

## Where are they?

Indeed!

THE action of the police with regard to the two Gulshan café survivors has left us flabbergasted. The police claim that they have been released after questioning but the two families have no knowledge of their whereabouts.

These two were either pivotal witnesses in the case or their role in the investigation process is peripheral. If the former is true, they should have been subjected to thorough questioning, and to that end, their custody with the police would be justifiable. Thus it defies logic that they should be released and that too without their next of kin being informed about it.

On the other hand, if their role in the investigation process is not crucial we wonder why they had been kept in custody for so long. And isn't there a set procedure for taking someone in custody and for releasing him or her? And shouldn't the fact that they have 'disappeared' after their so called release ring alarm bells among the police, as they were important witnesses to the killings?

This is a sensitive case that has drawn international attention and has brought the country in the focus of the world. Thus we find the action of the law enforcers, on both counts, incomprehensible. They should not overlook the fact that the international community is depending on us for a proper investigation. Regrettably, the handling of the situation has revealed a casual attitude of the law enforcement agencies which is in total contrast to the firmness and clarity of the PM's position and her strong commitment to root out terrorism. It has also further strengthened public perception that the police's capacity to handle such investigations has to be enhanced.

## Rejuvenating Dhaka city

Going 'green' in the cards

WE welcome the moves by both north and south city corporations in revitalising the open public spaces like parks by undertaking extensive plantation of trees and flower plants. It will go a long way to reverse decades of unplanned urbanisation that has practically destroyed the character of Dhaka city and turned it into a concrete jungle. Modern city planning dictates that for a city to be considered liveable, it must have at least 25 percent greenery (sadly, our city boasts a puny 5 percent). The city corporations are also planning to help city residents turn their rooftops into green roofs with the aid of soil, pots and fertiliser and offering a 5 percent tax rebate to building owners so that they may voluntarily take part in the campaign to reverse years of neglecting the environment.

Policies can be adopted and tax breaks offered, but without people's participation in the programme, the city corporations may achieve only so much. Many of the open spaces have not only been neglected but have been illegally occupied. These need to be freed up before restoration work can commence. Going green is an essential part of good city planning and contributes significantly to the mental and physical health of city residents. The rooftop greenery plan has the potential to reduce heat in buildings significantly that will reduce electricity bills for consumers by reducing workload for air-conditioners. Public awareness campaigns need to be launched so that people know what is at stake here and the benefits of going green are not lost on city residents.

## COMMENTS

**"Govt decides to take Peace TV off air"**  
(July 11, 2016)

**Muhammad Maheer Zaid**

Why not ban Star Jalsha and other Indian channels as well? Channels like these are sowing the seeds of dispute among family members and destroying our culture.

**Abu Elias Sarker**

What about the other Indian TV channels that have detrimental effects on our culture?

# "I still believe in man in spite of man"



KNOT SO TRUE

RUBANA HUQ

"ARE the waiters ok?" asked my daughter from miles away. She would have been there had she not left town for her vacation. There's a common joke

that runs in the family about our youngest daughter being a Holey addict. If I were to say that she visits Holey at least twice a week, I would not be mistaken. In fact, it could even be more. The latest pastries that they had introduced are irresistible. The bread, the weekend breakfast and brunches, the smile of the chef across the counter and obvious, predictable complimentary one dish coming our way . . . all have now joined the "were" club. This is how man's brutality to man changes tenses and kicks back the future to the darkest, irreversible pothole of yesterday.

Sleepless for over 60 hours, I write this column with an appeal of not to be judged. There are questions and curiosities that irk my mind. Watching the whole episode from thousands of miles away has its disadvantages. Distance impacts reaction. One becomes desperate to search for more news. Sprawled all across the floor, the pieces of the puzzles become harder to put together and one despairs far quickly than expected. My only access was through the online streaming of the local channels, popping up in the mini windows in cell phones, where the tickers down below were getting increasingly more and more difficult to read, just because there were at least three scrolls crowding almost every other news channel that evening. Let us remember that at the time of any crisis, the hands of a minute clock runs at its slowest. It becomes difficult to digest patience or strategy. The helplessness of watching anything on a mini screen often adds to the frustration. The police and RAB seemed slow with their reaction. Every time the cameras panned, they seemed to be talking amongst themselves. From a distance, one wondered if they could have been a little faster than they were that day. One wondered why they had

