

The ever bleeding campus

ABDUL MANNAN

RAJSHAHI University (RU) was one of the finest universities in the country. It produced some of the illustrious scholars who brought laurels for the nation. Then some thugs began dictating what should be taught, who will teach and who will not. They were called Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, an organisation that has been termed as a 'criminal organisation' by the International Crimes Tribunal in most of their judgments delivered against those who committed crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971.

Since 1969, the campus has seen the death of 36 people of which three were teachers, the last one being Dr. Shafiqul Islam of the Department of Social Sciences killed on November 15. On December 24, 2004, Professor Yunus of the Department of Economics was hacked to death. Later, the police arrested a few members of JMB, a radical militant group operating inside Bangladesh. They confessed in the court that they were responsible for the killing as they thought Professor Yunus was an atheist, which he was not. Attempts were made on his life in 1988 and 1998 by the Islami Chhatra Shibir because he preached secularism amongst his students and colleagues. On February 2, 2006, Dr. S. Taher of the Department of Geology and Mining was hacked to death by one of his colleagues, Professor Mian Mohiuddin, with the help of Shibir's RU President Mahbubul Alam Salehi and his gang of killers. His body was put in a manhole. Though Salehi was set scot free by the court because of weak charge sheet by the police, Professor Mohiuddin and three others were sentenced to death.

In no other university in Bangladesh had any faculty member lost his life at the

hands of his or her students after the birth of Bangladesh. However, on the ill-fated night of December 14, 1971, just before Bangladesh was liberated, some students of Dhaka University belonging to the killing squad al-Badar, formed by the student wing of Jamaat's Islami Chhatra Sangha (forerunner of Shibir), picked up a number of teachers of Dhaka University from their residences along with other intellectuals in the city. These hapless teachers and intellectuals were bayoneted to death and their dead bodies dumped in the Rayerbazar killing fields.

rule of Ayub Khan. General Ayub, the Iron Man of Pakistan, resigned on February 25, 1969 and handed over power to General Yahya, who presided over the disintegration of Pakistan.

Dr. Shafiqul Islam was a humanist, loved mystic Sufism and practiced the philosophy of the *bauls* (mystic singers and philosophers), notably of Lalou Shah the 18th century Bengali *baul* saint. He would often organise gathering of *baul* music lovers in his quiet residence and sing *baul* songs. Religious bigots had been after the local *bauls* for quite some

coming to class with their full face covered by a veil (*pardha*).

The killers even posted pictures of bloggers Rajib Haider and Ashraf Alam along with Dr. Islam's and claimed it was their Mujahids who killed them. They even audaciously disclosed that they had tried to kill bloggers Asif Mohiuddin and Rakib Mamun. The three who were killed were marked as 'file closed.' So far there is no evidence that there is any militant outfit in Bangladesh called 'Ansar-al Islam,' but there are such organisations in Iraq and Syria working with Islamic State (IS).

The advantage for such militants working in Bangladesh, especially in the north western part of the country, is that they can easily melt away across the border into India. After the recent explosion in Burdwan in Paschimbanga it was found that the bomb makers had a strong JMB connection inside Bangladesh and big consignments of bombs were transported across the border into Bangladesh. Jamaat is quite strong in this belt and the militants of JMB, Huji etc. can always find sanctuary in this area. JMB and Huji were born in Rajshahi and adjoining areas. During the Four-Party alliance rule they were even allegedly helped by the local law enforcing agencies, but ministers of the then government denied that such militant organisations ever existed in Bangladesh. It is the media that created such nonsense they said.

More than thirty people were arrested following the death of Dr. Islam but so far no clue has been unearthed. If the law enforcing agencies fail to bring the perpetrators to justice Dr. Shafiqul Islam will not be the last victim at the hand of these bigots. Many more could fall prey to their crimes in future.

The writer is a former vice-chancellor, University of Chittagong.

It was on the RU campus that, on February 18, 1969, University Proctor Dr. Shamsuzzoha stood between the demonstrating students and trigger-happy Pakistani army and gave his life to save his students. The students defying the curfew were demonstrating against the killing of Sgt. Jahurul Hoque at the Dhaka Cantonment.

