

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

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## Creditable HSC results

*But quality must be ensured also*

CANDIDATES this year have performed better both so far as their GPA scores are concerned as well as higher pass rate, which is 78.33 per cent, in the HSC and equivalent examinations of 2014 for all the 10 education boards. We congratulate the successful candidates. We would like to believe that the qualitative aspect of education is at par with the pass rate which is significantly higher than last year.

While analysing the students' performance we note the clear rural-urban divide in the results. We would urge the education ministry to address this issue in order for rural students to score better grades through increasing their access to quality education including better facilities as well as good teachers.

We are also constrained to bring up the issue of question paper leakage. While it might have sullied to some extent the significance of such an important exam it certainly does not detract from the fact that the very good results achieved by the candidates are well-deserved. We hope the government would take urgent measures to prevent recurrence of question paper leakage. In the meanwhile, will the government enlighten us about actions taken against those found complicit in such a heinous crime?

Considering the progressive increase in the number of students passing out from college, the public universities should be ready to welcome them by expanding their capacity. And along with increasing the capacity of public universities more skill- based training institutes should be setup which can be a good alternative for those who may not make to the public universities.

## Cutting casualties on roads

*Multi-pronged efforts needed*

A recent report prepared jointly by Brac and PPRC has pinpointed several reasons for the deadly rise in road accidents all over the country, especially on highways. That we continue to allow unfit vehicles to be driven by drivers without licence or by fake-license holders, and fail to take proactive measures to bring to book those responsible for reckless driving that end up in horrendous accidents, which in turn kill and maim people, are primarily the reasons why there is chaos on our roads.

What is notable is that the bulk of accidents are happening on 57 km of nine national highways. It is also an interesting fact that more than 9 out of 10 drivers caught breaking the law apparently get off by resorting to bribing. Hence, those charged with upholding the law are in fact abetting lawbreakers to flout the rules and this in itself becomes a vicious cycle where the name of the game becomes "rules are made to be broken."

If we are truly serious about bringing about meaningful change, then hard decisions will have to be taken. The highway law that dates back to the colonial era will have to be updated and strictly enforced by the police. We will have to get serious about addressing the issues of licenses and vehicle fitness, and raising public awareness of the need to follow traffic laws. This is a very tall order for drivers who are mentally tuned to follow no rules, but a start must be made somewhere.

## Erdogan as president

EDITORIAL: DAWN (PAKISTAN)

RECEP Tayyip Erdogan has reason to be jubilant. Enjoying his third term in a row as prime minister, Mr. Erdogan will, on August 28, assume office as Turkey's first directly elected president after he convincingly defeated his two rivals in the first round of Sunday's election.

Charges he used government machinery for his campaign may or may not be true, but there is no doubt Mr. Erdogan's political and economic achievements make him one of the most influential leaders in the region.

Political stability stemming from three consecutive electoral victories since 2002, the booming economy, and the peace agreement with Kurdish militants have transformed Turkey into the world's seventeenth and Europe's sixth biggest economy.

Now Ankara is playing a more active role in the region, and even though there is little possibility that Turkey will be admitted to the European Union as a full member it was Mr. Erdogan who convinced the EU to begin entry negotiations.

Perhaps his biggest achievement has been the way he established civilian supremacy by taming the Turkish army, which had toppled four elected governments and hanged a prime minister.

Deriving confidence from poll victories that enabled him to form a single-party government thrice, Mr. Erdogan, unlike his mentor Necmettin Erbakan who attempted to rush through reforms like former president Mohamed Morsi of Egypt, avoided a clash with the army, the self-proclaimed guardian of Ataturk's secular legacy.

Publicly accepting Turkey's secular character, Mr. Erdogan proceeded cautiously: he stripped the National Security Council of its military character and now feels confident enough to try army officers, including a former president and army chief, for treason.

Charges of corruption against his ministers and the Taksim trouble gave him anxious moments, but he has been able to weather the storm. Now he wants to amend the constitution on the lines of the French model to give the president more powers.

This move has raised fears in some quarters that greater powers as president will contribute to the authoritarian streak in him.

