



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.

### Proud to be a Malaysian

I, as a Malaysian, would like to express my feelings about my former prime minister to the foreign press. The Daily Star has covered the Mahathir debate with depth and understanding.

I belong to no political parties and consider myself to be a member of the growing Malaysian middle class. In my mind, there is no doubt that Dr. Mahathir is a charismatic, and at times, controversial leader. His ways may seem unorthodox (like his dealings with the 1997 Asian financial crisis) and he may rub certain people the wrong way, but the bottom line is that he is an effective leader.

No one can challenge his economic record of transforming Malaysia to what she is today; a vibrant growing economy and probably the most developed among the developing countries as well as among the Muslim world. He has just retired, handing over to his successor a country that is economically strong and stable; with the stock market at a 3 year high. In Malaysia today, there is no political upheavals, no violent street demonstrations and no military interventions.

Instead, there prevails a genuine sense of sadness among the general public and a feeling of indebtedness to the man. He can walk the streets of Kuala Lumpur today and he will be greeted with warmth and respect by all. How many retired or ousted leaders can claim to have such an honour?

Of course that does not mean that the man do not have his faults. There were times when he did seem to have been overly provocative like his by now famous or infamous comment about the Jews during the recent OIC summit. That made most of us smile our "there he goes again" smile and shook our heads.

However, it is the intensity of the reaction of the Western world that took us by surprise. Why such a strong reaction to something if they perceive it as not true? This made many of us really think that maybe there is some truth in it after all, that the Jews really do rule the world or at least significantly influence the world affairs by proxy through the United States.

After all, Israel and the US are practically synonymous. Americans like to evaluate things in terms of percentages. Well, in this respect, Dr. M's contributions to the country and the region far outweighs his faults. To us, he is a great leader who has taken Malaysia out from the wannabes and placed her firmly on the world stage. If he can do that for a small, initially backward country like Malaysia, just think what he can potentially do for a country like Australia.

Under Howard, Australians are not involved enough in the affairs of Asia and do not seem to support, appreciate or even understand Asian values. Unfortunately Howard has only one foreign policy, and that is to get as close to Bush as he is allowed to (the picture of the deputy shielding the sheriff is

## On adulterated food

This is regarding a news in DS (06-Nov) on adulterated food, toxic colours, carbide-ripened fruits, etc. The same situation prevails year after year during the month of Ramadan while our ministers have been frequently dropping their weekly meetings for lack of agenda! This time, before Ramadan, what could have guided the government to change the law by increasing the amount of fine from its previous level of Tk400.

**CNR**  
Chittagong



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

rather than his 22 years of political life shows shallowness, arrogance and a lack of humility. His achievements are nothing short of remarkable. Some even call them miraculous for a country like Malaysia. And, because of him, I am proud to be a Malaysian.

**Leong CO, Malaysia**

### 'Failed state is' contrived, not real

I've read Mr. Kazi Anwarul Masud's article in your paper, titled "Impact of failed states on global peace and security" on Nov 2 with all the patience I could muster. However, I found myself lost on what issues he tried to put across. He quoted a few people to describe the concept of a failed state but then he did not make clear which of the concepts he has used in his article.

He mentioned Bangladesh, albeit subtly. Was he trying to tell the readers that Bangladesh is a failed state? It was

history, there are two examples of failed states in living memory. One is Afghanistan and the other Somalia. Ironically, both failed more as a result of external intervention, most notable by the United States. So we should be wary about what these powers have to say about failed states, for their definition is not consistent with and changes with change of their interests.

Let me also comment on the other aspect of the piece that deals with the impact of failed states on world peace and security. The world is not really that much in a flux as the west wants us to perceive. Come to think of it; less than 3000 people were killed as a result of 9/11 and the chances of that happening ever again is indeed very remote.

Terrorists in greater numbers were killing people before 9/11 but when such lives were being lost before 9/11, the US was asking countries suffering

nance. Most countries come out of it clean. By linking such countries as those harbouring terrorists, the west will get the blank cheque to interfere anywhere and everywhere based on their self-interest. They will interfere in a country like Iraq while leaving a nuclear country, like North Korea, untouched due to fear of retaliation. The connection between failed states and terrorism is, as we have seen in Iraq, a lie. States don't fail, they pass through transformation and upheaval due to foreign interference.