It was on the RU campus that, on February 18, 1969, University Proctor Dr. Shamsuzzoha stood between the demonstrating students and trigger-happy Pakistani army and gave his life to save his students. The students defying the curfew were demonstrating against the killing of Sgt. Jahurul Hoque at the Dhaka Cantonment. Sgt. Hoque was one of the accused in the infamous Agartala Conspiracy case. Dr. Zoha shouted out at the military: "If you want to shoot, shoot me first." One trigger happy soldier obliged. The country at the time was amidst a mass upsurge led by the students protesting against the ten-year autocratic

time, branding them as non-believers. It is known from family sources that Dr. Islam had received a number of threats from Chhatra Shibir, warning him that if he did not stop all these he would have to face dire consequence.

He was brutally killed in broad daylight near his off-campus residence by a group of about six assassins. It took just a few minutes and the task was executed very professionally. A few hours later, a group claiming to be members of 'Ansar-al Islam-2' claimed that they had killed this "enemy of Islam" as ordered by Allah. They accused Dr. Islam of forbidding girl students from

U.S.-Bangladesh trade and investment ties: A partnership for sustained success

CHARLES H. RIVKIN

ON my trip through Asia last week, I was thrilled to visit Bangladesh, whose economic development has impressed the world. I underscored the U. S. government's commitment to growing our trade and investment ties -- so we can help sustain Bangladesh's success and extend the wealth to more of the country's industrious and determined people.

This, in part, is what U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry means by our Shared Prosperity Agenda and, on my travels, I have spread this and similar messages from Beijing to Dhaka, and from Mumbai to Delhi.

In conversations with Bangladesh government officials, garment factory owners, labor leaders, and others, we focused on the future of our shared economic growth.

We spoke about ways we can build on the success of the ready-made garment and knitwear industry, which has already contributed so much to economic development, employment, higher incomes, and better skills in Bangladesh, and which has helped to alleviate poverty, empower women, and advance progress on the timely attainment of several Millennium Development Goals.

We all recognized that -- as more global companies make their investment destinations based on a country's workers' safety and labor rights profile -- no government can afford to stand still when it comes to embracing change.

There was agreement that building a stronger "Brand Bangladesh" with a positive reputation for safeguarding labor rights would attract more foreign investors -- an essential key to future growth. Stronger enforcement of workers' rights and healthier labor relations, along with attention to such related issues as building safety, will help Bangladesh ensure broad-based growth and build a middle class as it competes globally and moves up the value-added chain.

As I emphasized during my visit to Dhaka, the United States is proud to have played a supportive role in Bangladesh's economic development success story over the past 25 years. The United States is now one of Bangladesh's largest foreign investors and our commercial relationship is equally promising: two-way trade has grown over 50 percent in the past two years, from \$4 billion to more than \$6 billion.

An improved labor rights climate would encourage more American companies to invest, build on our trade and investment ties, and help burnish Bangladesh's economic role in the region and beyond. More importantly, it would enhance the lives -- and increase the productivity -- of the nation's most valuable economic asset: its working people.

The stakes couldn't be higher for both our nations: President Obama has emphasized how economically important this market is to the prosperity of the American people. U.S. firms recognize the country's potential and are eager to do business, and the Business Council for International Understanding was proud to host and meet with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in New York in September during the UN General Assembly.

With a large and young population in need of an economic future, and consistent 5-6 percent annual GDP growth to build on, Bangladesh has more than 160 million personal reasons to move forward on workplace rights and safety.

The Bangladesh Government has made noteworthy progress -- on safety inspections, on passing Labor Act amendments, on facilitating union registrations, and on its efforts to comply with international labor standards and restore its Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) benefits. And it also recognizes that improved labor rights will work better in a Bangladesh that embraces broader democratic processes and institutions -- from freedom of expression to an independent judiciary.

But there is much work to be done, such as enacting implementing regulations of the 2006 and 2013 Bangladesh Labor Act Amendments, creating a mediation mechanism to systematically protect workers from unfair labor practices such as harassment and intimidation or worse, and hiring more labor inspectors. Moreover, workers in Export Processing Zones should have the same labor rights as workers elsewhere.