# The unusual resolution

### STRAIGHT LINE



MUHAMMAD  
NURUL HUDA

Media reports have it that the chief justice has decided to take action against a recently retired Dhaka court judge for hastily acquitting dozens of accused before going into retirement. Interestingly, many of these accused were acquitted in violation of rules. The honourable law minister has reportedly said that "Faruk Ahmed acquitted all the accused of 24 cases in 18 days, which was a farce in the name of trial. Wait and see what action I take against him." The judge in question retired as the judge of the Public Safety Disturbance Crime Prevention Trial in Dhaka on June 26.

The blatant violation of law by the ex-judge lay in the fact that he concluded the cross-examination of the accused even before recording witnesses' statements, which is quite clearly contrary to the provisions of the procedural code of criminal procedure. He reportedly granted bail to 45 accused, including drug peddlers, in June and acquitted the accused of 77 cases in six months. In addition, he granted bail to 101 accused between January and May this year.

Media reports also cite a High Court rule that said lower court judges will not, in the last 3 months before their retirement, deliver verdicts in such cases that may spark controversy. What is worrying is that the senior-most judge of the Appellate Division found some of the allegations to be true and has reportedly confiscated the files of the related cases. Reports have it that the Supreme Court registrar's office had sent a letter to the law secretary, asking him to take appropriate action against the suspect judge.

IN a time and clime wherein speedy disposal of public affairs, particularly conflict resolution, is not a virtue, the news of the disposal of twenty cases within four to ten days by a recently retiring senior judge should have been welcome news to all. Unfortunately, however, the saying "justice hurried is justice buried" appears to be uncomfortably credible according to reports emanating from authoritative sources.

*The media has implored the chief justice to use the weight of his office to go deeper into the functioning of the entire judiciary, particularly the lower judiciary, that affect the life and liberty of the vast majority of common people.*

What is disturbing and unsettling to learn is that only last month the chief justice decided to send 3 lower court judges into forced retirement for misconduct and corruption while discharging duties. The scenario is further aggravated by the report that the Anti-Corruption Commission will inquire into the hasty acquittal and bail of dozens of accused by the suspect judge, who has just proceeded on retirement. This confidence shaking decision came after the law minister asked the anti-graft body to take necessary action against the alleged defaulting judge.

It is utterly disgraceful and demeaning to know that the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will venture to find out if the judge in question had gained any financial benefit in the process of his hasty and doubtful actions. Already a highly placed functionary of the anti-graft body has said that the manner in which the judge acquitted the accused was unusual and the ACC feels that the judge had scope to get financial benefits and that he might have taken advantage.

Incidentally, the ACC is investigating a former Dhaka court judge who acquitted BNP senior vice-chairman in a money laundering case in November last year. That judge is now staying outside the country and has reportedly been located in Malaysia.

In view of the above, one may have to sadly admit that the image of the judiciary has been affected on account of the distortion of the process with ulterior motives by the said judge. Quite clearly, the norms of trial process had been abjured and compromised by him. The media has implored the chief justice to use the weight of his office to go deeper into the functioning of the entire judiciary, particularly the lower judiciary, that affect the life and liberty of the vast majority of common people.

In the ultimate analysis, well-meaning citizens cannot countenance a situation in which the integrity of the last resort of redressal of public complaints is doubted. Already there are mischievous elements in our midst that relish commenting that no segment of our society is on a high moral ground. Such pernicious thinking must be countered in serious earnest for public good. We believe that our judges are indeed on high pedestal with unimpeachable integrity.

The writer is a columnist of The Daily Star.

