

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
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## Medical establishments must adhere to rules

Enforce HC directives

WE welcome the High Court (HC) directive that all private clinics, hospitals and diagnostic centres must put on public display the list of charges for various services they provide. The HC has also directed that all general hospitals must have ICU/CCU units at the district level. The most important measure that the HC has ordered is of course, the setting up of a panel of experts to formulate rules and regulations that will effectively monitor clinics, diagnostic centres and hospitals.

For too long the privately owned hospitals and other medical centres have been taking patients for a ride. There have been long standing allegations by patients of overcharging for tests and medical care. Equally disturbing is the fact that medical centres, particularly hospitals and clinics are so rigid in their paperwork that patients have to fill up forms before they can avail medical services, even if they need emergency treatment. These instances speak volumes of a regime that is by and large unregulated and hence cause much of the aggravation faced by patients.

The HC has given directives which the Directorate General of Health Services/Ministry of Health should have on their own enforced long ago. Concrete steps should now be taken to make the burgeoning and hugely profitable private medicare conform to the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982. This would certainly pave the way to address many of the problems patients regularly face.

## Strict implementation of law can stop stalking

Another college girl attacked

NOT a day goes by without a news report of rape, stalking and violence against women and children in the media. In the latest incident that was reported in this daily yesterday, a girl in Nilphamari's Dimla upazila was brutally attacked by her stalker and his accomplices on her way to college.

In 2011, the High Court declared stalking of girls and women illegal, and directed the government to consider the offence as sexual harassment. The court also added that incidents of stalking of girls and women at any place in the country have to be brought under trial in accordance with the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act. In addition, it ordered the government to set up separate cells at every police station across the country to deal with such cases. One wonders if the directives given by the High Court have been followed by the authorities concerned.

According to *Ain O Salish Kendra*, from January till March this year, at least 16 children were sexually harassed by stalkers but only in six of the incidents, cases were filed against them. And most of such cases get settled outside the courts as the victims are mainly from poor economic backgrounds and the perpetrators are usually from local influential families. To make sure that the stalkers cannot get away with impunity, the local administrations should take effective actions against stalkers as soon as they get information of such incidents, as the High Court has directed.

Moreover, awareness must be raised about stalking from the school level. Topics of awareness against stalking should be incorporated in the school curriculum. We must also create a massive social movement against stalking as well ensure strict implementation of law to stop this crime.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Attack on Mahmudur

We can all agree that Mahmudur Rahman, a former acting editor of a now-defunct newspaper, is hardly an unblemished figure. What we should also agree is that the attack on him, or anyone for that matter, is unacceptable.

Under no circumstance is physical violence acceptable in a civilised society. No matter how profoundly we disagree with a person, it is simply inappropriate to assault him or her. That's the principle we all should accept.

What makes the attack on him more despicable is the fact that it took place on the court premises, where everyone goes to seek justice. The attack was, therefore, also an assault on the sanctity of the court.

We find the inaction by the police during the attack and in its aftermath reprehensible. They were there to protect him, and should have been careful of the dangers, and acted to prevent them and catch the perpetrators.

Mashiul Hasan  
Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

# Immigrants don't change culture but they surely can win you the World Cup

STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN  
NDC, PSC (RETD)

IF there was any doubt about President Trump's racist inclinations, it was fully removed by his pontification to the European leaders about, what he thinks, the negative

consequences of immigration on Europe. Every time the US president opens his mouth on any subject, with the exception, perhaps, of real estate business, he betrays an abject ignorance on practically everything under the sun. And every time he does that I am reminded of what an illustrious predecessor of his, and he belonged to the Republican Party also, had said about the dangers of speaking out of turn, which was that, "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and to remove all doubt."

It may be worth quoting President Trump's comment about immigration and Europe, whose leadership he managed to rub the wrong way with his characteristic injudiciousness. In an interview with *The Sun* in June, the US president blamed immigration for the changing culture of Europe: "I think allowing millions and millions of people to come into Europe is very, very sad. I think you are losing your culture." And he said the same thing later at a news conference with the British PM, face to face, warning Europeans to be careful of the "changing culture" as a consequence of immigration. The reality is that, and that is acknowledged by all except the ultranationalists and rightists, the UK would not be what it is today without immigrants.

Trump's utterances on culture is surprising on many counts, particularly the fact that such a thought was expressed by one who has both German and Scottish pedigree—being the grandson of a German, and the son of a Scottish immigrant to the US. And he has fathered a male progeny whose mother happens to be a first generation immigrant from Slovenia and has been a US citizen since only 2012. The American author James Jones had once advised the Americans to read their text books, and nobody more than the US president should take that to heart, particularly on history.

The issue of migration has been the topmost in the mind of President



Immigrant rights advocates and others participate in rally and demonstration at the Federal Building in lower Manhattan against the Trump administration's policy that enables federal agents to take migrant children away from their parents at the border.

PHOTO: AFP

Trump. He has doubled down on immigrants from the very first day he took office, banning immigration from a selected list of Muslim countries. His cabinet ministers have used the scriptures, very selectively, to justify the policy of separating children from parents seeking asylum in the US from across its southern borders. That being the case, it may be worth looking at the scriptures to put the matter in a historical and scriptural context.

