

What makes a criminal?

In an exclusive interview with *The Daily Star*, Dr. Md. Ziaur Rahman, Professor and Chairman of Department of Criminology at the University of Dhaka talks to Amitava Kar about the trends of crime and what needs to be done.

What was the thinking behind establishing the Department of Criminology at the University of Dhaka?

Criminology mainly focuses on the causes of crime from the theoretical point of view. If you cannot identify the reasons behind different kinds of crime such as killings, homicides, terrorism, property crimes, robberies, 'victimless crimes' which are common in western societies, you cannot develop a balanced society. Actually, the department should have been established long ago. Nonetheless, we started our journey in 2014 and we believe we can contribute to fulfilling the desire of the citizens of this country to have a healthy, free society. We have two batches of undergraduate students. We also have a master's programme which accepts regular students as well as professionals including lawyers, journalists, and members of different law enforcing agencies. We are working on establishing links with them for knowledge-sharing and learning. The students and researchers of criminology can contribute significantly toward the development of the criminal justice system.

Some of the crimes that we see committed today—rape, a daughter killing her parents, a brother killing a brother, adultery in food, horrible crimes against children and women—seem to have gone out of control. What are the reasons?

It is a good question. Our society is in a transformative stage. We have lots of traditional family values. On the other hand, we are exposed to various effects of globalisation, urbanisation, the introduction of information technology, and the development of electronic and social media. The nature of relationships is chang-



Dr. Md. Ziaur Rahman

ing. Although our standard of living has gone up, our family values are changing.

Lately the inaction or the lack of action by the law enforcement agencies in the aftermath of some horrible crimes has frequently been in the news. How do you see it?

As our society is transforming and people are becoming aware with the media playing a very active role, our institutions are still very much in the traditional phase. The perception of the Police is that it is a force, not a service to the people. The Police still follow the 1861 Police Act. If we want to address these sorts of crimes and deviant behaviours, we have to have a modern police service. We saw the images of a policeman beating up a young woman protesting sexual harassment during Pahela Baishakh. It shows that the mindset, the resources

and the manpower of the Police are related to their inability to cope with or address these issues.

But these issues concern not only the Police but the entire criminal justice system which has two other very important components—the courts and the prisons. If we want to address these kinds of crimes, we have to improve the entire criminal justice system. We must have the political commitment.

How do criminal behaviours affect human relationships?

Criminal behaviour has serious economic and psychological impacts. For example, if a family member is addicted to drugs, it puts the entire family under a tremendous amount of economic and psychological pressure. Any kind of criminal behaviour deeply influences all

kinds of social relationships.

Is it nature or nurture that shapes criminal behaviour?

It is a question of the difference between the biological factors and social factors. People who belong to the biological factors believe in concepts like "born criminal". From the sociological point of view, we definitely do not disagree with that. Genetics or similar factors like family background, heritage, and descent may pass on from generation to generation. But that does not mean that nurture is not important. Nurture has the main role because it is synonymous with the socialisation process. A person may have been born in a crime prone family but that does not mean he or she cannot change his or her character if he or she gets the right resources and a proper learning. We recognise nature, but in the end, I think nurture plays a more important role.

The criminal justice system deals with crimes and criminals. But what's the best way to prevent crimes?

Well, you have to have a comprehensive approach. It is the constitutional right of the citizens to live in a peaceful society. The state should ensure that through different kinds of state apparatus and institutions. At the same time we have to have some social forces which can render moral development of the citizens. If you desire a healthy society you have to start with the family, good education and things like that.