It is therefore very important for those who like Mr. Masud write columns and build opinions to be very cautious of terms such as failed states, pre-emptive strikes, etc.

**Shahjahan Ahmed**  
Dhanmandi RA, Dhaka

### Create underground services to ease congestion

It is incomprehensible that such a big city like Dhaka (not in terms of size but in terms of population) does not have an extensive public transportation system. It's virtually a nightmare to commute and it's getting worse day by day.

It is true that introduction of public buses on some of the major routes of the city has brought some respite for many ordinary commuters. But the number of buses isn't enough to cope with increasing demand. With ever-increasing traffic jam, it has not been much of a help either in getting to the desired location in time. Everyone feels the need of a mass transit system like the underground rail service that our neighboring city, Kolkata, has. If a city like Kolkata can have it, why can't we? Is it really impossible for us to build an underground rail network in Dhaka?

Our Communication Minister, perhaps in his bid to create media hype, presented before us the proposal of developing high-speed maglev train link between Dhaka and Chittagong. Besides experts' concern about unproven technology or high costs, the question that comes to my mind is, are we really in need of such high-speed link with Chittagong when we have to move at a snail pace within Dhaka city during most important time of the day? Isn't it more important to be able to move with a little more speed within Dhaka rather than reaching Chittagong in an hour? I have a dream of finding my beloved city free from the curse of traffic jam next time I am in Dhaka! But I am afraid, like many of my other dreams, this one will not come true in the near future!

**KM Zubair Sadeque**  
Duquesne University, USA

### Jamat rules us by proxy

A news item under the caption "BTV blacklisted BNP deputy" in the back page of The Daily Star on 8/11/03 reminded me of a similar incident when the BNP was in power from 1991-1996. At that time Advocate Mohammad Shahjahan used to run a magazine programme named *Dristikone*. In a particular episode they telecast how innocent Bangladeshi children were being used for camel races in the UAE. A few days after broadcasting the episode, the programme was banned by the then Information Minister Najmul Huda.

This time, the presenter of the magazine programme 'Anandaghanta', BNP lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury, telecast an episode on religious discussion, titled as 'Ikra.' It projected Islamic thoughts against intolerance and fanaticism, based on the Holy Quran. This angered some so-called religious people. The current information minister, Tariqul Islam, was once a leftist leader. How strange it is that a leftist minister blacklisted Mahi B Chowdhury? I guess, as the Jews rule the world by proxy, Bangladesh too is governed by the Jamat-e-Islam, Islami Oikka Jote and their masters by proxy.

**Iqbal Ahmed, New Eskaton, Dhaka**

### Temptation is evil

These days, human beings do not get their happiness only by satisfying their basic needs, they get it truly from chasing after various temptations and fulfilling their greed. Temptations of material comfort, black money and advanced technologies are challenging our moral values and will power. Today, we see the cable, internet, cinemas etc. distracting young minds from their studies. Gossiping over the phone or chatting on net for hours go on at the expense of precious time. As a result, during exams, temptation to copy or to feign illness has become a commonplace.

Temptations come in other forms too. The brains of poor countries are being drained to developed Countries due to temptations. We notice that our talented professionals are very eager to go abroad to make money. They work hard for foreign countries but agree to contribute least for their motherland. Obviously, the temptation of money makes the difference.

The western materialistic lifestyle, like driving fast cars, using branded cosmetics and outfits, liquor etc. have become an obsession for the Eastern people. To emulate those in the West, many of us are tempted to earn extra money through smuggling, bribery and other forbidden means. Tendency to purchase new cars and hi-techs are increasing not for the necessity, but for competing with others and show off.



PHOTO: AFP

## Beware of DV dupe

Many advertisements are appearing in Bangla dailies regarding US immigration visa lottery DV 2005. Most of the advertisers are claiming to be sole authorised agent appointed by the US government and telling that the applicants should approach them to submit their application forms. I have my doubts how far these claims are true.

This year, applications for DV 2005 are to be submitted through the official website between 01 November and 30 December 2003.

