

## A convincing win for the Tigers

### Maintain the momentum

AT the end of a consistent series of wins the Tigers have emerged victorious defeating such a high-ranking ODI side as India. This emphatic victory comes as a result of the steadily growing confidence after reaching the quarterfinals in the World Cup, the ODI series and a T20 with Pakistan in which Bangladesh has put up a good fight.

The overall qualitative improvement in our players has injected a breath of fresh air of self belief and team spirit into the national side. The immediate result has been the Tigers moving to the seventh place in the ICC ODI ranking.

The careful grooming of new talents from across the country has started paying rich dividends. The team has been bolstered by young talents like Mustafizur, Liton and Taskin and overall, in all departments of the game – bowling, batting and fielding – the team performance has significantly improved.

The challenge ahead is to keep up this remarkable pace by recognising and nurturing the key strengths of the team as well as identifying and working on the weaknesses. Bangladesh must replicate this impressive winning streak in the current series with India. The confidence they will gather from this will help them come good in test matches. We applaud the Bangladesh team's dynamic Sri Lankan coach Chandika Hathurusingha who has played a commendable role in bringing out the best in each player. We hope that the convergence of all these positive factors will take the Bangladesh Tigers to a pre-eminent level in the international arena.

## Three million cases pending

### Courts must be better equipped

A colossal backlog of around 3 million cases is pending with the courts across the country, including the Appellate Division and High Court Division of the Supreme Court (SC), causing immeasurable suffering to the litigants. With only 1200 judges to arbitrate the cases, it is difficult for the courts, despite their best intentions, to adjudicate the cases expeditiously. Under the circumstances, litigants are left to suffer, with many of the accused, especially those from impoverished backgrounds who cannot afford bail, undergoing long sentences in prisons before they are even found guilty and sentenced. Others, having to wait for years on end for justice to be served, become disillusioned with the system; some cannot afford to fight the cases in court over such a protracted period.

With the utmost respect for the judiciary, we urge them to expedite the resolution of so many hundreds of thousands of cases in public interest. The Law Commission has recommended the appointment of at least 200 judges each year, a suggestion we wholeheartedly support, as currently the courts are understaffed to deal with the whopping number of cases. The Chief Justice (CJ) had earlier in the year proposed curtailing the six month long annual vacation of the SC (including weekends) to reduce the gridlock. The judiciary may find, in its best wisdom, to adjust the timetables of respective courts to accommodate the huge backlog and address the inordinate delays in hearing and concluding cases. The judiciary should also identify and address additional underlying causes which are augmenting the backlog.

## COMMENTS

### "VAT on private universities"

(June 15, 2015)

Mahmud Rafi

They can only do that when they have enough public universities to accommodate all the students. For now, it's a bad decision.

### "The delusion of Bangladesh's cheap labour"

(June 13, 2015)

Waziuddin Chowdhury

As Dr. Akbar Ali Khan on Channel-1's 'Tritiyo Matra' programme noted three days back, "You cannot be a middle-income country without a labour pool that has either a decent education or some vocational skills." Both of these tracks are in short supply and require investment that the government has not prioritised in its newly issued budget. Scarier still is that the days of being a 'bottom-feeder' may be cut short too with the newly emerging Myanmar's RMG industry. The priority should be on lesser number of births and spending available resources to provide these young unemployed people with some life skills.

Zaman Khan

Nowadays to board a flight or to begin any carrier, we need to go to the respective website to get all the information needed, and we need to know English to be able to do that. The way our scholars and government is pushing for Bangla in all sectors including roadside signboards, your dream shall remain a dream.

Rafiq Islam

I disagree with Mr. Zaman Khan. Germany is the prime example where they don't care much about English, but they have an amazing, successful model as a nation. Same goes for Japan. I think our main issue is overpopulation. If we can control that in the next 25 years, many of these issues will either ease or completely disappear.

## WORLD REFUGEE DAY

# Overcoming compassion fatigue

C R ABRAR

JUNE 20 marks World Refugee Day. The day provides the policy makers as well as citizens of all states around the world who enjoy the privilege of being able to live in their homelands to spare a thought and reflect on those unfortunate fellow humans who are forced to flee their own homes for fear of life and liberty – the victims of wars, internal strife and authoritarian regimes. It also offers an opportunity to look beyond one's immediate self-interest and chart a course so that each of us in our own way contribute to making the world a better place to live in.

This year the World Refugee Day is being commemorated at a time when on the one hand the plight of refugees and asylum seekers has reached new heights, while on the other, globally a compassion fatigue appears to have set in. Termed as 'the worst refugee crisis since World War II, 2014 witnessed a steep growth in the number of people forced to flee their homes with 59.5 million people forcibly displaced, compared to 51.2 million a year earlier. The recent media footage and reports on desperate people escaping violence at home and undertaking perilous journeys across the Gulf of Aden, the Red, Mediterranean and the Andaman Seas, are glaring testimonies of the scale of this humanitarian crisis.