If migration is a crime, which Trump thinks it is, then the blame of the original sin must fall on the two who transgressed the Lord's Command and thus endured forced migration. Ever since Adam and Eve were forced to migrate to the earth, human history has been the history of migration, of seeking newer lands for greener pastures and for following the command of the Lord, as did Abraham when he obeyed the order of his Lord to leave his home which was in present day Iraq. Immigration to a Christian kingdom, whose king Najashi knew his scriptures well, contributed to the survival of Islam at the very seminal stages of its existence. And the Islamic calendar commences with the immigration to Medina. Interestingly, all the revealed scriptures talk about

protection of the immigrants.

Contrary to what Donald Trump thinks, migration has enriched and embellished languages and enhanced the capacity to adapt. But coming from one who is regrettably oblivious of how the American colonialists and their successors have decimated the American Red Indians, to the point where they are now penned in so called reservations, the fear expressed is not surprising. Neither is it new. Two hundred years ago Benjamin Franklin was worried about too many German immigrants "swamping America's predominantly British culture." Migration from Ireland was discouraged because they were looked down upon as "lazy and drunkards"—Poles, Italians, Russian Jews were the "new immigrants believed to be too different ever to assimilate into American life" at the beginning of 20th Century. Their contribution to America belies the misgivings.

Unfortunately, people like Mr Trump forget that the US is about migration and migrants. According to a US author, writing in 2002, "An authoritative 1997 study by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) concluded that immigration delivered a 'significant positive gain' to the U.S. economy. In

testimony before Congress last year, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan said, 'I've always argued that this country has benefited immensely from the fact that we draw people from all over the world.'

As for Europe, the notion that there are "original people" from whom the present day generation is originated has been proven wrong by a research report published in *The Independent* (UK) in February this year which says that immigrants have been "moving and mixing" across Europe since ancient times. The liberalists believe, in view of the spurt of refugees in Europe that Europe's cultural, ethnic and religious diversity will increase in a transformative way in the years and decades to come. As for the Sub Continent, its cultural richness is the result of intermixing of people of various races creeds and ethnicities.

Modern day migration is a fact of life and the natural order of things. And the pull factors are just as relevant now as it was 1,50,000 years ago. Mr Trump, immigrants don't change culture but they surely can win a country the World Cup. The French would swear to that.

Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan ndc, psc (Retd) is, Associate Editor, *The Daily Star*.

# How can we get women to stay in the workforce?

MALIH RAHANAZ

ELIMINATING economic hurdles to encourage women's participation in the workforce remains at the heart of any economy's development agenda. Supporters of women's rights have continuously championed issues of equal pay, equal working rights and equal promotion as a moral issue. The roles can reverse where increases in economic development result in increases in female labour force participation. However, the relationship is not as straightforward or consistent as we might find at the country level. There is significant variation across developing

percent of the economies restrict women from working in jobs considered dangerous, difficult or morally unsuitable. Thirty-seven of the 189 economies restrict women from applying for a passport, 18 do not allow women to get a job without permission from their male counterparts. In 29 economies, women are not allowed to work the same hours at night as men. Such a restriction is more prevalent in South Asia, Middle East and North Africa with 63 percent of men having the opportunities to work at night. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) finds that despite growing equality, more and more

tend to reduce women's salaries to accommodate for paying women higher leave benefits. The effect of parenthood on employment seems to work in opposing directions for men and women, with employment rates decreasing for women and increasing for men. This arises from perceived gender roles. Perceptions regarding stay-home women play a key role in the decision and ability of women to enter the labour force. Parenthood plays a key role behind such preferences. Practically, costs of and access to childcare are still inadequate in many developing countries. Available data shows that healthcare and childcare costs exceed college costs in the US for

*A recent report from the United Nations shows that women do 2.6 times more unpaid and domestic work than men do. That is in addition to their paid work!*



PHOTO: BETTER WORK

countries in the participation of men and women in the workforce. These variations are driven by economic, political, legal and social factors. To a large extent, debatable indeed, these factors have positively empowered men than women.

According to World Bank's 2018 edition of "Women, Business and Law" report, out of 189 economies, both developed and developing, in 104 economies women face some kind of restriction in the workforce. About 30

women continue to stay at home than men.

Women workers tend to face barriers if they are in their child-bearing and child-rearing ages. By and large, a significant number of women, after childbirth, withdraw from the workforce. There has been a recent increase in maternity leave in India from 84 to 182 days. This is serving as a disincentive to hire women as employers have to bear the full cost. Due to this difference in cost, employers

parents. This is more prevalent in developing countries, such as in Bangladesh where a limited number of workplaces provide day-care centres.

Additionally, with no government intervention for care of mothers with young children, there is difficulty in finding affordable, reliable childcare near their homes, making it one of the primary reasons families prefer stay-home women for the family's well-being, especially during the child rearing ages.

A recent report from the United Nations shows that women do 2.6 times more unpaid and domestic work than men do. That is in addition to their paid work! Domestic work in the form of raising children, looking after the elderly or sick family members is generally seen as the responsibility of women. Shakra Razavi, chief of research and data section at UN Women has called for reforms to include "unpaid domestic work" of women in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) calculations so that the economic value of cooking food, collecting firewood and providing care for the members of the family is not eliminated from the calculations.

The World Bank's 2018 report mentioned earlier illustrates the need for practical reforms to ensure continuous participation of women in the workforce. This is essential because in absolute terms, we are looking at more than 2.7 billion women who are restricted in some way from having the same employment choices and opportunities as their male counterparts. Women have had successes in education and politics, however participation in the workforce remains lower than men. Reforms to encourage female formal labour participation will enable economic independence, self-reliance, retirement planning and provide a cushion from economic shocks for the household as a whole.

Malihah Rahanaz is lecturer of Economics at the Department of Social Sciences at BRAC University.