captured Shaon, the Holey Bakery staffer from the road, where he had no clothes on him and seemed irrational. One wondered if they could have been a little more careful and not shown the picture of the assistant pizza chef as one of the assailants the very next day. But of course one wondered about mostly everything one did not have control over. How would we know what it takes to conduct an operation or how counter offensives were planned to address a fluid situation? In reality, we know nothing except that 20 lives have been lost, many of them directly known to us or connected to us in some form or the other. But of

there is a time when almost every kid stays confined in their own rooms, hooked to cell phones and computers and rarely do we ever know what's being plotted in their tiny minds. Even as adults, we often watch our peers going through radical transformations that we cannot explain. Changes happen. People do evolve in different directions. But to spot the changes and to make a mental note is something we often forget to do. All across the US, one used to hear: "If you see something, say something", right after 9/11 happened. Similarly, the culture of reporting and sharing has to begin. At this point, I feel guilty of not

when I was being invited to a "social" *dawaat* to listen to religion being discussed in a "homely" circle in Azimpur. It took me five sessions to realise that I was their next victim to be indoctrinated. I ran away from that last session in that dingy flat in Azimpur, never to return. I narrated the whole experience to my mother, who herself wore sleeveless blouses all her life, recited the Quran every morning and chanted Ayatul Qursi every night, following it up with her claps, in a virtual cum spiritual effort to secure the four corners of the house. Today, I do the same, only with a difference. I cover myself with an *anchal* of my sari every time I am out in the public, just because I don't feel secure anymore. Many of my friends have taken to *purdah* because it's simply safer to go to the bazaar and shopping malls and not be grilled by the male gaze. Many have even opted to do this just to save the salon bills and hassles of drying their hair. Many of my friends' children have gone to Malaysia, just because we did not want the oceans to distance us, thinking that Malaysia was just one air-hop away, not realising that the choice to want children to go to specific places did not guarantee the apt practice of religion. It is conscience that guides faith; it's frankness and transparency that builds character and it's certainly familial kindnesses from the community that nurtures a child.

For the last few days, I have been answering frantic calls from buyers all across the globe, asking me whether all's 'ok' at our end. Instead of violently defending our situation, it was for the first time in the 20 years I have been in business, that I blurted out the truth: "No. It is best to revisit your travel plans." Unless we recover from this inner helplessness, we have no right to assure others. But then, let us also remind ourselves that while we mourn the death of all the foreigners, and Faraaz, Abinta, Isharat, let us also not lose hope in our resources and strength. After all, we do "believe in man, in spite of man", as the Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel once wrote.

The writer is Managing Director, Mohammadi Group.

*That is what happens every time we turn the other way and decide to be indifferent. This is how we are losing the proud flag of secularism at our end. This is how this year Brussels Airport was struck in March, how Istanbul got hit in June, how we were blown over on July 1, and that is how three Saudi cities got rocked in less than 24 hours.*

course, we know nothing except what we are being told by the media and the authorities, in bouts of occasional gestures of information sharing sessions. Somehow July 1 brought back haunting memories of 1971 right back to many of our mindscapes. The uncertainty of terrorising boots and bayonets smashing our doors, the tragedies of watching our own being brushfired in a bush, the horrifying sound of our mothers being raped in the next room . . . all were part of a kaleidoscope effect from the past, being streamed to many of us watching the episode online. Could it have gotten worse on July 1? No.

Young kids, whom we may have watched growing up in front of our own eyes, having strayed from the usual family practices is not an unusual thing. There is a time when parents are bound to be strangers to their kids;

tracking a kid one of my daughters used to go to school with. I vividly remember the day when she came home distraught and shared that her friend seemed different. A brilliant boy in class, apparently, he had started speaking the language of a newly radicalised young Muslim. I regret not having ever shared this with anyone, thinking it was no business of mine to probe into the life of someone else's child. That is what happens every time we turn the other way and decide to be indifferent. This is how we are losing the proud flag of secularism at our end. This is how this year Brussels Airport was struck in March, how Istanbul got hit in June, how we were blown over on July 1, and that is how three Saudi cities got rocked in less than 24 hours. That is how we are losing our sons and daughters to the insanity of fanaticism. Time to tell the truth: I was only 18

## The justifiability of BCB playing hardball

MD. RIZWANUL ISLAM

IT is not very often that I can laud the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for its professionalism or foresightedness. BCB's financial muscle has strengthened, cricket players of the country have become more professional; however, the same cannot often be said about the professionalism of BCB's management. But, BCB's insistence on sticking to the Future Tours Programme (FTP) and to flatly rule out the possibility of opting for a neutral venue for the English National Cricket team's tour in October this year, is, in my opinion, a rare glimpse of professionalism and foresightedness.

