

DU incidents

Violence and education cannot go together

CAMPUS violence, which never quite took leave of Dhaka University, manifested itself in a rabid form once more on Thursday. The supporters of the JCD, the student front of the ruling party, pounced on the BCL supporters, leaving at least 50 of them injured. It was the kind of highhandedness that the well meaning always opposed as the root cause behind things going awfully wrong in the academic arena.

The JCD supporters also assaulted the university correspondent of The Daily Star -- again an inexplicable wreaking of wrath on a wrong target. The journalist was simply discharging his professional duties when he came under the JCD attack. It was far from an attack on an individual and was indicative of the general mood of the JCD activists apparently ready to go to any length to muzzle the press. How else could it be explained?

Now, there are those, and their number is pretty large, who might not be interested in the political intricacies of the issue. But their stake in it is still very high. The general students and their guardians can only feel upset when the university turns into a hotbed of violent student politics. Nobody wants the highest seat of learning to degenerate into a place for show of muscle power. This intractable politicisation of a sacred institution having a glorious past is most undesirable.

There are, however, some developments that might bring a modicum of relief to all and sundry. First, the university authorities have formed two committees to investigate the incidents that took place on Thursday. Obviously, the attacks on the BCL supporters and a pressman could only bring disgrace to the university, still struggling to erase the rankling memories of the bloody clashes between rival groups that cost several lives in the last two decades or so. Second, the JCD general secretary has promised disciplinary action against the unruly elements that attacked the Star correspondent. We hope his words will be translated into tangible action.

Elimination of rowdism from the campus is needed not only to forge a tolerant political culture, but also to make sure that the academic atmosphere on the campus is not spoiled by raucous activities on the part of highly politicised groups of students and, regrettably enough, outsiders.

Tapping tourism

The industry could help boost our economy

THE suggestion made by the Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka, Matsushiro Horiguchi to tap our tourism industry for facilitating foreign investment, we think, should be taken quite seriously. In fact we agree with him in saying that tourism indeed 'could be a powerful engine for economic growth'. It would not only create new employment, but also be a considerable source of earning foreign currency. We welcome such keen interest shown by Mr. Horiguchi in our tourism industry.

Mr Horiguchi emphasised on the development of our domestic tourism. Needless to say, culturally rich and attractive sites like the Sundarbans, Paharpur, Cox's Bazar beach etc remain as unattractive as ever. There are some initiatives both in the private and the government sector to lure people to the spots, but they are hardly satisfactory. Lack of security, traffic discipline and most importantly tourist friendly arrangements have largely contributed to the disinterest in domestic travelling. Though recently domestic travelling has been witnessing a boost especially during the long holiday periods, stories of tourists facing innumerable problems are also abound. Here the government as well as the private sector could play the most vital role.

If the domestic tourism could be improved, the infrastructure would automatically improve too, encouraging the foreign tourists to visit Bangladesh more. Not only that, foreign investors would then see the potential in our tourism sector and probably show more interest to tap the market. In this respect the government should give special attention to those who want to invest in this particular sector. We don't have to go far for success stories. Tourism in our neighbours like India and Thailand have been contributing significantly in their economic growths. Similarly our historical and cultural heritage along with the natural beauty should not get wasted. First of all we have to project a tourism friendly image to the outside world, secondly we have to provide security and all the facilities a tourist requires and lastly it's time we gave it a serious thought that a boom in the tourism industry could also boost our economy to a greater strength.

