstrators added another demand to their list: cancellation of the registration of Jamaat-e-Islami and its affiliated organisations. People should be careful about the conspiracies to create unrest and take stand against all propagandas.

Rakibul Hasan
*Senior Officer
Bangladesh Krishi Bank
Ranigonj, Gazipur*

Build a footbridge in Rampura

Rampura is one of the most busy and densely populated areas in Dhaka. Many educational institutions like East West University, Dhaka Imperial College, Aftabnagar Ideal School and College, National Cambrian School are situated here. Every morning thousands of people leave the area for office, while thousands of others come here. The DIT road is the main road of Rampura, so it always remains very busy. Every day office goers and students have to cross this road risking their lives, as there is no foot overbridge around.

It has been a longstanding demand of local residents and parents of students to build a foot overbridge in front of Johurul Hoque City and Aftabnagar main gate. Despite repeated requests to the authorities, no action has yet been taken. Therefore, the government should build a foot overbridge in that area to ensure safety of students and pedestrians.

Nusrat Jahan Eshita
East West University

Need for quality study materials in higher education



PHOTO: YAMIN TAUSEEF JAHANGIR

In the last 40 years many countries with backgrounds similar to us have left us behind in vital areas of human development, and education in particular. The functioning of private universities has filled a huge gap in higher education, although a lot has to be done to ensure their quality.

Today I would like to mention the serious dearth of books and study materials. The university students should concentrate on research and gather knowledge from various sources. But in Bangladesh Internet is still costly for students. And no quality books are easily available. Mostly, we can see books of foreign writers published in India which are photocopied and sold in our market! The copies have very small fonts and are hazy! No student is willing to buy those books.

Some such books and their extracts are prepared and sold by universities. Each private university should have a publication facility of its own to ensure quality study materials. When it comes to higher education, we must ensure quality. Otherwise the entire blame will fall on the governing body of the institution.

I urge all private universities to ensure quality even if there is a small increase in charges. I sincerely hope that this request and appeal will be heeded for promotion of education. Only physical structure does not speak much of quality.

Syed Imtiaz
Banani, Dhaka

Create projects to support poor students

There are systems of providing scholarships to the poor and meritorious students so that they can continue their studies. But only scholarships are not sufficient for the poor students to bear their educational expenses. If government introduces some projects in which these students can work and have some income to support themselves, it will be very beneficial to them.

Showkat Ali, On e-mail

Take united efforts to ban Jamaat activities

The entire nation saw the militant activities of Jamaat-Shibir on 22nd February after the Juma prayers. They vandalised our Shaheed Minar and tore our national flag into pieces and burned it across the country. Through these types activities they have proved that they do not believe in the independence of Bangladesh, have no respect for our language and Liberation War. They do not believe in democracy; rather try to create panic across the country to stop the war crimes trial.

Mosques can never be the centre of any political activities. Banning of Jamaat is the demand of the nation.

We hope the political parties will not use the issue for their political gains; instead they will work together against Jamaat. United efforts of government, civil society, business community, political parties and students can resist and stop the evil and undemocratic acts of Jamaat.

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news analysis headlined "Khaleda Zia & 'genocide'"

Faisal

It was a great chance for BNP to win the hearts of millions by tactfully avoiding the responsibilities of widespread anarchy created by Jamaat. But the party dealt the matter very awkwardly and irresponsibly. Their stance will simply create more distance between the party and the people.

Reaz Hassan

The writer has maliciously misrepresented and distorted parts of speeches or words of the Opposition leader in an attempt to tarnish her image and make her look small and villainous. Khaleda Zia in her written speech mentioned repeatedly about 'mass killings' that took place and nowhere mentions about GENOCIDAL attacks. Mass killings are defined as murdering of four persons during a particular event with no cooling off period between the murders. Such indiscriminate murders of large number of people may be carried out by government agents as in the case of shooting of unarmed protesters. As Leader of the Opposition, she rather rose to the occasion and delivered possibly one of her finest speeches so far.

Jumana Sarwar

Syed Badrul Ahsan, this is mass murder. Blaming Jamaat for everything is also an authoritarian mentality. The playground for AL and its student wing BCL is extremely smooth while the rest has no ground to stand.

Dr. Iftikhar-ul-Awwal

Please don't spread unfounded criticism at this critical juncture of our national history. Give the lady (Khaleda Zia) credit for what she said in her speech rather than making intentional distortion of her words. She never spoke of GENOCIDE but of MASS KILLINGS.

Hoq Kotha

Badrul always has an axe to grind against BNP. His writings are highly partisan and lack objectivity. He does not see any problem that over 60 people got killed by the police and AL goons - the highest number of people killed in the history of Bangladesh.

Concerned citizen

A newspaper should not take side of any political party. It should be neutral in delivering news and even while writing editorials about political parties of a country.

Rashid Ahmed

It does not matter whether the murderers are supporters of Jamaat or Awami League. It does not matter whether the murders were committed during Independence War by the Razakars or during the last five years of Awami League regime. Murder is murder. Shahbagh projonmo youths should seek death penalty for all murderers if they are truthful. How can Awami League so quickly nab the suspects of one murder whereas they can not arrest the murderers of Sagar-Runi yet?

Kazi Salim

Does she know the definition of genocide? Does she accept and admit the genocide committed by the Pakistani army and the Jamaati Razakars and Al-badrs in 1971 in Bangladesh? She has now strengthened relations and alliances with those killers and murderers of 1971.

Naabaj

BNP's playing of the religion card and identifying them with the barbaric agents of Pakistan are nothing but playing with fire. They should have learned some lesson from the changing demography of our future leaders who rightfully have come to street to keep up our spirit of Liberation War.

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Mastermind Shibir man"

M. Haque

Now, how do we know that they weren't forced to admit this?

Sengupta, Canada

Where are our youths heading to? Who are spoiling them? Why are their parents silent?

Rashid Ahmed

Awami League is very fast in arresting the suspects of Razib murder. They are also very fast in naming the mastermind of this murder. Who is the mastermind of Sagar-Runi murder? Why don't they name them?

Rky

You mentioned in your report that journalists were not allowed to talk with them. Why? We know our police. They can torture anyone and force them to admit any crime.

Soccer boy

The press should ask them directly who they