

## Providing BCL cadres with jobs by any means! Portends danger for merit based public service

We were heartened by the prime minister's exhortations to the country's youths when she urged them to become self-reliant and not take to lobbying for job as it was not a dignified pursuit. However, her adviser H.T. Imam's statement during a discussion at the Dhaka University essentially contradicted her by suggesting that once the BCL members got over the hurdle of written tests at the civil service exams the rest would be left to them (Imam and his likes) to help them succeed in the viva voce tests.

Such utterance by the PM's adviser is indeed a shocker to all sensible persons and points, if anything, to what an abysmal low the partisan mindset has descended. Needless to say, the idea that the BCL cadres will sail through competitive exams without considerations of merit is a prescription for disaster as it will effectively damage the quality of the public administration. In consequence, this institution will perhaps become for good the repository of bad apples.

We are even more surprised that such a suggestion has come from a former bureaucrat who cannot be unaware of the importance of merit in the public administration. We are constrained to say that the idea of relegating competitive public exams to a piece of cake for BCL cadres can only come from minds with poor judgment.

Why are we in this manner sacrificing merit? Are we then to assume that AL or BCL people are without merit? The sooner such self-defeating policies are abandoned the better for the nation.

## China, U.S. agree to limit greenhouse gases Major breakthrough against global warming

In what is being widely hailed as a major breakthrough and a historical climate deal, world's leading carbon emitters, China and the US, have finally agreed to work together to combat climate change and reduce their emissions well beyond their earlier pledges.

It is certainly a positive step that, for the first time ever, China has pledged to cap its emissions by 2030 and increase its reliance on alternative energy sources like hydro and nuclear power. Meanwhile, the USA has also announced its highest target yet -- to cut its emissions 26% to 28% below 2005 levels by 2025.

We welcome the news that the two countries, which together produce 45% of the total carbon emission in the world, have abandoned their earlier self-seeking stances to protect their own economies and ecologically destructive practices at the cost of irreparable damage to world ecology and have been able to reach an agreement, after years of categorical refusal to work together to reduce their contributions to global warming.

However, we must remember that climate change is an urgent matter, especially for countries like Bangladesh, and global leaders and top carbon emitters should do more to pull their weight in the fight against climate change, particularly in next year's crucial climate change talks in Paris. Emerging economies like India, which have done little so far, should also make concrete pledges to lead the fight against climate change in the region.

## WORLD DIABETES DAY Socio-economic impact of diabetes

MUHAMMAD ABDUL MAZID

PEOPLE all over the world, especially in developing countries, have the impression that diabetes is a disease of the rich. That is NOT the case. Diabetes is rising faster in developing countries like Bangladesh. There are many reasons for the increase, but a key reason is that lifestyles are changing faster in developing countries. This change is related to urbanisation and globalisation. What is of concern is that with this increased urbanisation people are getting less physical exercise. Even if they want to exercise, there's less space to do that.

The increase in diabetes in Bangladesh is expected to follow global gender patterns, whereby more women than men will have diabetes. IDF and WHO predict that the number of women in the world with diabetes will double in less than 20 years. In Bangladesh, the number of women with diabetes will grow from the current 2 million to 4 million by 2025.

According to a group study, diabetes has been gradually and globally imposing a large economic burden on the national healthcare system. Major findings are:

First, diabetes imposes a large financial burden on people with diabetes and their families. The size of this burden depends on their economic status and the social insurance policies of the countries in which they live. Individuals with diabetes and their families in developing countries pay a larger share of the expenditure because of the poorly organised systems of medical care insurance and/or lack of governmental provision of medical services.

Second, at the societal level, diabetes leads to loss in productivity and economic growth. The American Diabetes Association estimated that the US economy lost \$58 billion, equivalent to about an half of the direct health care expenditure on diabetes in 2007, as a result of earnings due to lost work days, restricted activity days, lower productivity at work, mortality and permanent disability caused by diabetes. Such losses are perhaps relatively larger in poorer countries because premature death due to diabetes occurs at much younger ages.

Finally, the largest economic burden caused by diabetes is the monetary value associated with disability and loss of life as a result of the disease itself and its related complications, including heart, kidney, eye and foot disease.

Fortunately, the economic burden of diabetes can be reduced by implementing many inexpensive, easy-to-use interventions, and most of the interventions are cost-effective or cost-saving, even in the poorest countries. Unfortunately, these interventions are not widely used in poor and middle income countries. More resources should be invested to deliver these cost effective interventions, in particular to those in the developing countries where the great majority of persons with diabetes live.

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# The journey of IS jihad

## CROSS TALK



MOHAMMAD BADRUL AHSAN

Nothing like it happened in recorded history. Nations fought wars. Revolutions rocked nations. Madness overtook mankind. But Islamic State (IS) is nothing like anybody has seen any time before. The original al-Qaeda had a force of 20,000 members, dominated mostly by two countries: Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The Taliban has 60,000 members, drawn mostly from the Afghan popula-



tion except for Pakistani and other infiltrators.