## The hole in the nation's soul

### CROSS TALK

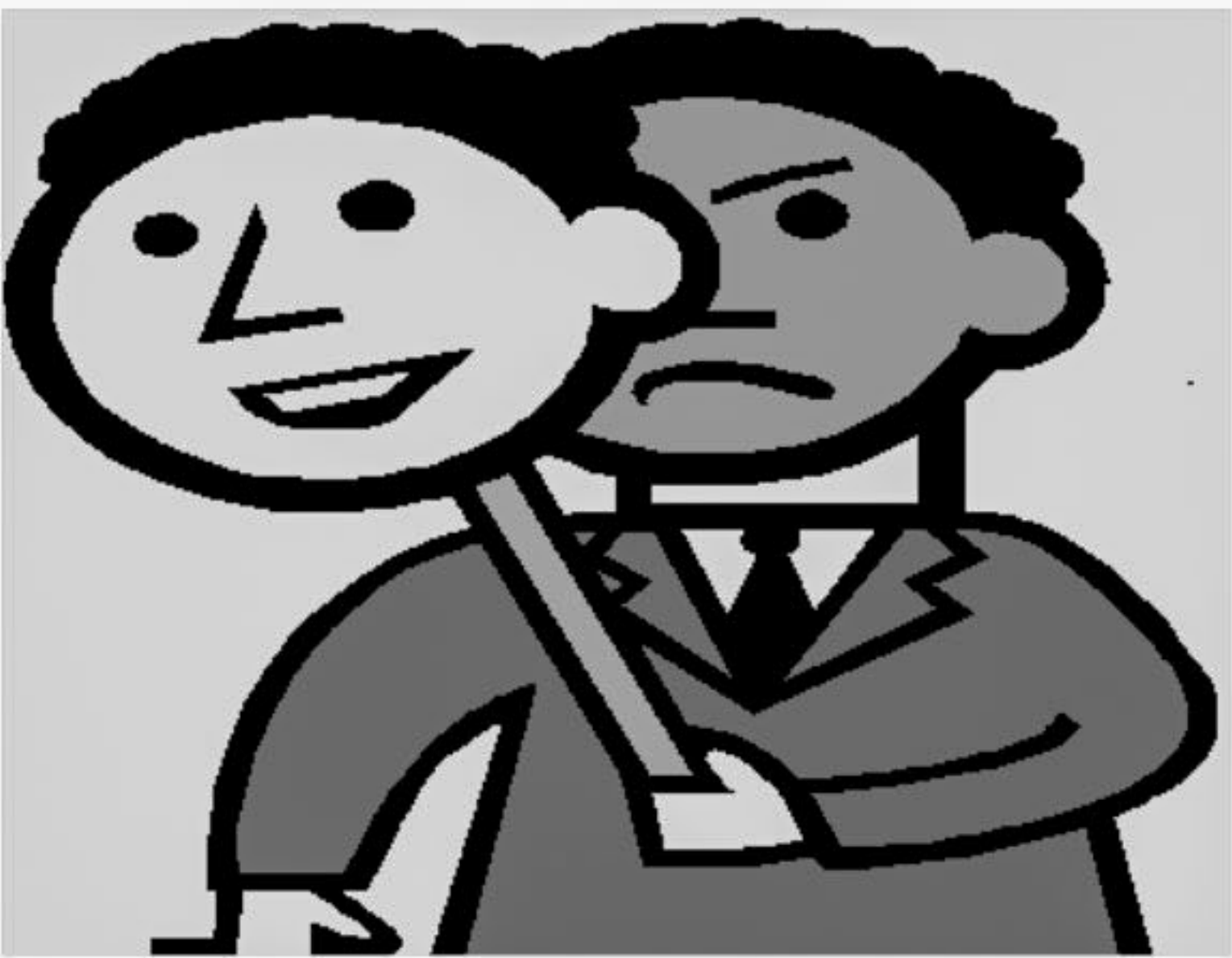


MOHAMMAD  
BADRUL AHSAN

of World War II still rankle in German minds. What's the hole in the soul of our nation? What should keep its happily unhappy people awake at night?

First of all, what does it mean to say that a nation has got a hole in its soul? It's simply a state of national mind when people as a whole feel a certain lacking, a hole, or a

EVERY nation has a hole in its soul! For some Indians it's femicide, but more conscientious amongst them would also like to add to the list the massacre of Sikhs in Delhi and the targeted killing of Muslims in Gujarat. The British people believe drinking is the hole in their soul because nearly 25% of adults drink when they're depressed. The humiliation and disgrace



*We live in the pretense of having a virtuous character, moral or religious beliefs or principles that we don't really possess. In other words, we're a nation that has double standards. We love to live in our mirror image.*

falsified, bank documents are doctored, question papers are leaked or 154 parliament members get elected without an election, the proverbial onion peels down to the same ugly nub. We're a nation thriving on self-deception; each of us is cheating himself before cheating others.

Today, politicians curse journalists, doctors fight reporters, people mistrust leaders, intellectuals undermine intellectuals, and law keepers compete with criminals. It means each side is now seeing through the hypocrisy of the other and losing respect for them. A nation can't have respectful people unless they also have respectable ones.

Other nations heal their souls, whereas we make ours worse. Fraudsters, phonies, imposters and pretenders swarm this country, and in all familiarity we're all strangers. Every face is a spectacle of farce behind its mischievous mask. No other nation ingests this duplicity so much like us.