Netrokona-3 by-elections : A decade after 'Magura'



NAZIM KAMRAN CHOUDHURY

IN 1994, the BNP had been in power for about three years. The party was a surprise winner of the 1991 general elections and its performance in governance thus far, could at best, be described as naive. In that year, the death of Advocate Md Asaduzzaman, MP for Magura 2, resulted in a by-election to that parliamentary seat. Asaduzzaman was a leader of the Awami League, and had won the seat for his party in the general elections of 1979, 1986 and 1991. In his last election, he got 43.63 per cent of the votes against 23.05 per cent for his nearest rival, Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Majidul Huq of the BNP. In the ensuing by-election, the BNP decided to pull out all stops in its campaign for its candidate Kazi Salimul Hoque, who won with 50.68 per cent of the votes against 27.41 per cent for the AL candidate, Safiquzzaman Bacchu. There were allegations of wide spread vote rigging, and even the then Chief Election Commissioner left the district in a huff. The opposition combined forces and demanded the formation of a caretaker government for future elections. The country faced two years of civil unrest until the BNP was forced, in 1996, to amend the Constitution to allow for a caretaker government. General elections followed and the Magura-2 seat was won back by the Awami League with nearly 40 per cent of the votes cast. The nation has yet to recover from the confrontational politics that resulted from two years of opposition movement, and the "Janatar Mancha", which was the culmination, has divided our bureaucracy to this day.

A decade after the Magura by-election, we do not seem to have learned any lessons. The BNP has returned to power without seeming to be any wiser. The naivety of its first term seems to be replaced by sheer incompetence of the second. The Awami League, back in opposition, has not toned down its shrill voice of finding conspiracy in everything.

Against this backdrop we have another by-election, this time in Netrokona-3. This seat is one of the 90 in Dhaka Division, which I term as the heartland of Bangladesh electoral politics. In this area, the BNP and AL are almost neck to neck, and a mere 4 to 5 per cent vote swing can result in more than 30 seats changing hands. For instance, in the 1991 elections, the BNP got 56 of the 90

seats while AL got 29. In 1996, with a (-3.31%) vote swing, the BNP lost 31 seats while gaining five to bring down their total to 30. With a +5.56 per cent vote swing the AL lost five, retained 24 and won 35 new seats to take their total to 59. In other words, BNP's net loss was 26 seats while AL's net gain was 30. In the 2001 elections, both BNP and AL gained in the number of votes won at the cost of other parties. The BNP vote share went from 35.13 per cent to 42.66 per cent (+11.28% vote swing) and their tally went to 56 seats, ending with a tally of 31. However, if you leave out Greater Faridpur District (16 seats) BNP's vote in the rest of Dhaka Division (74 seats) was 45.56 per cent to AL's 42.77 per cent. In other words, with a net positive vote swing of less than 3

actual number of votes cast increased by 48,210, as there were about 60,000 new voters on the list. The combined votes of BNP and AL in 1991 were 77.81 per cent. It increased to 86.39 per cent in 1996 and a staggering 97.36 per cent in 2001. It is interesting to see how the gap closes. In 1996, the increase in the total number of votes cast was 38,370. BNP increased its vote by 25,966 while AL increased by 16,920. BNP got 9,046 more than AL in its share of the increased votes. In 2001, the total number of voters in the constituency increased by 60,432, and the number of votes cast by 48,221. The BNP got 32,763 more votes while AL got 30,932 more votes. (The additional votes came from increased vote share). This year, the difference between BNP and AL in the increased votes narrowed to 1,831. Though the difference between BNP and AL in the

single party, it is a formidable vote bank. The increase in AL's vote share must have come from a greater share of the new younger voters that became eligible to vote in the 2001 elections. Otherwise, if the new voters had voted in the same proportions as before, the BNP+Alliance vote percentage would have crossed 53 per cent range as a national average. What is actually the present BNP+Alliance arithmetic? For all practical and electoral purposes, the alliance comprises BNP and Jamaat-I-Islami. The question now is what does JI bring to the table. In 1991, the JI got 12.13 per cent of the vote. In 1996 their vote share dropped to 8.61 per cent. But this alone does not tell the whole story. A full 67 per cent of the 1996 JI vote (or 5.77% of the national) was in Rajshahi Division (41.43%) having 72 seats and Khulna Division (25.80%) having 37 seats. In rest of the 191 seats, the JI