AN ODE TO JOHN AND ALICIA Two beautiful hearts

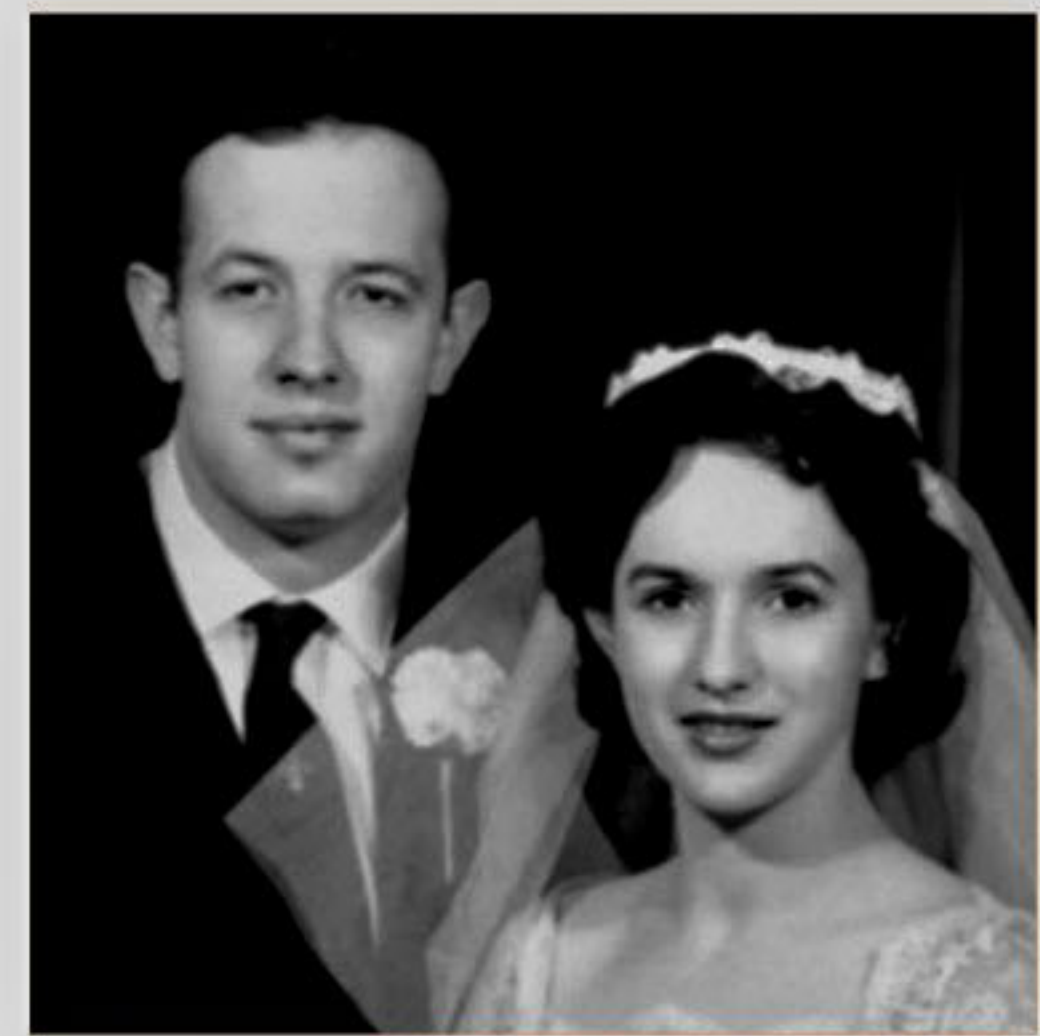
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

THERE'S never been a shortage of drama with John Nash. With probably the shortest reference letter, 'this man is a genius' from Richard Duffin, his professor at Carnegie-Mellon, a 20-year old Nash arrived at Princeton in 1948 to start a PhD. Princeton was 'the' place to be if you were a mathematician in the 1940s and 1950s. It had the likes of John Von Neumann, Albert Einstein, Harold Kuhn and one Albert Tucker, with whom Nash would do his PhD.

Just eighteen months later, Nash submitted a 28-page dissertation in 1950. John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern laid the foundations of what's now known as Game Theory in 1944, but they failed to provide a solid solution to games. Nash's solution that would soon bear his name involved complex math, but the intuition is very simple.

Many people are playing a game where everybody's trying to do the best they can. Everybody considers what other people in the game are also doing. Now, if everybody's 'actually' doing their best given that each and every other player in the game is also 'actually' doing their best at the same time, would any one player want to move from their chosen decision? If you thought no, then probably everybody else will also think likewise. This would mean the game reaches a stable situation, the Nash Equilibrium.

The Nash Equilibrium was the best thing that happened to applied math since calculus, probability and econometrics. Initially, Nash's solution found applications in economics, and then in political sciences, military strategies to even



John and Alicia Nash

biology to explain evolution. Nash's solution did have its limitations, but that only added to a challenge to refine it. However, it wasn't in Game Theory that Nash earned his reputation as a mathematician. Einstein's relativity theories and his own personal aura led to a growing interest in geometry amongst mathematicians in and outside Princeton. Nash's reputation was such that the larger the problem, the more tempting to think about a solution.

Before his mental illness, Nash had solved Reimann's problem in differential geometry now known as the Nash Embedded Theorem. He made seminal contributions in differential equations and topology. Before schizophrenia struck and kept Nash inactive for decades to come, the 'Kid Professor' had become the Newton and Einstein of his time all rolled into one.

John Nash's mental illness through schizophrenia by the 1960s and his almost unique ability to recover and make a comeback formed the myth of the 'Phantom of the Fine Hall' at Princeton and many other myths and legends. Sylvia Nasar first documented this as *Beautiful Mind* in 1998. The 2001 Hollywood movie under the same name with Russell Crowe made Nash a household name.

