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Belated May Day greeting



PHOTOS: AFP

According to Wikipedia, “May Day” is “International Workers Day” which is declared as a government holiday. However, do workers in Bangladesh have any rights? Does the government punish those who abuse the rights of workers? Did the garment workers who died in the fire at the Tazreen factory several months ago have any rights? Did the garment workers who have died and are dying from the collapsing Rana Plaza in Savar have any rights? Will the building owners who built sub-standard structures, whatever officials who permitted them, and the factory owners who threatened not to pay their workers be brought to justice? If the answer to these questions is no, then the observance of May Day in Bangladesh is hypocrisy.

Let us hope the blood of those who have died in Ashulia and Savar will not have been spilt in vain. It was reported a few days ago in the DS that there was a list compiled of 321 illegally built garment factories. I say knock them all down now and save future lives! It was said that the BGMEA built its building illegally, spoiling the splendour of the Hatirjheel road system. Ok, knock this building down as well! In fact, knock this building down first! If the BGMEA people can get away with building illegally, then how can they tell their affiliates not to do the same? Why protect murderers and those who protect murderers?

Scott Elliott
Texas, USA

Prof. Yunus, we are proud of you

When the people of Bangladesh are passing their days in a suffocating atmosphere, the news of Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus receiving the US Congressional Gold Medal was like a breath of fresh air.

Prof. Yunus received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award of the US, on April 17, 2013 in recognition of his efforts toward combating global poverty. In 2009 he received USA's Presidential Medal of Freedom for his works as an agent of change. Yunus is the seventh person in history to have won both the awards.

Our heartiest congratulations to Prof. Yunus, for he has made us extremely proud and happy. He has dedicated the award to the people of Bangladesh. We thank and praise him for this thoughtful gesture.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Demolish all illegal structures

Why does the government have to wait for a fatal accident to occur before taking any action? Many such catastrophic accidents may occur in future as there are so many buildings which have been built illegally and are an extreme danger to the people who live in or around it. Even the high-rise buildings near the airport are also at risk. I hope the government will take measures to prevent such disasters in future.

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka

Save Buriganga, save environment



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

My letter refers to a photograph that appeared in The Daily Star dated April 16, 2013 titled, 'No sign of improvement'. The picture speaks for itself. The water of the Buriganga has been polluted by the industrial and household wastes. We know that Wasa partly collects water from the Buriganga, treats it and serves it to us. How costly is it to clean such pitch-black and muddy water? It is time to take action against the industries that are polluting the Buriganga. The Buriganga is the lifeline of Dhaka. We must save the Buriganga and our environment at any cost.

Shafkat Rahman
BIAM Laboratory School, Dhaka

Re-interpreting Shariah law

Esam Sohail's doubts about Shariah law co-existing with the modern world are shared by a leading British Muslim saying, “Shariah Councils in Britain are archaic, incompetent -- and increasingly popular” and “Shariah law was put together in the ninth and tenth centuries. People want to apply it in twenty-first-century Britain without realising that they are living in different times.”

Christian scholars have studied the huge developments in interpreting ancient texts over the last century or so. “What did this mean when it was originally written?” is necessary to answer before “So what does it mean for us today?” -- despite the sometimes painful challenges. I know there are Muslims who want to do this for Islam but are afraid of the violent reaction of those who say that re-interpreting Shariah is forbidden.

But 'Opening the doors of reason' may well reveal that God has been knocking on the other side of them for a long time....

Angela Robinson
Baridhara DOHS
Dhaka

Light in the dark

Jharna Begum of Rajshahi has her name etched in the hearts of the people of Bangladesh. She fearlessly went to the rescue of a police officer, who was the target of hartal enforcers' brutality, when none dared to venture outside for fear of life, let alone saving someone's life. The Jamaat-Shibir men repeatedly thrashed the man's head with a helmet (which belonged to the victim) and bricks. The victim was lying unattended on the road under a blazing sun when Jharna decided to save his life. She tore her headscarf to bandage his bruised head and rushed him to hospital where she stayed till his relatives arrived to take charge of him.