has done a lot to keep a section of our politically more religiously inclined populace under its umbrella. There is a recent trend for many such people to drift towards more extreme parties due to both national and international politics. No nation is an island and neither are we. The other members of the BNP alliance has little to contribute anywhere. Had the BNP nurtured JP (Nazim), it might have been a platform for some elements that, if critical of BNP, are not ready to switch to AL. However, this no longer seems relevant. Returning again to facts, this by-election will be straight fight between BNP's Khadija Amin, widow of late Nurul Amin Talukdar and the old warhorse, Jubaidul Ali AL. Jubaidul Ali, an advocate who still practices law in Mymensingh, hails from Kendua Upazila which has 12 Union Parishads. The late Nurul Amin Talukdar, a retired police officer

as voters will judge them by their performance. If a section of the voters are dissatisfied with the performance of the Government, there are two courses open to them. One is to vote for the opposition, and the other is not to vote at all. In either case, the benefit will accrue to AL. A voter turnout of 65 per cent or less will almost surely mean an AL victory. A turnout of 70 per cent will be a close fight, and a higher turnout will bode well for the BNP. Both BNP and AL must approach this election with caution. They must trust the voter. With the question of uncertainty of future caretaker governments, the BNP government has an added responsibility. Not only must it ensure that the election is fair, but that it is seen to be fair. It must reign in loose cannons and aid the Election Commission in every way that the Constitution provides for. It must ask its Ministers to follow, and to be seen to be following, all EC guidelines. The BNP should not approach the election as a prestige issue, but rather as a verdict on its performance. If they win, they can take it that their performance has not been as bad as some people may think. If they lose, they should take it as a wake up call, examine the reasons why they lost, and rectify their policies so that they perform better in the more crucial elections to come.

The most important role in this election is that of the Election Commission. The voting patterns of the A decade after the Magura by-election, we do not seem to have learned any lessons. The BNP has returned to power without seeming to be any wiser. The naivety of its first term seems to be replaced by sheer incompetence of the second. The Awami League, back in opposition, has not toned down its shrill voice of finding conspiracy in everything.

per cent, BNP won 26 extra seats while AL lost 28 seats. Netrokona district is a model of the seesaw change. It has four Jatiya Sangsad seats. In 1986, AL won three to one for the JP (E). In 1991 BNP won three to AL's one. In 1996 the AL won back three seats to one for BNP. The tables again turned in 2001, with BNP getting three seats and AL one. The neighbouring seats are similarly distributed. Mymensingh-3 is held by Mujibur Rahman Fakir of AL (margin 6,028), Mymensingh-8 is held by Shah Nurul Kabir of BNP (margin 10,274), Mymensingh-9 by Khurram Khan Chowdhury of BNP (margin 7,835), Kishoreganj-4 by Md Osman Faruk of BNP (margin 1,124), Netrokona-4 by Md Luttfuzzaman Babar of BNP (margin 3,851) and Netrokona-2 by Abdul Momin of AL (margin 7,390).

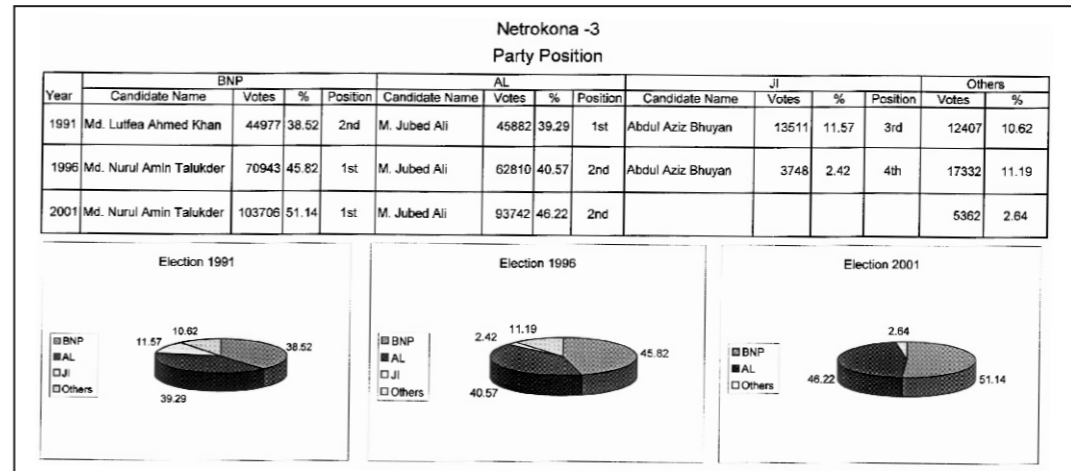
Netrokona-3 is an interesting constituency as it reflects the present trend towards a two-party system. The present AL candidate, M Jubed Ali won this seat in 1986 with 32.30 per cent of the votes against his main JP (E) rival. He retained the seat in 1991, getting 39.29 per cent votes, while his nearest rival, Md Lutfeza Ahmed Khan of the BNP got 38.52 per cent. The percentage of votes cast in 1991 was 50.40. In 1996, the percentage of votes cast increased to 74.92 and Jubed Ali increased his vote share to 40.57 per cent. However, Md Nurul Amin Talukdar of BNP, contrary to the general trend, defeated him by getting 45.82 per cent of the votes. Mr Talukdar retained the seat in 2001 by getting 51.14 per cent votes against 46.22 per cent for Mr Jubed Ali. The percentage of the votes cast rose marginally to 75.92 per cent, but the

