

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.

Politics of naming infrastructure is scandalous

Mr. Wahid Shafi's letter (DS Oct.29) on the name of the national stadium is drawing public attention. He posed a question "whether the commentators were asked by the authorities to refrain from calling it 'BNS'". He is wrong (not about the involvement of the authorities but about the way it was re-named); because it was never accepted as BNS as the Stadium was popularly known as 'DNS' (Dhaka National Stadium). The trend in this country to change names or impose some names on the landmark sites or structures or institutions is very common, especially with the change of government. This is not desirable at all and should be condemned.

Recall how the names of the PG Hospital, Jamuna bridge, Niaz Stadium (Chittagong) etc., have been changed to new names. The first two were named after Shaikh Mujib and the latter after a local Awami leader's name who has little popular support. Efforts are afoot to name the intersection of Panthopath and Road 32 of DRA as Russel square.

We've seen how disgracefully the sign of BBSMUH was replaced by the PG Hospital and BB bridge by Jamuna Bridge --the common names popular with the people.

So, let's call a spade a spade and let's not try to impose some names only to disgrace the leaders at a later stage. Better yet not add up some one's name with the already popular 'national structures.' They better be left with their 'national nomenclature' without any individual's signature on them.

AF Rahman
Dhaka

Is Bush an egoist?

Like all human beings, leaders too have their egos. How do we know who has ego only but not the super ego that comes from principle? That is to be seen in their perception of themselves and of others, and in what they say and do. An egoist has insatiable love for power and wealth; believes in invincibility; wants others to follow his commands; and events to occur, as he desires. His only anxiety lies in the fulfilment of his wishes, no matter right or wrong. To find a super egoist, we can look into the persona of President Bush.

It all began with war on terror. Before pounding and blasting Afghanistan, President George W. Bush declared to the world community that the nations unwilling to join his war on terror would be considered as having taken stands against him. Israel, the American watchdog in the Middle East, is playing havoc in Palestine and beyond with overt and covert supports from President Bush.

Bush is als for regime change in countries where the governments defy his authority, especially in the developing and Muslim countries. Hardly he is able to see reasons in others opposing him on any issue. He does not find it obligatory to abide by the UN

Resolutions if those do sync with his mission in hand. It is obvious that President Bush has antipathy, just as his father Sr. Bush had, for Bin Laden and President Saddam Hussein. Lately, he has turned vocal against some other countries, namely Syria, Iran and North Korea. May be he is thinking of a regime changes in those countries too.

Thousands of innocent men, women and children in Afghanistan and Iraq were victims of his dual- doctrine, war on terror and regime change. Yet he finds no reason to feel sorry for what he has done and is doing to this world and the humanity at large. It therefore seems befitting to say that Mr. Bush is a perfect egoist.

Moni Khan
Dhania, Dhaka

Bush kills three birds with one shot

After the recent waves of attacks in Iraq, US is spreading more lies; saying the attackers are from Syria and Iran. Well, if that is the case then why the so-called coalition forces do not petrol the borders

some assistance from Iraq's neighbours. But why should Iraq's neighbours help?

Look at the language used by Bush. "We are working closely with those countries to let them know we expect them to enforce borders" he said recently. You "expect," Mr Bush, everyone to do what you wish while your guns are aiming at their very existence? What do you think all those Syrian and Iranian people are? After the amount of lies you have told us, the only thing you can expect from us is a fair trial at the Hague, if not a massive slaughter of your troops in the streets of Iraq and Afghanistan.

If you want peoples' help, you ask them politely, you don't order them. In case you are day-dreaming, let me inform you, that as much as some of your neo-cons and anti-Muslim extremists may dream of creating an American empire, your dream is dead in the desert.

Bush is not interested in fighting terrorism. Instead, he is busy using terrorism to serve his Zionist masters. By putting the blame

list of his priorities. This "farce on terrorism" (some call it war on terrorism) is not what it sounds like. It would be dangerous to let Bush and Blair fool us again. Bush is trying just to achieve three goals with one operation.

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

Mayor must mend the roads

The condition of the roads in Dhaka is tragic. There is not even a single road to allow smooth driving. Most of the roads are broken, damaged, misused, and full of unauthorised constructions. One main reason is the faulty construction at the very beginning.

The surface of the roads is so damaged that one must blame the construction work itself first for the misery.

Even roads in Gulshan, Baridhara, Banani, are not useable either. It needs immediate attention. It's just a matter of overlay and little bit of maintenance. The way the roads are broken, none can drive safely. Cars are getting damaged and

tivity suffers.

It also becomes a matter of utter disappointment if an appointment is made and not attended in right time, due to terrible traffic jam.

Therefore, I would urge the Mayor to at least make a budget to over lay the damaged roads of Dhaka city immediately during this dry season by reputed contractor. Even if it costs more, contractors must provide warranties for 10 years of satisfaction.