Nash's genius as the 'Beautiful Mind' is due to his wife, the 'beautiful soul', Alicia. In Alicia, the romance of Nash's legend rests. Although the two divorced in 1963, Alicia stood by John 'in thick and in thin' till they remarried in 2001 and till they tragically left the world together.

John Nash's reputation in the academia rests in economics and pure mathematics. With Alicia, his reputation rests on fighting schizophrenia, making a comeback, and then actively working together to raise awareness about mental illness. The world lost two 'beautiful hearts' on the fateful night of May 23, 2015.

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TELECOM INDUSTRY OF BANGLADESH

Challenges and policy impediments

M. ROKONUZZAMAN

ALMOST three decades ago, following many other countries, Bangladesh took the decision to break the state owned monopoly in the telecom sector. The objective was to benefit from market forces to accelerate telecom penetration, which was hovering at around one percent. The journey began with the entry of BTL for Cellular and BRTA for digital telephone service in 1989, without noticeable success in early years. In 1996, the entry of three cellular operators (GP, TMIB, and Sheba) initiated a difference in the industry. Cellular operators targeted customers waiting for BITB's wire-line connection—the middle segment of the society.

Due to the rapid growth of global technological innovations and supply driven investment strategy of operators leading to economy of scale, the quality of cellular services started to improve and costs saw a sharp fall. As a result, cellular services expanded toward both BTCL's stronghold and the mass of the population. Such strategy has resulted in penetration growth from less than one percent to more than 70 percent over a span of 20 years. In this period, the revenue of the industry has also grown from less than USD 500 million to over USD 3 billion—almost 2.5 percent of the GDP. During the journey, the objective of expanding wire-line network through private PSTN operators faced catastrophic failure, which could be partly attributed to the Telecom Policy and Regulation.

The telecom industry has natural monopoly tendency, driven by both supply and demand side economies of scale and scope, a critical feature to reducing cost and increasing utility. The limited use of BTCL's and Cable TV's wire-line infrastructure to offer

triple play services, an example of economy of scope, has resulted in high price of internet services in Bangladesh. Despite a sharp fall of wholesale bandwidth price, from BDT 28,000 to less than BDT 1,500 per Mbps, there is no proportionate change at the end user level price for broadband services. It has also contributed to poor ranking of Bangladesh in global indexes prepared by UNDESA, ITU or WEF. BTCL's less than 20,000 ADSL subscribers make Ethernet LAN, deployed by ISPs, as the source of wire-line broadband services for 98 percent subscribers in Bangladesh. The sce-

up in a private monopoly. Irrespective of the share holding structure, such monopoly will be harmful. Monopolies have two major limitations - deadweight loss, and lack of innovation. In pursuing profit maximisation, monopoly pricing produces much less than the social optimum quantity. BSCCL's pricing for international connectivity, before the advent of ITCs, is an example of such monopolistic pricing. The necessity of competition for driving innovation to create new value creation opportunity is obvious.

Three major objectives for telecom

Unless there is a strong case of economy of scope, no operator should be allowed to enter in more than one segment. For example, a cellular operator does not need to enter in the application or transmission service business to benefit from economy of scope. Downstream or upstream service concerns should be handled following appropriate regulation. The policy of allowing an operator to enter into multiple segments to address quality or capacity issues must be avoided. Such entries will allow monopolistic market power accumulation through several means, including predatory pricing and increasing entry barriers. Bottlenecks in the chain should be dealt with by issuing new license, updating roll out obligation, regulating service quality, catalysing access to resources, and facilitating demand creation and aggregation.

On the other hand, economy of scope of facilities, owned by any operator, should be exploited by opening access. Intra-segment competition should be optimised to benefit from economy of scale and minimise deadweight loss. To benefit from innovation, new entries should be facilitated and competition should be optimised.

Prevailing policies and regulations appear to be suboptimal. The data of local context as well as experiences of other countries need to be gathered and analysed within sound models to derive insights and compare options to take the most effective policy and regulatory decisions. Otherwise, the telecom industry of Bangladesh will likely end up being a private monopoly—an outcome that must be avoided.