The Spanish Civil War comes close to it when 3,000-5,000 foreigners from 53 nations had gathered to fight for the Second Spanish Republic between 1936 and 1939. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) claims IS has between 80,000 and 100,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria. The CIA is more conservative in its estimate ranging from 20,000 to 31,500.

It's not just the sheer numbers of fighters and countries they are coming from, but also the nature of their participation that's unprecedented. Hundreds of young women and girls are leaving their homes in the western countries to join the IS force. Many of them are willing to marry jihadists, bear their children and take up arms. Britain has five people leaving every week to join the jihad.

In Australia, Muslim parents are turning to the authorities for help to prevent their children from becoming IS recruits. Malaysian women have traveled to offer themselves sexually to militants. According to Israeli source, nine Japanese had already gone to the Middle East to fight for IS. Four women in Saudi Arabia were jailed last month for preparing their sons to fight in conflict areas, because

that's what they believe is required by Islam.

Italian author Ignazio Silone has said that revolutions are like trees that must be judged by their fruits. How do we judge IS? Is it a revolution, or is it raving madness? Its leaders have declared a caliphate rebuffed by noted Islamic scholars. Its soldiers are ruthless and recondit, mowing down enemies like loggers clear-fell trees in a wood. Many of the Muslim rulers are not comfortable with and sympathetic to IS adventures. A preponderant number of Muslims around the world also share the same sentiments.

Which between tree and fruit is IS? Is it the culmination or germination of a spirit or an idea? Someone compared history of human thought to the swinging of a pendulum, which can take centuries to swing. A long slumber is always followed by a moment of awakening.

Wikipedia gives a list of 637 revolutions and rebellions starting with the Set Rebellion of 2740 BC up to the Hong Kong protests in 2014. This list is by no means exhaustive, but gives a ballpark figure of how frequently mankind switched between lethargic slumber and logical awakening. From Taliban to al-Qaeda to Boko Haram to Islamic State the turmoil of our time bears the Islamic stamp on it.

Preceding decades were dominated by communism, which was responsible for a greater number of deaths than any other political ideal or movement, including Nazism. Two World Wars and many civil wars killed millions. Between one million and three million lives were lost in crusades.

Before that, Muslim conquests lasted more than four hundred years between 623 and 1050s. Between 7th century and 14th century was the period of universality and decentralisation for the Muslims. The fragmentation period ran from 15th to 19th century. The 20th and 21st centuries are marked as the nationalist period for them.

Meanwhile, the Mongol Empire under Timur, the Mughal Empire, and the Ottoman Empire took Muslim glory to its pinnacle. Many centuries later, petrodollar revived that glory momentarily in the 1970s, before the attack on Twin Towers in New York turned it into menace.

The Arab Spring and Osama bin Laden's death brought temporary surcease until IS appeared on the scene. Roaming like bands of bandits in post-apocalyptic movies, its fighters are an affront to modern sensibilities. If the Muslim angst is compared to a mutant expressing itself in many forms, IS is but a miserable manifestation of that mounting menace.

Blasts in Burdawan, deaths in Damascus and monstrosities in Mosul rang out the same apprehension that echoed last week after IS posters showed up near the Pakistani prime minister's home and Egyptian militants pledged allegiance to IS. Converging fighters are the flying debris of a dwindling world order. That primordial transformation is perhaps unfolding in the trail of deaths, devastations and depravities these fighters are leaving behind in their trajectories.

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## The G20: Drawing a line under the global financial crisis

TONY ABBOTT

IN a few days, the leaders of G20 economies will arrive in Australia for the Brisbane Summit. Six years ago, the impacts of the global financial crisis reverberated throughout the world. While those crisis years are behind us, we still struggle with its legacy of debt and joblessness.

The challenge for G20 leaders is clear -- to lift growth, boost jobs and strengthen financial resilience. We need to encourage demand to ward off the deflation that threatens the major economies of Europe. The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Christine Lagarde has urged us to find new momentum with more growth, more jobs, better growth and better jobs.

This means creating the right conditions for the private sector to succeed. It means having the willingness to use investment in infrastructure to boost growth.

We cannot let recovery stall, which is why I will be asking G20 leaders in Brisbane to do more. At the 2011 G20 Summit, leaders discussed the necessity of political will. Leaders understood that the G20 is at its most effective when we commit to action together and when we exert our collective political will to deliver on those commitments.

In 2014, we have worked towards an ambitious shared objective -- to lift G20 GDP by at least an additional 2% above the current trajectory by 2018. To achieve this goal, G20 members have identified almost 1,000 new measures in their domestic growth strategies.

Over the course of 2014, G20 members have challenged each other to find reforms that matter and that will deliver the biggest impacts.

While there will remain a role for accommodative monetary policy, the G20 must adopt the sort of structural economic reform that drives long-term growth. These reforms are difficult, but for those economies that pursue them, growth has begun to return. This is true of both Britain and the United States.