M Haider Uzzaman
Onmail

FTA's pros and cons

Bangladesh is going to sign FTA with India very shortly. Well, if Bangladesh can sign this deal with India pragmatically, its economy will be boosted. But Bangladesh has a huge trade imbalance with India. Trade gap should be reduced to maximise the benefits of the FTA regime. Bangladesh needs to study the pros and cons of the FTA from a purely economic vantage, if the aim is to reduce trade deficits by enhancing the volume of trade. As well, informal trade should be marginalised. I hope Bangladesh government would be savvy enough to kick off FTA with India soon with that mindset.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen
Dept of English
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Mahathir's legacy

Hats off to Dr. Mahathir, who ruled Malaysia for 22 long years as the prime minister. But for his bold and courageous leadership, Malaysia would not be what it is today.

When it has become a normal practice among the Muslim leaders to remain in power by any means and rule their countries by unleashing brutal forces, Dr. Mahathir set a golden example by voluntarily relinquishing power. It will be better for the Muslim world in general and for Bangladesh in particular if our leaders follow this noble example.

Iqbal Ahmed
Dhaka

A laudable editorial

I was relieved to read your comments in the editorial on the burning car incident on Wednesday, 29th October. The piece deserves strong recommendation and praise. Thank goodness you have condemned the act committed by those hotheads. I only wish that more of us had written in condemnation of their cowardly act.

If it were an accident, get the girl to the hospital and send the driver to police.

Take the licence plate number and name of employer/owner of the car - let justice prevail. Such barbaric behaviour committed by a small group of hot-headed youths can only be condemned as an insult to our society.

However, whilst we all stand by and watch such incidents being unfolded before our very eyes and take no action, we can only blame ourselves for not having any civic pride.

Jill Chowdhury
One-mail



Mahathir and our Ottawa reader

The DS's Canadian reader from Ottawa, Mr. Mahmood Elahi, likened Mahathir Mohamed to Hitler in his letter of 29th Oct, 03. Instead of praising a rising star in the dark sky of the Muslim world, Mr. Elahi goes about criticising the domestic failures of Malaysia, which has no relevance to what was spoken at the OIC summit by Dr. Mahathir.

Fail to understand what he meant by saying "He is trying to find a scapegoat for his own failures." Does Mr. Elahi mean to say that the Malaysian PM was telling his audience and the world that the Jews were the cause of his domestic failures and he found a scapegoat in them? If he did, then it is completely and outrageously out of context.

That is exactly what this Muslim leader wanted to expose when he said that the Jews now rule the world by proxy. People like Elahi; if he is at all a Muslim, speak on their behalf by proxy even if it is completely out of context. The widespread criticism from the Jews and the Western world goes to prove how right this Muslim leader was. And, the out of proportion reaction of the non-Muslim leaders, lead by G. W. Bush, goes to prove that the Jews indeed control the world by proxy.

The war against terror has virtually degenerated into a Crusade against Muslims and it is conceived by many in the USA as a war against Islam. Then again, is it acceptable to make bigoted and offensive comments as long as they are anti-Muslim and not anti-Semitic?

Mr. Elahi and his likes must note that Mahathir might have derided the Jews who rule the world by proxy, but he did not go to the extent to pour in scorns on their religion. Nor did he accuse them of worshipping a false God like the ignorant deputy under the secretary of defence for intelligence in the US, Lt. Gen W. Boykin, did with respect to Somali Muslims.

None in the non-Muslim world raised a voice against so many offensive anti-Muslim comments made by countless stalwarts of the Western society. Some even declared that "Satan wants to destroy the USA as a nation and wants to destroy us as a Christian army." Mr. Elahi should also note that Mahathir did not condone suicide bombers, but, quite to the contrary, he advised Muslims to disassociate from such self-abnegation and excel in science and enlightenment to revive their lost glory.

This was the essence of his splendid speech and not about the Jews ruling the world by proxy, which in fact is true. Picking at Mahathir's domestic failures at this stage by a Muslim would not only be out of context but a shame for the Muslim community.

Mahmoodul Haque
One-mail

Likening Mahathir with Hitler is inexcusable

It was indeed bizarre to find a letter published in your esteemed daily, captioned as 'On Mahathir and Hitler.' The letter was written by a reader from

Iraq and US: the third option

The fall of Baghdad at the hands of US military has added a new dimension to world politics. The most powerful nation on earth unilaterally declared war against a despotic regime and still maintaining a strong presence against the will of Iraqi citizens.

Having said that, the Iraqis are not making much effort to handle the situation in a constructive way either. The US may had ulterior motives behind this invasion but the reality check will show that creating a terroristic atmosphere in the country, may be with the help of fanatic religious individuals like Osama Bin Laden and the likes, is going to make Iraq another Lebanon. If that is the US aim, I have nothing to say.