The UN estimates that one in every 122 persons that inhabit the globe is now a refugee, internally displaced, or an asylum seeker. A recent UNHCR report goes on to record that "Were this the population of a country, it would be the world 24th biggest". The UN figures further inform that almost nine out of

every ten refugees (86 percent) were in regions and countries considered economically less developed. 25 percent of the total stock is based in what the UN has ranked as Least Developed Countries. Therefore, the global distribution of refugees remains massively distorted away from wealthier nations and towards the poor nations.

The dismal response of the world leaders in facing this humanitarian crisis has deeply disappointed agencies and entities that are engaged in refugee protection. The head of UNHCR, the globally mandated agency for protection of refugees, has lamented "an unchecked slide into an era ... of global forced displacement" and the "utter inability of the international community to work together to stop wars and build and preserve peace". He further bemoaned that "there is more and more impunity for those starting conflicts".

Refugee and rights organisations have also been critical of the apathy and antipathy of the world leaders of both developed and developing worlds. In a report titled "The Global Refugee Crisis: the Conspiracy of Neglect" released days ago, Amnesty International has accused the world leaders of "condemning millions of refugees to an unbearable existence and thousands to death by failing to provide essential humanitarian protection". The organisation held governments responsible for pursuing "selfish political interest instead of showing basic human compassion". Terming the governments' response as 'shameful failure', it suggested "a radical overhaul of the policy and practice to create a coherent and comprehensive global strategy".

Foremost among them was calling on the states "to live up to their individual

legal obligations and renew their commitment to international responsibility-sharing". The Amnesty's usage of the term 'responsibility-sharing' in place of the commonly used phrase 'burden-sharing' is noteworthy. It makes the states liable and accountable, replacing the voluntariness that is associated with the concept of burden-sharing'.

Among the measures proposed by Amnesty is the commitment by the states to collectively resettle one million refugees within the next four years; creation of a global refugee fund that will fulfill the UN humanitarian appeals for

sations to exhort governments to view refugee, asylum and displacement cases from a humanitarian lens as deserved, and not through the security lens, as has often been the case.

Upholding the spirit of humanitarianism, we urge the Bangladesh government to review its Rohingya refugee policy, to robustly engage with the international community to compel Myanmar to create enabling conditions for the refugees to return, to refrain from taking new measures that may further jeopardise the interests of registered Rohingya refugees and asylum

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refugee crisis and provide financial crisis to countries hosting large numbers of refugees; the ratification of the international refugee instruments, and putting in place 'fair domestic systems to assess refugee claims and guarantee that refugees have access to basic services such as education and healthcare'.

The above recommendations merit due consideration and endorsement by all states. Policy makers of developed and developing countries need to take them in proper stride and act on them. Onus also lies on the civil society organi-

seekers including the ones undocumented, to develop a strategy for re-integration of the camp-based Urdu-speaking Bangladeshi citizens, to ensure effective rehabilitation of the returnee refugees and the internally displaced people of the hill districts, to frame a national refugee law which is a constitutional requirement and to ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention.

The writer teaches International Relations and coordinates the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, University of Dhaka. He writes and researches on rights and migration issues.

## Stand by Them

### NO STRINGS ATTACHED



AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

ONE of the most uplifting scenes when you are on the streets of any city, village or town, anywhere in the world, is the sight of hordes of girls in crisp school uniforms, a spring in their step, their faces glowing with carefree youth, as they prance forward in the beautiful journey called life. When you see them you may feel a pang of wistfulness,

thinking of your own golden days, those giggling fits over every little thing, voraciously munching on unhygienic but mouthwatering street food, sharing secrets, the absurd, obsessive crushes – all those wonderful experiences every young girl should be entitled to. You also feel an inexplicable sense of optimism that is hard to articulate in words. Girls in school uniforms denote progress for any nation, definitely for Bangladesh. With increasing enrolment rates and an overwhelming number of girls scoring brilliantly in board exams, we are definitely on the right track.

But an ominous shadow lurks above these rainbow thoughts. There are other pairs of eyes on these young women who, given half the chance, can be the scientists, pilots, teachers, astrophysicists, painters, musicians – anything actually - they may set their hearts on. These eyes watch their every move, waiting in the dark shadows, for the opportune moment, to put an end to those wondrous, exhilarating moments of growing up, for good.