total votes secured in 2001 remained in the 1996 range of around 9,000, the proportionate share of AL was more. The significance of this is that while BNP's gain can be partly attributed to its alliance partners (the JP+JI total for 1996 was 12.53%), AL's gain has to have come from new voters. The question that now begs to be asked is will the BNP+Alliance arithmetic of 2001 work again? A lot of factors have changed. After the last elections, in an article in The Daily Star, I admitted that though I had most of my predictions right, I had made one very big miscalculation. I had not expected AL to increase its overall vote share. My guess at that time was that the AL vote share would hover at the 36 per cent to 37 per cent mark. The fact that AL has increased its vote share to 41 per cent mark changes all future calculations. As a

national average is less than 3 per cent. There is not much it can offer in the Dhaka Division. We do not know if the JI has increased or decreased its popular base. Here I can only offer conjecture. A party that does not participate in elections cannot hold on to its vote base. The "Scale" symbol has not been seen in 169 constituencies for the last seven years. Its voter base was already on a decline and there is no tangible reason to think that the course has reversed. Contrary to popular perception, I think the fact that the JI is a part of the Government has cost them dearly. They have to take the responsibility of governance without really being a part of the process. There is very little for them to offer their supporters, leave alone any reason to attract new ones. This is, in a way, rather sad. All said and done, the JI is a democratic party and

turned businessman was from Atpara Upazila which has seven Unions. Khadija Amin is originally from Faridpur. While the AL will be banking on its core support base, the BNP will try to arouse sympathy votes for the widow. Among the other contestants is Osman Ali Khan. He contested in 1986 in the hayday of JP (E) as its candidate, and got 8,484 votes. He again contested in 1996 as a candidate of Samridhya Bangladesh Andolon (Fish) and got 741 votes. Abdul Ali is another candidate from JP (Monju). In 2001 he got 629 votes. Abu Jafor Sabet of KJSJ also contested in 2001 getting 462 votes. With BNP and AL sharing almost 98 per cent of the votes, the election will be decided on the voter's perception of the performance of the parties. The BNP vote share is at its peak. It is difficult for an incumbent government to maintain its vote base at that level,

For the AL, a victory should not mean a no-confidence in the government, but merely a message to it to put its acts together. A defeat, provided the elections are seen to be fair, means that they still have to go the extra mile to convince voters to give them another shot at government. The most important role in this election is that of the Election Commission. The voting patterns of the constituency will guide them as to how to ensure fairness. They should examine vote centre wise voting patterns. This is the DNA of the constituency. Sensitive or venerable centres can easily identified, and precautions taken. If complaints are received of irregularities in any centre, and the vote swing is 10 per cent or more, the issue should be examined urgently and if necessary, re-polling should take place. If the services of the Army are called for, the officers concerned should be fully briefed on the history of the constituency, and their responsibilities in ensuring fairness. The Chief Election Commissioner and his colleagues in the EC have demonstrated in the 2001 general elections that they are fully capable of carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to them. Let not the faith that the people have reposed in this institution be again shaken. Let us not have another Magura as it will further destroy an already battered nation.