Iraqis are not, at the moment, capable of running their own nation without mass killings, terror or injustice. The people of Iraq have suffered enormously under an unjust ruler and economic sanctions imposed by the UN. Now they are victim of a brutal occupation.

It is time to think more carefully. Iraqis can teach their future generations that violence and suicide bombings do not bring any fruitful results but create an environment of despair. The example of Palestine is a glaring one. They have two distinct choices: (1) liberate the country from US occupation at any cost, or, (2) work with US and make the best out of the worst situation and show that violence is not the solution. The current state of affairs is untenable for both the Iraqis and the US. May be the global leaders can convince US to withdraw quickly and leave Iraq to the Iraqis. This compromise can save the world politics from a catastrophe.

M. Hassan, On e-mail



more thoroughly? US has thousands of soldiers in Iraq and tens (if not hundreds) of spy satellites that can take pictures of some very small things on the ground. So, why doesn't the US stop these "foreign" fighters before they cross the border? Well, Iraq being such a big country, we understand that it would be difficult for US to patrol all the borders without

on Syria and Iran, Bush wants to remove the alleged threat posed by these countries to the terrorist state of Israel. Secondly, he wants to punish these countries for not dancing like his usual puppets. And third, if there is time, he will fight terrorism but only to ensure the smooth supply of oil to his energy-starved economy. Fighting terrorism is pretty low in the

loosing utility quickly. It's painful for the passengers of the rickshaw, baby taxis and cars driving through these roads. The traffic is getting slower, resulting huge congestion and jam in every corner. Many executives are getting stuck in traffic jam only to loose valuable hours on the road. During that lost time, commuters get exhausted while the produc-

Jews and Muslims have much to share

Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysian Prime Minister, recently delivered some harsh words about the Jews in the OIC conference in the Malaysian city of Putrajaya. I must say at the outset that Jews, Christians and Muslims are all descendent of Abraham and have much commonality than differences. Greed for land and resources pitted one against the other. This is a political problem, not a religious one *per se*.

During his twenty two years of rule, Mahathir maintained a notable silence regarding the Palestinian-Israeli issues. Surprisingly, on the eve of his departure, he made these divisive and unnecessary comments. The outgoing and outstandingly successful leader may be losing control over his patience; observing intense exhibition of bias against his co-religionists by Washington and Israel's uninhibited proliferation of settlements in the Palestinian territory.

He reiterated some common terms embodied in the culture of the Muslim world to describe the Jews. Often these terms are unsophisticated, irresponsible, self-defeating and senseless. His remarks are powerful but impulsive.

For Muslims, cultural anti-Judaism provides, among other things, a way to shun reality. It helps them escape responsibility for not having unity and democracy in their own lands. If the cultural preferences of their youngsters disappoint them, they blame the Jews and the Americans for proliferating their addictive materialism. Because most of the mass culture (may include the presence of McDonald, Coca-Cola, Hollywood movies, and computer games among others) they receive originates in the West, they leave the burden of their cultural sins on Jewish and American shoulders.

A typical newspaper in the Muslim world would publish articles like: "The degrading Western family values," "Homosexuals allowed legal rights," etc. These are some of several thousand similar headlines that appear every year in Muslim papers. Same is true if you

browse through the Western media that frantically seek opportunities to undermine Islam and its followers.

No doubt the newspapers know perfectly well that Muslims are also struggling to retain their joint families at a time when divorce rates are rising. And, there are closeted gays among them. But at the same time they want to give their readers a feeling of superiority over Jews and Americans. So the newspapers flatter its readers into believing, incorrectly, that Muslims are in a position to look down on Western inanity.

In this way, double standards become an indispensable element in the Muslim culture. In any act of domestic terrorism, the Muslim media dig out involvement of Tel Aviv spies. Muslim clerics seldom finish a sermon not making slanderous remarks about non Muslims. For many of the Muslims, Israel offers a safe punching bag. Will Muslim reader ever object to a newspaper hammering contempt on Jews and Americans? NO. Because they think the Jeudo-Christian oppression of Muslims must be repelled in all fronts.

In Muslim world, cultural anti-Westernism has been endemic for generations. Critics need to respond whether it emerges from their own political and moral failures. The Israelis have maintained democracy, unity, and security and progressed tremendously in science and technology since the creation of the Jewish state.

In the same period, Muslims suffered from gruesome burdens that its leaders have placed on the people; including dictatorship, poverty, corruption and repression on women and minority. The Muslims were engaged in numerous wars - inside their own land and with their Muslim neighbours. Muslims too should learn something from the unique Jewish experience and successes..

Hasanat Alamgir
Vancouver, British Columbia