If you go to the website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov), you will get full details on how to apply for DV 2005 lottery. This is the official website of the US

Yielding to the temptations of drugs and drinks has turned out to be a serious problem in our society as there are many people resorting to stealing money and even killing others for drugs. Love and marriages are losing their purity and holiness due to the temptations like getting involved in extra marital relations and having multiple sexual affairs. Though temptations and greed give pleasure for certain period of time, These can cause loss of health, wealth and morality. We should check all kinds of temptations for the salvation of our souls.

**Rubab Abdullah**  
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

### Mahathir and Hitler: Never the Twain shall meet

After going through the letter of Mr. Mahmood Elahi published in your issue of 29 October, criticising Dr. Mahathir and comparing him with Hitler, I realised that when making such serious allegations against a dynamic, progressive and successful leader, the writer did not either take the trouble of reading the full text of Mahathir's speech at the OIC summit, or he did not have the opportunity to do so. In either case, he had no business to throw mud at such a revered leader.

I am sure he has been influenced by the Jewish dominated Western media so much that he could not believe that they could be guilty of falsifying news.

I would like to repeat what Mahathir said. He said that there were twelve million Jews in the world at the beginning of World War II. Six million were exterminated during the war. Besides, they have been persecuted for over two thousand years. Even after that they have not done anything silly. They pursued knowledge and sharpened their wits to become the rulers of the world by proxy. He asked Muslim to unite, pursue knowledge and sharpen their wits to get their rightful place in the world.

Mahathir has also said that the communism, democracy, human rights etc. are Jewish innovations, designed to protect future generations of Jews from persecution.

What Mahathir did not say was that the Jewish state of Israel is now depending more on brawn than brain, which will usher their downfall. Recent European Union survey has identified Israel as the biggest threat to world peace and European governments cannot ignore their public opinion for long.

My advise to people like Mr. Elahi is that they must not jump to any conclusion on the basis of what they'd read or heard in the Western media. Iraq war has conclusively proved that the so called free press is not after all free.

**Salahuddin Ayubi**  
Dhanmandi RA, Dhaka

### Shapla bus fleeces commuters

There's no doubt that life is pretty difficult in Dhaka city. And when it comes to commuting in the city, the difficulties know no bound. The difficulties are at their severest when one commutes on the Gulshan-Motijheel route by a Shapla bus. This bus operator has recently introduced air-conditioned buses from Gulshan to Kamalapur. All the office-goers who don't have a car, heaved a sigh of relief, thinking that their long-time problem would be solved.

However, to their utter surprise, the

passengers saw that they brought only seven 27-seater buses -- which are a little bigger than mini-buses and smaller than the big ones. One of these seven buses is always in the repair shop, either for engine trouble or for AC problem.

So, virtually, the company operates with only six vehicles, charging Tk 20 as fare. Even if a passenger wants to get dropped at Willes Little Flower School in Kakrail, he still has to pay the same amount. On the other hand, the Pre-

State Department for would be applicants (entrants).

Anyone with computer knowledge can file an application and try his/her luck. Correct applicants will get an immediate electronic confirmation and finally those selected will be informed by mail between May and July 2004. I would request those who have computer knowledge to go to the website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) and find out how easy it is to submit an application for DV 2005. Don't fall victim to the greed of those who may not be professional people, let alone authorised agent of the US government.

**Ziauddin Ahmed, Gulshan, Dhaka**

that passengers feel embarrassed. We request the authorities concerned to do something about the fare and the service. Otherwise, please let other operators offer better service.

**Ekrum Kabir, Gulshan, Dhaka**

mium Bus service, the first AC bus in the city, that operates on Uttara-Motijheel route, charges Tk 25 only. Now, how can the fare of Gulshan-Kakrail be Tk 20 when the Uttara-Motijheel fare for a much better service is Tk 25?

The fare should not be more than Tk 15 on Gulshan-Motijheel route. Moreover, due to their small number of buses, passengers have to sweat at the bus-stops for about 40 minutes. Some of the drivers of these buses are so rude

## Mahmud: A great captain



PHOTO: AFP

As Bangladesh team is losing matches one after another, many of us have failed to notice the achievements of the present captain of our national cricket team. For them I have listed his great records below.