Nazim Kamran Choudhury is a renowned election analyst and businessman

Japan's search for a non-combat zone in Iraq

MONZURUL HUQ writes from Tokyo

JAPAN is desperate to join the invasion in Iraq and there is no hiding in Tokyo's ambition to become part of a new axis of 'non-evils' that the Japanese leadership sees as the driving force in an uncertain world of the near future. Amid sharply divided opinion within the country's political circle, the Diet has already passed a bill allowing the powerful Japanese army under the disguise of a non-evil name of self-defence forces to be deployed in Iraq. However there is nothing clear yet about the future of the country (Iraq) or that of the invading forces of the 'non-evils'. It is interesting to note that the bill has been passed in the Diet with the active support of a political party preaching loudly the teachings of Bhagaban Buddha, the supreme proponent of the idea of self-sacrifice and non-violence. It, therefore, seems natural everywhere that when politics gets mixed-up with religion, both lose their respective position of respect and restraint.

For more than a decade Japan has been seen drifting slowly away from its post World War II pacifist position towards a more hawkish standing in international politics. It is true that Tokyo came under barrage of criticisms in 1991 for not joining the broader coalition of the first Gulf War by contributing troops. Japan was at that time still following strictly the principles that call for denouncing war and avoiding any military involvement outside its borders. Such principles, enshrined in country's war renouncing constitution, are still considered to be valid as there was no amendment to the article 9 that specifies the rejection of war or any preparation related to armed conflict overseas.

But politicians everywhere try to find out ways to overcome any obstacle that they might come across in their pursuit of reaching a specific goal. Here, in by-passing the constitutional bindings, the goal for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was to join the Bush-Blair axis at a time when Tokyo's closest ally has mostly been isolated in international politics and facing criticism at home for cheating the public by providing fictitious information about the threat

that Iraq was posing. No doubt, the loud-voiced Buddhists and pacifists were happy to vote in favour of a bill that in all account counters the teachings of Buddha but helped Koizumi to save his face for the time being by not letting down his friends at the hour of their need. Japan's re-emerging desire to be a military power capable of reaching distant corners of the globe was first publicly displayed in early 1990s, soon after the first Gulf War. During the post World War II period the first Japanese deployment of troops overseas was in Mozambique, where self-defence forces personnel were sent to help the country solve its internal conflicts. This was quickly followed by Tokyo's involvement in UN peacekeeping operations in Cambodia, Zaire, Golan Heights and

that reminds many of Winston Churchill's infamous saying -- the 'white man's burden'. Japan, after all, is a country of the yellow race and this might help the new axis to dilute its image of being carrying a colonial burden of the past on its shoulder. The new law also specifies that the Japanese self defence forces personnel are to be deployed only in non-combat zones in Iraq and initially they will be involved only in humanitarian and reconstruction work rather than providing logistic support to US troops. The changes in tone of the law is mostly to convince the nervous public who, amid the non-stop counting of body bags of US military personnel, are expressing increasing uneasiness over the deployment of Japanese troops in Iraq. Bowing to the public pressure, the Japanese

of a wife of a would be deployed Japanese military personnel with the prime minister. Replying to the queries of the worried wife about the areas in Iraq where fighting was going on and where not, the prime minister simply replied that she couldn't expect him to answer that question. In reply the wife asked the prime minister a second question: 'where will you send the contingent when you can't identify a non-combat zone?' The whole of Japan like the fictitious wife of the defence forces personnel is now anxiously waiting for an answer to this second question from the prime minister. A convincing reply is yet to come.