The apparel sector alone will not lift Bangladesh to the next level of prosperity if the economic gains from trade fail to benefit all of society. For Bangladesh to unlock its potential for sustainable and broad-based growth, much will depend on the collective efforts of the government of Bangladesh, apparel manufacturers, the nearly 4 million workers in the factories, and the dozens of new and independent trade union leaders springing up in a transforming industry. Empowering workers to bargain for fair wages and to ensure their own safety would be a critical step toward that future -- and would send an important message to investors.

In the weeks and months ahead, I look forward to hearing more about Bangladesh's efforts to transform the garment sector and its forward progress in other areas as well. I also look forward to continuing to share the important progress I have seen in Bangladesh with U.S. government and business leaders.

The writer is U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

I, too, vote for Wasfia Nazreen everyday!

FAKHRUDDIN AHMED

TAKE a cue from our pride, and Bangladesh's only Nobel Prize winner, Professor Muhammad Yunus, I, too, vote for mountaineer and human rights activist Wasfia Nazreen every day. Wasfia is up for the People's Choice Award for the National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, 2015. There are ten candidates. The person receiving the most fan votes will win. Individuals can cast a vote for their favourite candidate once every day until January 31, 2015. Anyone can vote.

The link is: http://adventure.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/adventurers-of-the-year/2015/vote/#/happy-summit-everest-bangladesh_85266_600x450.jpg

We Bangladeshis are a small nation size-wise, but are packed with a lot of people. If many of us vote for Wasfia every day, she will win. Whether Wasfia wins or not is in our hands. Let us make it happen!

And she absolutely deserves it! Not only has Wasfia climbed Mount Everest, if she summits Oceania's Carstensz Pyramid next year, she will be one of the very few, male or female mountaineers, to have climbed all the Seven Summits -- the highest peaks on every continent. As a marathoner I can testify that running a marathon is hard; but, what Wasfia has accomplished is an order of magnitude harder.

Anyone who chooses a sedentary lifestyle from childhood pays a price with systemic ailments as they age. Yet, as Wasfia recounts in her National Geographic interview, girls (boys, too) are discouraged from participating in outdoor activities in Bangladesh. For Wasfia to buck that trend, and achieve physical feats that women (and men) from western nations would envy, is simply staggering! We are in awe of Wasfia, and marvel at her monumental achievements. The whole of Bangladesh adores Wasfia, and is proud of her.

We Bangladeshis are a close-knit unit. We brag about Bangladeshis who excel. I was heartbroken when architect par excellence Fazlur Rahman (architect of Chicago's Sears Tower, one time tallest



PHOTO: PAT MORROW

building in the world) died in 1982. We are so proud of Yunus Bhai and Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, both of whom continue to receive international accolades and win honours for Bangladesh regularly. Of course, we always point out that the founder of Khan Academy, Salman Khan, and the co-founder of You Tube and PayPal, Jawed Karim, are both of Bangladeshi origin.

Although ladies have been the prime ministers and leaders of the opposition in Bangladesh for the last 23 years, and Bangladesh boasts of world renowned female singers, in the field of sports women have not made their mark until

recently. Now they are doing so by leaps and bounds. When Nishat Majumder and Wasfia Nazreen scaled Mount Everest in quick succession in 2012, it was as though they carried the pride of all Bangladeshis with them.

The more I learn about Wasfia, the more she impresses me. Unlike many other Everest climbers, Wasfia was not gratified with the superstardom that comes with summiting Mount Everest. She decided to climb all seven summits on every continent.

Wasfia did not rest on her laurels as an international celebrity; instead, she became a human rights activist, rehabili-

tating sex workers and empowering girls and women. Through personal example she is teaching Bangladeshi girls to be independent and brave, to defy superstition and inane opposition, and to chart a course for themselves. She is teaching Bangladeshi women and men that we should not depend on the foreign NGOs to solve all our social problems; we should learn to solve them ourselves.

Wasfia has funded organisations with the express purpose of encouraging girls and women in general, and the marginal-

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ised women in particular, to participate in outdoor activities. Wasfia Nazreen is an inspiration to women and men all over the world.