Jharna Begum, a shelter-less divorcee with two kids, was living on a day-to-day basis. Life was never kind to her, it treated her rather harshly. But she never compromised her sense of humanity with anything else, even with her own life and future of her children. She and her likes are indeed providers of salt to otherwise our barren earth and make life of human-kind meaningful on the planet. Will the world audience take cognizance of Jharna Begum's memorable effort on behalf of humanity?

Syed Badrul Haque

Lalmatia, Dhaka

Hefajat-e Islam's 13-point demand



PHOTO: STAR

Hefajat-e Islam, aided, guided and also goaded by the Jamaat and BNP, seems to be growing as a virulent threat to the democratic polity of Bangladesh. Hefajat has chosen a time when the Jamaat and BNP allies are already out to dislodge an elected government. Hefajat has come up with its 13-point demand, one of which relates to capital punishment for bloggers. Their other demands are steeped in medieval perception, trying to deprive us (especially women) of individual freedom that leads to economic emancipation. Not a single demand merits attention.

A. H. Dewan
South Kafrul, Dhaka

Showing all accused on TV

While a rescue operation was going on in Savar, our television channels were trying their best to broadcast all the rescue efforts. But many of the channels did not show the pictures of the accused on their channels. We urge the television channels to show the pictures of the accused regularly, so that people can recognise them as murderers when they see them.

A citizen, Dhaka

A lesson to learn from Savar tragedy

Probably the Savar tragedy is the most severe holocaust our country has ever witnessed since independence. This tragedy has claimed nearly 600 lives and left 2400 others injured, with several hundreds still missing. In such a dreadful situation our people showed unbelievable love and courage in rescuing the helpless victims from under the debris of the collapsed building. This spirit of our people can save the nation from any sort of calamity -- natural or man-

made. This was a lesson for us to learn how to act during the time of any national crisis.

We should be thankful to the selfless volunteers, Bangladesh army, BGB, fire brigade, Enam Medical College and Hospital, along with other hospitals, journalists and many others who came forward to participate in the rescue operation and treatment of the victims.

Md. Shahjahan Mia
Development Professional



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined “Act within 48 hours”

Reaz Hassan

The caretaker government system is the demand of the nation and as such it has to be restored in the constitution. The removal of caretaker government clause without the consent of the stakeholders was a major political blunder, and Khaleda Zia has merely echoed the sentiments of the people.

Mohammad Nurul Hoque

To make a law or decision, 48-hour is not enough. We expected an authentic speech from the opposition leader.

Elpadrinobc

I hope the nation will never forgive her for collaborating with the war criminals.

Shahidul Islam

AL government must listen to the voice of the majority. It is not time for confrontation but to make sure national unity is maintained at any cost. I hope our leaders will be able to act above their party interest. Will my dream ever come true in my lifetime?

M K Khan

Be cordial please, we want solution.

Faisal Khan

But how can I believe you, madam, when you repeatedly bow down to Jamaat? How disconnected you are with people! Do you know rescuers were still discovering dead bodies from Rana Plaza when you came up with an ultimatum? You surely can't topple an elected government, so what's your plan really? More destruction and deaths? What we expect from both of you (PM and opposition leader) is a peaceful dialogue and a democratic solution.

Shamim

No more confrontation, please.

Dev Saha

The government should compromise in this case and restore the caretaker system of government. Let's go for people's mandate! The Awami League will have the chance to get another mandate from people or stay on the sidelines for the next five years.

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined “Robbery after tragedy”

Mohammed Khan

How pathetic! The poor husband got money from the government to bury his wife and on the way the merciless robbers snatched the money from him! What a shame!

Mofi

Will the law enforcing agencies take stern action and make the nation happy by arresting all those animals? Will they show us that the country still has some degree of law and orders?

Doronto

This is a country where the law enforcers themselves take part in disappearing people. Taking bribe is an open secret. This should not be so surprising in Bangladesh where the life of his wife has already been snatched away by another robber named Sohel Rana.