Hypocrisy has created many wounds for us. It has turned our lives into an endless masquerade ball, where each of us meets others from behind a mask. Every time a scandal is exposed, it doesn't shock us as hard as it should. It's not because scandals have become less scandalous. It's because we have become resistant to scandals in the manner antibiotics are losing their power to fight infections.

That precisely embodies the hole in our soul. For so many years a bunch of bureaucrats have used fake credentials of freedom fighters to seek career enhancement. These imposters have lived a double life, Dr. Jekylls and Mr. Hydes who had no qualms about deceiving us by deceiving themselves.

Japan is the example of one nation in the world that has grappled most with the hole in its soul. Norihiro Kato, professor of modern Japanese literature at Wasada University, wrote an article in the New York Times. He argued that Hello Kitty, a fictional character produced by the Japanese company Sanrio selling over \$7 billion in a

year, all without any advertisement, is a symbol of Japanese denial of their wartime atrocities. Professor Kato also mentioned that Godzilla is a symbol of Japan's sense of victimhood and unresolved pain of losing World War II. He further wrote that the over "cutification" of their popular culture is a result of Japan's inability to properly face-up and resolve their history.

What does hypocrisy symbolise for us? It's the black hole from which nothing can escape. Whether credentials are

falsified, bank documents are doctored, question papers are leaked or 154 parliament members get elected without an election, the proverbial onion peels down to the same ugly nub. We're a nation thriving on self-deception; each of us is cheating himself before cheating others.

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## LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

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### Fugitive killers of Bangabandhu

I appreciate Jamshaid Taher's letter on the above subject published on August 11. I wonder why the taskforce is taking so much time to bring an end to this subject. We know that the 6 fugitive killers are hiding in different countries including Middle East, Canada and US. What benefits are their host governments enjoying by giving them shelter? We must bring the killers to book as early as possible.

Emran

Lalmatia, Dhaka

### New regulations on

### English medium schools

It is heartening to know that the government has realised the need to put the fast-growing English medium school business in its leash and recently the cabinet has approved new laws which bars English medium schools from taking fees above a certain limit based on their grading. It is a welcome relief for us- students and their parents, who have often struggled to pay the monthly fees which often soar to more than 15,000 taka a month. However, a well-reputed English medium school in Uttara has recently increased its fees to almost taka 20000 (for A Levels) after the new law was approved. It is not just one school, many schools in their fee structure for 2014-2015 have violated the new law. If the government fails to implement those laws properly, people may lose respect for the laws.

I would like to request the education minister to take initiatives against these malpractices and take severe action on those found violating the laws.

A student

Uttara, Dhaka

### Earthquake tragedies in China

This refers to the report, "367 killed in China quake" (August 4). Hundreds of buildings have been destroyed. There is technology to forecast storms and tsunamis, but none to forecast a quake. The Chinese have set up a space station and are planning to send astronauts to the Moon and Mars. The Chinese should also take the lead in developing technology to forecast earthquakes.

Advertisements for buildings should also state how far are those structures earthquake-proof, instead of giving superficial details about club house, glazed tiles etc. What is of prime importance for a buyer is his safety, when he is putting his lifelong earnings to buy a roof over his head. Japan can be a good source of knowledge to draw on while building earthquake-resistant buildings. The Fukushima tsunami-cum-earthquake in Japan saw that not even a single building collapsed in Tokyo, though the buildings were just swaying; that is because Japan has a strict building code.

Deendayal M. Lulla

On e-mail

*Comments on news report, "Inu plays down concerns," published on August 12, 2014*

Saleh Md. Shahriar

Hasanul Haq Inu's response is not up to the mark. He is a very tactful man.

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*"Show him the door" (August 11, 2014)*

Saleh Md. Shahriar

Public dealing is a skill that is to be learned. Some MPs and ministers lack that skill.

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*"War role ignored, now the existence" (August 12, 2014)*

Bappi Tsangma

Thank you Mr. Liton, for your article. The problem is some advisers of the prime minister as well as some ministers are not so educated. They misguided her. They can not interpret the word 'indigenous' properly.

Saleh Md. Shahriar

Bangladesh is a country of cultural diversity. Indigenous people are a part of our country. Their rights should be protected properly.

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*"Launch owned by Shajahan Khan's family found faulty" (August 9, 2014)*

Anonymous

No surprise. It's Bangladesh. Everything is possible here.