In fact the Japanese officials themselves are puzzled on the location of country's contingent in Iraq. Japan initially proposed to the US the idea guarding a number of airports including that of Baghdad. But the US is in no mood to hand over responsibilities of what it considers strategically important sites to outsiders. Instead, Washington proposed that Japanese soldiers should be stationed in Balad, a place where US troops are coming under repeated attacks in recent days. The proposal no doubt came as a horror to the Japanese officials and they are now saying that it might take a little longer to decide the location for troops deployment, and also to identify what specific duties Japanese soldiers are supposed to perform.

Such recent twist and turn of events have compelled even hawks in Japan to take a cautious standing concerning the location where Japanese soldiers are to be deployed. They too are obviously not at ease with the prospect of sending young self-defence forces personnel with no combat experience at all to a deadly trap like Balad. The defence agency chief Shigeru Ishiba, known for his hawkish standing, has indicated that it might not become possible for Japan to send its troops to Iraq before November. And if no non-combat zone in Iraq is located beyond that date, there is every possibility that the burden might remain on the shoulders of white man for a much more longer period.

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East Timor. But in all such previous occasions, despite criticism at home and in neighbouring countries that saw a re-militarized Japan, in whatever form the process evolved, as a threat to their own security, the UN umbrella gave a tacit legitimacy to the act of by-passing country's pacifist constitution. But the new law that has been enacted a week ago is different in a sense. It doesn't mention at all the necessity to obtain approval from a collective world body before Japanese troops are to be deployed in distant territories. With the law in hand, Koizumi and his trusted advisers are now poised to send Japanese soldiers to Iraq with the overt intention of helping the process of rehabilitation and rebuilding of the country.

But there remains a small obstacle before the ambitious Japanese leadership would be able to satisfy its own desire of helping the axis of non-evils, to extend its present proximity

government now appears to be seeking less hazardous mission for its troops. According to the original plan, they were supposed to maintain the supply of water and ammunition and filling other logistic needs for US and other soldiers in Iraq. Koizumi now has to convince Washington to accept this new idea and analysts find it not to be an easy task for the Japanese leader. Moreover, it is not yet clear where the Japanese troops are to be deployed in Iraq. The new law forbids their deployment in any combat zone. Critics of the law, who earlier opposed the passage of the bill, are now voicing their concern that since the whole of Iraq has turned into a combat zone with the mounting casualties on US side, sending troops anywhere in Iraq would be a gross violation of the new law.

Japan's popular daily *Asahi Shimbun* in one of its latest issues has published a fictitious conversa-

Lest we forget

Abu Sayeed Chaudhury
Unsung hero of liberation war

FAZLUL QUADER QUADERI



TODAY is the 15th death anniversary of the first constitutional President of Bangladesh Justice Abu Sayeed Chaudhury. Would it be an exaggeration to say that his name seems washed off from our mind? Should no effort be made to recall his contribution to the Bangladesh War of Liberation? Shouldn't we, the so-called professionals, intellectuals, writers, journalists, poets, historians and politicians evaluate the courageous role played by him during those days of nightmares in 1971?

Justice Abu Sayeed Chaudhury's historic contribution to the cause of Bangladesh will always shine like the 'Pole Star' in the political horizon of Bangladesh. Nobody can deny it and undermine his historic role during those perilous days of our national life. He was the first man to have sent a letter to the then Education Secretary of Pakistan saying, "There is no point in my continuing as the Vice-Chancellor of the Dhaka University any longer after the shooting of my unarmed students. My dead body will lie in London street, rather than I compromise with Pakistan."

He was also the first person to unfurl the National Flag of Bangladesh at Hyde Park in London in April 1971. He also inaugurated for the first time the exhibition of stamps for independent Bangladesh designed by Amiya Taraider, an Indian national. All these are facts and will always remain as history. If there arises any confusion, the 'News Week' of 16th April 1971 may be seen. Justice Chaudhury moved heaven and earth, ran from pillar to post to mobilise world opinion in favour of the just cause of Bangladesh. His endeavour to win the confidence of 270 members of the British Parliament was no easy a job. It was the turning point in history in favour of Bangladesh War of Liberation. His press conference in Geneva will remain as a milestone in his onerous task for the War of Liberation. His famous speech which was published in the Sunday Times under the heading "Genesis of Holocaust" is a burning example of his invaluable contribution to the cause of Bangla-