I can appreciate that there may be many Bangladeshis who agree with BCB's position but may, nevertheless, resent the public statement or question the pragmatism behind it. According to this line of thinking, hardball play tactics, as expressed through the strong words of many, backfire and could elicit an equally tough response from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and English National Cricket team's players. And it would be a loss for cricket in Bangladesh. But Mr. Eoin Morgan, the English Cricket team's limited over match captain, has already made his concern public and there have been considerable media speculations about the ECB's shadow of doubt regarding the tour of Bangladesh. For this reason, I do not think that the public position of BCB is untimely or non-strategic. The only concern that I have with this approach is whether or not BCB can stick to its current position. It would be very unfortunate if (without any significant change or drastic events) the BCB, in the near future, decides to backtrack and opts for playing matches in a neutral venue. However, as long as the BCB sticks to its position, I do not find any flaw in its hardball play approach.

While cricket is a passion for our country, we should, at the same time, not lose sight of the bigger picture here. In some ways, this is also an issue that is bigger than just cricket. If BCB opts for a neutral venue for the tour, it would send a signal, not just to the cricketing world but to others as well, that Bangladesh has become so insecure a place that Bangladeshi administrators themselves are not considering the country safe enough to host an international cricket team. Surely that would send an unmistakably clear signal of lack of confidence and resignation. As the host, BCB has to do everything within its means to ensure the safety of the players,



PHOTO: STAR

match officials, and spectators, and try to assuage all their concerns, including those of the ECB. But it cannot just concede to each and every demand made by the ECB or other cricket boards, just to go ahead with a scheduled tour. It would seem that the BCB has appreciated the dangers that lurk within such a choice.

As with any other cricket board, the ECB is entitled to take its decision based on the available intelligence and security advice of the experts. The English team's captain and other members of the team are perfectly within their rights to vent their concerns about their safety in Bangladesh or to decline to tour Bangladesh. The decision to decline to tour may even be taken by an individual player, even though the administrators usually take the final decision to send their teams to other countries for international matches. After all, a player is not a member of an army regiment who would have to follow the command of the superior come what may. However, any fair-minded observer cannot but question the consistency of the choices made by some western cricket administrations. As I had written in this newspaper when the Australian national Cricket team cancelled their tour last year,

in an increasingly intolerant and violent world, terrorism is not a threat confined to Bangladesh or the economically underdeveloped world alone. This is amply clear from the terror attacks in the last few years. However, despite very grave terror attacks in Mumbai, London, and Sydney, bilateral series, as well as World Cup matches, have not been interrupted. Nonetheless, when it came Bangladesh, even before any significant terror event (here I am referring to last year), the tour was cancelled. In short, let me put this straight, at times such choices are difficult to understand at best and seem hypocritical at worst.

It would appear that there is some problem with the global cricket administration. The Australian National Cricket team's tour was cancelled but at around the same time the Australian national football team played in Bangladesh (even though the schedule was substantially truncated). It would seem that the lives of some sporting heroes are more precious than others (or you can also say that some global sporting administrators might appear to be more 'coddling' than others).

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Enough is enough

The recent terrorist attacks are not just "stray incidents". We must stand together and show them that we are not afraid of them. No one deserves to be brutally killed this way.

IS is not Islamic at all; they have been only using the name of our religion but they know nothing

about Islam and its principles. They are the complete opposite of what Islam teaches us and that is, peace.

We live in a dangerous world but together we can and fight back. Don't give up on hope and peace.

An ordinary girl  
Dhaka



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

### Terrorist attacks in Bangladesh

We are completely dumbfounded by the unprecedented and brutal terrorist attacks at Gulshan and Sholakia. The people of Bangladesh did not experience anything like this before. These incidents have created great anxiety, fear and uncertainty among the common people. We strongly

condemn these cowardly acts of terrorism.

And here in the US, the latest, bloodiest shooting is creating more havoc and fear there than ever before.

So where's this leading to?  
Ted Rudow III, MA  
CA, USA

### Messi's retirement

Lionel Messi's retirement has come to his fans as a great shock. We would like to request him to reconsider his decision. We want him to continue to play and make the beautiful game more fun.

Chandro  
Dhaka