

MAILBOX

starweekendts@gmail.com

To protect our girls, teach them to be independent

It is really alarming for society when girls are continuously degraded by their male counterparts and even brutally tortured by them. We all know that somehow influenced by the media or other sources of information technology, it seems almost impossible to stop the deviation of the young generation.

Being influenced by obscene and vulgar mentality, their behaviour towards girls has changed. So, teasing, mental harassment, and physical torture are increasing day by day.

Physically handicapped girls, especially, are becoming their victims. We often see news of them being tortured in the name of “judgment”, especially in rural areas of the country.

Many girls commit suicide, as they fail to bear the agony and harassment, both physical and mental. Female domestic workers are also brutally tortured by their employers.

The situation is getting worse day by day, as we have seen that even a young girl of six years of age can become the victim of a brutal rape case. On the other hand, sexual harassment in the name of love or simple friendship has increased a lot too.

The time has come to say no to all these practices. And that is possible only by making our girls independent. When a girl feels that her life is dominated by the male figures of the family, surely, she can't live an independent life. And this “parasite” form of living is a sheer wastage of her true potential. It is high time to ask ourselves how, and in what way, do we really want to save our girls? Otherwise, they will have to suffer in the long run.

Rifat Munir Eti
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

BCL activists on a rampage!

A group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists has been playing the role of thugs since the quota reformation movement began. They have repeatedly attempted different ways to foil this legitimate, peaceful protest. But due to having strength in unity amongst protesters and joint conveners, BCL members have failed to foil this well-supported people's movement. Even amidst rampant violence and intimidation by BCL activist-leaders, the movement has been successful, leading to the Prime Minister's decision to abolish quotas in civil service jobs.

Yet, BCL activists viciously attacked demonstrators and joint-conveners who were preparing to hold the prescheduled press conference in front of DU Central Library building. The joint conveners who were at the forefront of this movement were being assaulted by BCL activists and are allegedly detained by law enforcers.

However, our constitution reads: “Every citizen should have constitutional right where they can assemble and participate in public meetings and processions peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of public order or public health.”



PHOTO: STAR FILE

So, it is raising some questions that there is discontent and headaches at the demonstrators and joint convener leaders. Who has given the right to BCL to impede this peaceful, prescheduled press conference by force?

Shame on our law enforcers who are supposed to play constructive role in holding this peaceful, unarmed, meeting. The role of law enforcement agencies in this regard has disappointed us. According to *The Daily Star* and other media houses, duty police members were seen leaving the spot just before the BCL attacked on the quota reform activists at Central Shaheed Minar.

Needless to say, the BCL activists have become unbridled which is why they dare to repeatedly attack on the protesters and joint conveners. It would however be a mistake to think that the latest incident has been committed by their own volition. Bangladesh Chhatra League activists, and others behind them, who attacked the demonstrators should be held accountable. We should try to come up with a meaningful resolution of the quota system in public service recruitment. Md Abul Khaer Govt Saadat University College Tangail



PHOTO: PAHN CHAKMA

“People speak sometimes about the ‘bestial’ cruelty of man, but that is terribly unjust and offensive to beasts, no animal could ever be so cruel as a man, so artfully, so artistically cruel.” — *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*

SNAPSHOT

OPINION

In Maharashtra of India, 33 people were killed in a road accident, but do they talk about it like the way we do? Whenever something happens in Bangladesh, no matter how insignificant it is, everybody makes a fuss,” commented Bangladesh's shipping minister Shajahan Khan, who is also the executive president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation. The minister made this remark, laughing, at a press conference while Dia Khanam and Abdul Karim, students of 11th and 12th grade respectively of Shaheed Ramizuddin Cantonment College, were being buried by their distressed family members. The two high schoolers were run over by a bus at Dhaka's Airport road on July 29, 2018. Throughout the conference, he kept addressing this ruthless act of murder as an “accident” although it was far from it—the bus driver unlawfully overtook another parked vehicle at full speed and knocked down the students waiting on the footpath for transport.

Deaths caused by reckless driving of buses are not uncommon in Dhaka



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

HOSTAGE IN OUR OWN COUNTRY?

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

city—the have become the norm. Last week, a bus driver and his helper injured North South University student Saidur Rahman Payel in a freak accident, and then threw him in a canal to kill him. Just a couple of months ago, on April 4, Rajib, a student of Titumir College, was severely injured and later pronounced dead, when a bus tried to overtake another and knocked Rajib down, detaching one of his limbs from his body. Just two days later, on April 6, another double-decker bus ran over a teenage girl called Rozina Akhter and killed her. All these are old news now; but the question is, why is our government—which is powerful enough

to subdue all of its political opposition—fails to control unruly transport workers? Who all are giving bus workers the indemnity to break all the traffic rules and kill people on the streets?

Obaidul Quader, Minister for Road Transport and Bridges, partially answered this question last year, when Dhaka's bus owners made the headlines for increasing fares up to two to three times its initial price, causing public outrage. Quader, upon failing to stop the fare increase, remarked, “Bus owners are not ordinary people. They are very influential and powerful. They don't respond to our call for meetings.”

Who are these all-powerful bus owners who can dare to defy the government's call? Not surprisingly, some of the transport owners are also policymakers of the current government.



Several of them run the companies using their friends and family members' names. For instance, Jabale Nur, the bus that killed the two students at Dhaka's Airport Road, is owned by Nannu Mia, the brother-in-law of Shipping Minister, Shajahan Khan, the same person who laughed upon hearing about the deaths. Khan's brother, Hafizur Rahman Khan, also owns a bus company called Kanak Paribahan which operates in Dhaka's Gabtoli-Mirpur-Abdullahpur route. Another bus operating the Mirpur-

Jatrabari route named Shikhor Paribahan is run by Mahmud Hossain, who is known as the right-hand man of Shajahan Khan. In fact, in 2009, when the bus got its route permit, the launching ceremony of the company was chaired by Shajahan Khan's wife.

Bihongo Paribahan, which killed two students in 2014 and three people in 2017, is still operating. This company is owned by current Awami League lawmaker, Pankaj Debnath. Another bus

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