1. Mahmud had been the most expensive cricket player in the history of Test cricket for quite some time. His bowling average was over 450 before going to Pakistan lately.

2. Presently Mahmud's Test batting average is 10.88 and bowling average is over 50, which made him the worst recognised batsman and worst specialist bowler in the Bangladesh squad. He is, however, the worst fielder in the team. Considering all these facts he is the worst player of our team but still he is the captain, which is unmatched. So, that itself is a record too.

3. Our beloved captain is the shortest pacer in the world, which is also a record.

We guess Mahmud wants to make some other records too. Such as: a) He wants to have his name in the record book for getting dismissed in the silliest ways most of the times. (b) He wants to become the longest awaited captain. BCB has come forward for Captain Khaled Mahmud so that his above-mentioned targets also get fulfilled. We all should support him so that he can accomplish these successes too and bring glory to Bangladesh cricket.

**Shahida Islam**  
IUBC

## Choosing best captain for the team

The great Sunil Gavaskar asked Athar Ali Khan, when he came to Dhaka with the ESPN STAR team, to comment on the TVS Cup Tri-Series (between Bangladesh, India and South Africa), "Why is Khaled Mahmud in the side? Is he a bowler, a batsman or an all-rounder?"

As far as I am concerned, I guess he's in the side because he's the captain." That statement was made in April this year. It has been seven months since Khaled Mahmud has taken over the leadership role from Khaled Mashud, who resigned after the World Cup debacle.

Well, except some occasional titbits from our skipper in Pakistan, the statement of the great Sunny still remains intact, because Mahmud has not been able to prove his critics wrong. This I say with due respect to Mahmud, who has inspired us to the win against Pakistan in 1999.

I feel he has had too many failures to remain in the squad. In the 1<sup>st</sup> ODI against England in Chittagong, he promoted himself to No 6, but only to nick the ball straight into the wicket keeper's gloves and score a miserable 2-ball duck. And, when it came to bowling, the so-called bowler-all rounder did not even bowl a single ball. If a player gets you scores of 0 and 1 and does not bowl (well, if he does, he goes for over 6 runs each over without wickets), why is he in the team?

According to my opinion, the squad should be finalised first, i.e., the best 11 (or 15) by the selectors, and the best possible captain should be chosen from that squad, not *vice-a-versa*. Nine months of continuous failure is enough for a leader to show him the exit door, and bring a new skipper in.

**Aranya Syed**  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

## A princess betrayed by her butler



really spot on and comical - will he do the same for an Asian leader? Your guess is as good as mine).

To me, the greatness of Mahathir is not measured so much as by the infrastructural improvement to the country like the North-South highway, Multimedia Super Corridor, Petronas Twin Towers, new administrative capital of Putra Jaya, KL International Airport or Sepang F1 circuit. Rather, it is the way he moulded the society, improving their way of life and enabling various races to live in peace and harmony.

As well, his role in opening the eyes of the third world by championing their causes made him one of the greatest statesmen of our time. That some countries chose to judge his achievement of the last 22 days of his reign

not clear to me if he did or did not, although I could sense he was hinting at Bangladesh as a failed state. The concept of a failed state is, as we all know, a New phenomenon in international relations. It gained momentum after 9/11 when we heard from the world's only super power, the United States, a list of such states.

The concept is very fluid and there is no reason to quote the British Foreign Secretary's definition to describe such a state, knowing how he lied in leading his country to war against Iraq based on such a concept. The definition coming from the US administration about failed states has also been very subjective and goal-oriented, and we should think twice before accepting their definition too.

From my understanding of world

acts of terrorism to deal with such matters "politically". In many cases, the USA strengthened the hands of those carrying the acts of terrorism. But with 3000 US lives gone on 9/11, all has changed. To take revenge, the US must have killed many times more Afghans whose lives do not, it seems, count. While discussing failed states, we should keep this in mind.

We should not fall into the trap of the invention of this "failed states" concept which was invented by the West to justify their domination of weaker nations challenging their hegemony. The pre-emptive strikes, though an old strategy, is a corollary to that failed state justification.

Countries, historically, go through the process of internal turmoil, poor leadership, chaos, and bad gover-