desh. He was made the first Constitutional President of Bangladesh not because of any fear or favour. Banga Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman realised the truth, appreciated the work done by him and thus chose the right man in right time. Justice Chaudhury earned both name and fame for the country as head of the state. A man of his status with profound background was quite befitting for the post. He contributed to the framing of Constitution of 1972. He represented Bangladesh at different international forum. One such was his representation at WHO seminar in 1975 in Geneva. He was, because of his quality of head and heart, elected Chairman of Commission on Human Rights in United Nations in 1985. He was the judge of Dhaka High Court, Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, Chairman of Bangali Development Board. He was President of the country at national level, while at international level, he was representative of the country at the UNO; Chairman of Commission on Human Rights in Geneva as a well known jurist. All these were possible for his dignity, honesty, belief and firm courage of conviction. Justice Chaudhury was an unparalleled example of humanism, with fathomless knowledge in history and literature. Mr Sidharta Sankar Roy, the former Chief Minister of West Bengal and ex-Governor of Punjab, hearing the sudden news of his sad demise, wrote a letter to Mrs. Chaudhury saying: "Shahjahan was one of our brightest jewels. God has taken him away. My prayer is that when the time comes for me to part too, I may be able to see him again."

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Communicative English: A failure

I have carefully read the letter of Mr. Zahid Akter published on July 13, 2003 on Daily Star, written in response to Dr. Alam's letter titled "Communicative English: A failure" published on July 07. Dr. Alam mentioned in his letter that 'students are not eager to learn grammatical rules'. Needless to say, Mr. Zahid Akter have failed to make out the

"not eager to learn grammatical rules." Students simply don't show any interest to learn grammar because they are not asked any grammatical questions in the exams. I believe they would certainly show eagerness in learning grammar if they have to answer more grammatical questions in the SSC and HSC exams. It is a fact that students do well when they are asked to answer questions on passages or as such because they

can form ideas, though vaguely, from the given passages. So, they prefer to answer such type of questions more. But when they are asked to write a correct statement, most of them fail to do so as they don't know how to arrange words in proper sequence to build a complete sentence. When they write a composition it is usually full of grammatical mistakes. It is because they don't know how to arrange words in proper order to build up a grammati-

cally correct sentence. Therefore, it appears that to encourage communicative English means encouraging students to learn incorrect English, which in my opinion is of no value. Mr. Zahid Akter has expressed a very well-thought observation in his letter, that "such approach (communicative English) may prove to be ineffective if the teachers are not well-trained and creative enough." Actually the problem lies there, in many-schools

and colleges in village and local towns, especially in the non-government ones, there are no English teachers, let alone well-trained and creative teachers. So who will teach such complicated communicative English courses to the helpless village-students? Mr. Zahid Akter, at one point in his letter, said, "we do not remember students coming out with good English through that time-tested method," which is according to him,

rather time worn. It is not clear enough what he actually meant by this sentence, but it can be said strongly that hundreds of prominent English scholars came out through that old system of English teaching. Even Mr. Zahid Akter himself, was perhaps taught English in that old method which is never timeworn as he believes, rather truly time-tested as Dr. Alam believes. **Md. Momin Uddin Bablu** Piaratola, Kushiha Zoo

Where were they? This is response to Mr. Sengupta's letter (July 30, Saddam, s sons...) This is between two nations at war, war happens between enemies. Isn't this quite grey area where international laws aren't very clearly defined all the times? Seems like all the Islamic nations and their newspapers are quite sad at the turn of events, but when were they supportive of USA anyway? What were the

Islamic nations doing when in 1971 Pak militia butchered 3 million Bangladeshes? Were they sleeping then? Suddenly 2 vip lives warrant so much newspaper space but how about the 3 million who perished in 1971? How much space did the Islamic newspapers dedicate for that? **Rahul** On e-mail