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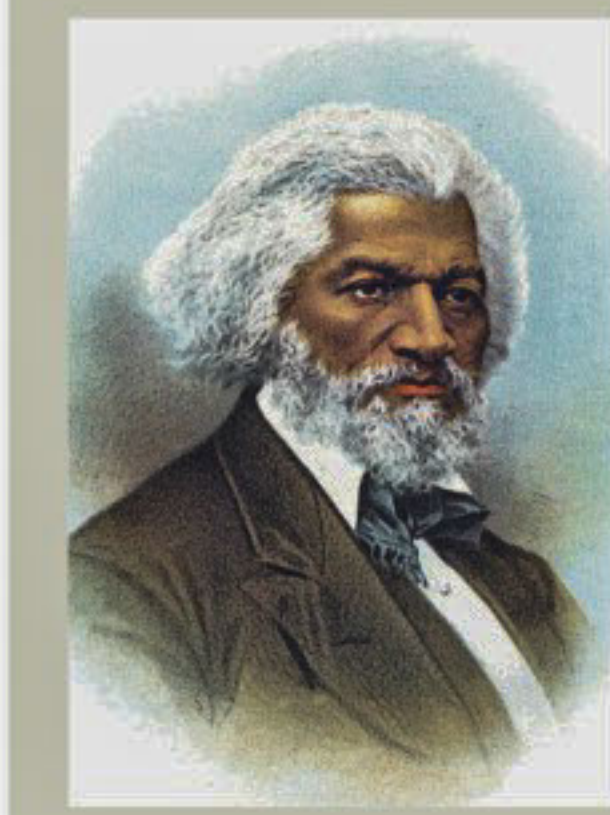
The core challenge appears to be the fact that progress in achieving the first objective leads to the creation of monopolistic power, which reduces competition and discourages new entry contributing to deadweight loss.

nario is quite different in other countries though. For example, in India, for wire-line broadband services, telephone lines offer 87 percent connection in contrary to only 7.7 percent provided by Ethernet LAN. Such a depressing situation could also be attributed to policies and regulations.

In taking advantage of economies of scale and scope, if boundaries of operators are not set appropriately, the industry will tilt toward monopoly. As BTCL or Teletalk will unlikely make aggressive investments and improve operational performance, the telecom industry of Bangladesh will likely end

policy and regulation are to benefit from economies of scale and scope to reduce cost, to minimise deadweight loss to maximise social benefit, and to promote innovations to benefit from dynamic competition. The core challenge appears to be the fact that progress in achieving the first objective leads to the creation of monopolistic power, which reduces competition and discourages new entry contributing to deadweight loss. A fine balance needs to be attained to maximise both consumer and producer surplus. The vertical segmentation of the industry partially addresses this challenge.

QUOTABLE Quote



Some know the value of education by having it. I know its value by not having it.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
1818-1895

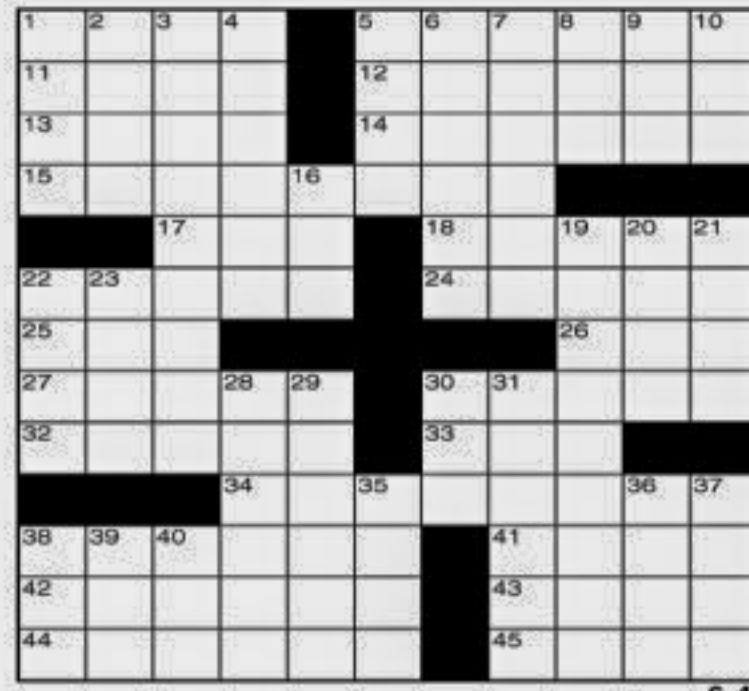
CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Chapel seating
- Long-winged seabird
- Canyon sound
- Get in
- Stumble
- Mirror sights
- On cloud nine
- Shot
- Small amphibians
- Terrific
- Flynn of film
- Retina part
- Gorilla or gibbon
- Neighbors
- Really stoked
- Train stop
- Beat walker
- Pastor's address
- Shot taker
- Freshener target
- Cherishes
- Au naturel
- In addition
- Gush forth

DOWN

- Tennis star Sampras
- Stocking shade
- Produced hastily
- Oscar winner Loren
- Skating group
- Royal fur
- Bullet with a trail
- Outfit
- First lady
- French article
- Fall mo.
- Finished
- Imbibe
- Downhill glider
- June celebrant
- Lounge attire
- Corrida star
- Platter player
- Good serve
- Knuckle-heads
- Sweeping
- Network junction
- Made a sketch
- Manx, for one
- Commotion
- Unruly group



Yesterday's answer



BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



HENRY

by Don Trachte