Bangladeshis at home and abroad celebrate the achievements of their superstars vicariously. Lately, my mood has been buoyed by Bangladesh cricket team's 3-0 whitewash of Zimbabwe. Wasfia has already made Bangladeshis everywhere proud of her accomplishments. In return, if we make Wasfia win the National Geographic's Adventurer of the Year, 2015 contest, the whole of Bangladesh will bask in her glory.

The writer is a Rhodes Scholar.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Tailed flier
 - 5 Newscast segment
 - 11 Perfect place
 - 12 City on the Rio Grande
 - 13 Heavy metal
 - 14 Not optional
 - 15 India neighbor
 - 17 Holiday lead-in
 - 18 Old gold coin
 - 22 Sacred song
 - 24 Future fern
 - 25 Museum topic
 - 26 Team backer
 - 27 Spirited attack
 - 30 Makes finer
 - 32 Get some shuteye
 - 33 Pindar poem
 - 34 Sporting dogs
 - 38 Fall, e.g.
 - 41 Lustrious stone
 - 42 Wilde character
 - 43 Dog from Kansas
 - 44 2005 Super Bowl losers
 - 45 Hearty dish
- DOWN**
- 1 Brown seaweed
 - 2 Notion
 - 3 Household whistler
 - 4 Salad green
 - 5 Dispatched
 - 6 Begg
 - 7 Door-pounder's cry
 - 8 "Gnarly!"
 - 9 Part of Mao's name
 - 10 Lawn material
 - 16 Harden
 - 19 Perking need
 - 20 "I smell --!"
 - 21 Wallet bills
 - 22 Physics amount
 - 23 Vaccine type
 - 28 Trawler or tanker
 - 29 Stand against
 - 30 Heir, often
 - 31 Block-heads
 - 35 Small workers
 - 36 Overdue
 - 37 Deliberate
 - 38 Spot
 - 39 Hurler's stat
 - 40 Director Lee

CRYPTOQUOTE 9-30

BMH'D DJRR OJMORJ VMF DM BM DVTHXU, DJRR DVJP FVWD DM BM WHB RJDD VJPG UGOGTUJ EML FTDV DVJTG JGULRDU.

-- XJMGXJ U. OWDDMH

Saturday's Cryptoquote: I CANNOT ENDURE TO WASTED ANYTHING SO PRECIOUS AS AUTUMNAL SUNSHINE BY STAYING IN THE HOUSE.

-- NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

M	A	M	A	M	A	M	M	A	L
A	B	U	T	A	M	O	E	B	A
C	E	L	L	G	A	D	G	E	T
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S	H	O	O	T	S	Q	U	I	D
W	O	V	E		U	L	N	A	
A	B	E	T	S	S	I	L	K	Y
N	O	R	E	X	I	T	S		
	M	A	R	X		O	F	F	
P	A	J	A	M	A	O	V	A	L
I	M	O	K	A	Y	D	E	C	O
P	A	T	E	N	S	D	R	E	W

ধানমন্ডি (২২৩৫ বর্গফুট)
 মোহাম্মদপুর (১৫৭০ বর্গফুট)
 পরিবাগ (১০২০-১৬২৫ বর্গফুট)
 বসুন্ধরা (১৬৪০ বর্গফুট)
 বনানী (১০৪০-১৭৮০ বর্গফুট)
 মতিঝিল (৮৯৫-১১৯০ বর্গফুট)
 মগবাজার (১৪৭০-১৬৭৫ বর্গফুট)
 উত্তরা (৮০৫-১৬০০ বর্গফুট)
 বাসাবো (১১৭০/১১৮৫ বর্গফুট)
 সিদ্ধেশ্বরী (১৩৩৫-২০৬০ বর্গফুট)
 মিরপুর (৯৬৫-১৭৩০ বর্গফুট)
 কাঁঠাল বাগান (১১৮০-১২৩০ বর্গফুট)

শেল্টেক ইনভেস্টমেন্ট
 ফেয়ার ২০১৪ উপলক্ষে
 ঢাকার বিভিন্ন প্রাইম
 লোকেশনে আকর্ষণীয় মূল্যে
 শেল্টেক-এর
 অ্যাপার্টমেন্ট
 বিক্রয় চলছে ...

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