When we read headlines like 'schoolgirl raped and killed', 'primary school girl raped by staff', girl abducted and raped' we are disturbed but soon these cases pile up in the dust of forgetfulness. We do not get to see the look of terror, shame and then total blankness on that girl's face. We do not see the devastation of her parents whose only desire in life is to see that she is equipped to stand tall among the crowds. We cannot feel the physical pain and mental trauma of being tortured so brutally. We cannot fathom the sheer bleakness ahead—of facing hostile, apathetic law enforcers, being probed by strangers for 'evidence' of that ghastly experience and then appearing before a courtroom mainly consisting of men, where the rapist has the right to question the victim's morality (!). We cannot imagine the feeling of helplessness, dejection and utter despair when, even after reporting the rape, a girl will most likely have to watch her rapist go scot free. We will never know how many of these girls have stopped going to school out of fear and shame.

A research by The Daily Star based on news reports has found that 82 percent of victims of rape are below 20. They are mostly minors. Many of them were accosted



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

while going to school, taken to a secluded area and then raped or gang-raped. The study further points out that in a large number of cases the rapists were known to the victim - stalkers, thwarted admirers, relatives, neighbours etc. This means these culprits could easily be identified, caught and brought to book. But in the backdrop of a society that shuns the victim while being almost indulgent towards the rapists, the raped rarely get to see their assaulters punished.

The reasons for why that is so are known. We are a society that endorses the philosophy of 'do what you want, just don't get caught.' It also tacitly treats sexual violence as an acceptable misdemeanor of men who 'just can't help themselves'. In contrast, the raped girl or woman becomes tainted by some invisible taint of shame and can no longer be treated as a 'normal' member of the community. Such twisted logic compels many victims to be silent about the crime. And those who have risked dire consequences and reported their rape have faced the humiliation of law enforcers refusing to take their cases or going through agonising delays in getting justice, if at all.

But just blaming a flawed legal system is escaping our own responsibility. There is something inherently wrong with a society that does not know how to protect its girls and women from rape or any other kind of sexual harassment. When unruly youths harass schoolgirls on the street, why is the neighbourhood silent? Why are mobs not as 'enthusiastic' about catching a rapist as they

are about catching a thief and beating him to a pulp? Why do most people stand apart when girls and women are groped in a crowd?

These are no doubt naïve questions in a country that allows religious clerics to publicly compare women to mouthwatering tamarind and that thinks that the legal marriageable age of girls should be lowered to 16. This regressive mentality has seeped into the most unlikely of corners – inside university campuses that were once the bedrocks of democratic movements and in board exam questions where a girl wearing western clothes is projected as 'indecent'.

These are signs of a society moving backwards where the convenient solution to stop sexual crime is by stifling the women and girls. But clipping those wings that were meant to fly will not make sexual predators go away. It will only help them to carry out their depraved acts with greater ease and frequency. We must learn to loosen the chains that choke our girl children from the very moment they come to this world. We must know how to set them free. We must also know how to protect our girls by publicly shaming stalkers, by constantly demanding justice for the victims and making sure that every case of harassment, rape and abuse is reported and followed through. So that we can always have streets full of boisterous, confident, school girls in their smart uniforms, as they walk past us, fearless of the unknown, beautiful future that they will create for themselves.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Nuclear energy

When we compare the cost and other aspects of nuclear energy with the other energy sources, we find that a nuclear plant is really competitive in the market. Low and stable marginal production cost is one of the main economic aspects of a nuclear power plant considering its lower fuel cost. Nuclear plant produces only 15% to 20% of total cost for the entire life cycle of nuclear fuel including enrichment, fabrication, spent fuel treatment and disposal. For example, if the price for uranium is increased by 100% then the electricity production price will increase slightly by around 5%. If the same amount of cost increases for gas power plant in comparison, then the electricity cost will increase by at least 75%. So economically nuclear energy is strong. Nuclear energy is not like other energy resources and

important aspects include production of clean energy without reducing greenhouse gas as well as using carbon free energy sources. Typical nuclear reactors use mineral fuel extract energy from its radioactivity and in such reactors, the input fuel is 235Uranium. The 235U is burned to yield heat and most of the energy yield comes from 239Plutonium. Some of the 238U transforms into 239Pu through the capture of neutron particles, which is released at the time of 235U burning. Uranium sources are available in different concentrations in land and water. Proper management can deal with all the safety concerns and environmental impacts. Regardless of the definitions of renewable energy, nuclear energy is capable of fulfilling all the criteria for sustainability and the well-being of the future generation.

Md Al Mamunul Haque  
Post-graduate Researcher  
The Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

### Callous way of reporting on sexual harassment

I feel shocked seeing that some TV channels and print media report on sexual harassment in a callous and senseless way. Sometimes they reveal the victim's identity and address. This is a double blow for the victims as they feel socially humiliated when their identities get revealed. This practice should be stopped right now.

Ashek Sarker  
Comilla