The fiscal stimulus provided by the G20 during the global financial crisis helped prevent the collapse of the world economy. Since then, some governments have exhausted their fiscal capacity. New sources of investment must be found. There is a big role here for the private sector.

Encouraging greater levels of investment in every G20 nation is essential to address the \$1 trillion annual infrastructure investment gap.

In September, G20 nations agreed to establish a Global

Infrastructure Initiative -- a multi-year agenda to improve investment environments, plan and prepare infrastructure projects better, and improve long-term finance.

We recognise the need to address youth unemployment and are working to boost workplace participation, because these issues are critical to economic growth. In Brisbane this month, we'll consider setting ourselves a goal of reducing the current gap in workforce participation between men and women in G20 economies by 25% by 2025. Narrowing the gender gap by this amount would bring more than 100 million additional women into the workforce worldwide.

Economic growth needs to be built on sound foundations. Building the resilience of the financial sector has been at the heart of the G20's work since the global financial crisis. It's work to protect taxpayers from having to bail out globally important banks, make derivatives markets safer, and improve oversight of the shadow banking sector

-- the financial institutions that act like banks, but without the same level of supervision.

The outcomes of the recent 'stress test' of Europe's banks showed that we're on the right path and that our actions are making a difference.

Now is the time to draw a line under the global financial crisis. With a membership that is responsible for almost 85% of global GDP and three-quarters of world trade, the G20 can play a crucial role in doing that. But we will only succeed if leaders use of their collective influence and capacity for action, and implement the necessary domestic reforms to boost confidence.

The G20 exists because it can deal with big problems that are beyond the capacity of nation states to deal with individually.

Reaching agreement on how to deal with such problems is a test of the strength of the G20 partnership.

When Australia assumed the G20 presidency a year ago, our aim was for G20 leaders to come together in Brisbane prepared and equipped to deliver real actions and real economic reforms that would make a real and measurable difference to the global economy and to the peoples of the world.

When the summit concludes, I trust leaders will have agreed a body of work that addresses the fundamental issues facing the global economy, and that commits each of us to action at home.

The writer is Prime Minister of Australia.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Lift the foreign league ban on Shakib

Shakib Al Hasan, the ace all-rounder of Bangladesh cricket team was handed a six-month suspension on July 3. BCB also decided not to provide him with No Objection Certificates (NOCs) to play in foreign leagues until December



31, 2015. But later the six-month suspension has been reduced and he has been allowed to play against Zimbabwe. We all know the result.

Now BCB is also thinking about lifting the ban on NOCs which would allow him to participate in the overseas tournaments. I think BCB should lift the ban as Shakib's behaviour and attitude have already changed for the better.

Md. Khurshid Alam Palash  
Assistant teacher  
Chuadanga Govt. Girls' High School

### Over-reporting on minister's marriage

I fully agree with Faruque Hasan's letter "Reporting that's in bad taste" published in your daily on 11th November. Why this event attracted so much attention? Was it for the first time in the country that a man married a woman half his age? Did our minister commit any crime by marrying at the age of 67? I really did not like the piece "The railway minister and his trophy wife" at all. I did not expect such bad taste from a writer who otherwise is a well-respected columnist.

Best wishes for the newly wed couple!

Mohiuddin  
Gulshan, Dhaka

### Contract children of Switzerland

A few days ago, I was watching a documentary on BBC titled, "Switzerland: Stolen childhoods." The documentary revealed that Switzerland, one of the richest countries of the world and a defender of human rights, has a shameful past in terms of child abuse. One may find it interesting to know that even in the 1950s and 1960s Switzerland had a poor economy. After the Second World War, in the 1940s, '50s and '60s, the children of divorced women or single parents were taken away forcefully by the state and sent to the countryside to some farming families in order to work in the farms. These children were called "contract children".

BBC's interview with some of these contract children, who are now in their late sixties and seventies, disclosed how they were abused at their workplaces as they were forced to work under hard conditions and often faced severe punishment. Some said their foster parents often used to beat them up. Sometimes they even had to starve if they failed to work up to their parents' expectations. Even though their real parents were forced to live without them, they had to pay for their children's upkeep. Some of the victims are still suffering from mental trauma and fear that they will be looked down upon by others if their past is revealed.

Recently, the Swiss government has decided to compensate these contract children who were taken away from their parents against their will. But how can they compensate them? Can they give them back their childhood?

Nazmunnahar  
Mirpur, Dhaka

### Comments on news report, "Jubo League, this time," published on November 11, 2014

#### Nasirullah Mridha, USA

We should be indebted to Awami League men because they have not occupied our homes! If AL takes possession of all our properties, we can say nothing because our liberation has come due to AL men's sacrifice only!

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### "New Biman MD joins Jan 1" (Nov. 8, 2014)

#### OpeeMonir

All I can say is congratulations and good luck to Kyle Haywood as he is going to take over in all probability the most difficult task of his life. I can guarantee him that he will pick up some unique experiences from this part of the world.