

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.

Keep Lalbagh fort open on holidays



ILLUSTRATION: DHAKA, SMIRITI BISMIRITR NOGORI BY MUNTASIR MAMUN

We, the inhabitants of the Dhaka city, have little access to well-planned resorts/park and other recreation spots. Among the existing spots where people can hang around, the Lalbagh fort is one of the most enticing places. This historic place can be a wonderful sight-seeing spot to visitors.

People go to the Lalbagh fort to pass some time, to enjoy the moment with family members during the holidays. But, during some government holidays, the fort remains closed. Recently, I went to the fort area with my friends on one of those holidays. And, we found the fort closed. I could not understand the reason for such a closure on a day when visitors are most expected.

I, personally, request the authority concern to ponder over the issue and take some steps so that we can enjoy the scenic beauty of the Lalbagh fort on public holidays.

Rabi Choudury, BUET

defeat, Sheikh Hasina comes out with the same old ideas and policies that are designed to serve her party, not the country.

For the last two years, the AL probably spent just two months attending the parliament. As if that wasn't enough, they now want to take the whole nation into a war path to confront with the BNP alliance. But this isn't the only thing that worries me. Next time Khaleda Zia goes in opposition, she will not be attending parliament just as Sheikh Hasina is doing now.

And, if the AL employs violence to bring down the BNP-alliance, the same will be repeated by the BNP when they go in opposition. While these acts of self-destruction go on, our poor country is paying the price. I have a very simple question: Why should we let Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia use our resources to perpetuate their family-politics?

I beg to the people of Bangladesh, please don't give your life in the fighting for these leaders. Instead of coming out on the streets vandalising and fighting on their behalf, spend time with your family, your children and think hard about our country's future. Both Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia are birds of same feather. In their entire lives, they lived on our tax money. They're also incompetent, short-sighted, uncaring and utterly useless. Instead of supporting them, let's get rid of them.

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

Finance minister's food for thought

The DS news report of November 8, followed by another on November 9, on the arrest and release at Khulna of the listed notorious smuggler Shamsul Azam by the Khulna thana OC, was a dazzling matter. A racket involving three lakh taka kickback was exposed in this saga. The OC and a Khulna BNP leader were allegedly involved. This speaks of the magnitude of corruption we have sunk ourselves into. Few days earlier, four Khilgaon thana cops were arrested for mugging two lakh taka from two jute traders. After all these exposures, does our finance

minister still refute the TI report that ranked Bangladesh as the most corrupt country? Most amazing however is the probe committee report relating to the Khulna incident that found only the OC guilty of delinquency and had him closed. The committee comprised of senior police officials. Thus the dictum "nothing ever happens to wrongdoers who can investigate themselves" is ringing true once again.

As the news reports unveiled, the OC acted deliberately at the behest of a BNP leader. Moreover, a Khulna BNP law-maker was also reported to have dictated the committee 'not to be rigid'. Hence no trace of the huge amount gulled and no mention of the BNP leader involved. Well, who dare ring the bell?

If a law-maker could pull the wires to alter the course of action, how could you expect the rule of law to follow. No wonder good governance remains a mirage?

AH Dewan
Dhaka

DS should do something for famine victims

I have just learnt from BBC that Northern Bangladesh is about to face one of the worst food crises in history. Our local administration is too corrupt and suffers from logistical problems to handle this kind of situation properly. History had witnessed this sad truth repeatedly. I therefore request The Daily Star and its affiliates to initiate a joint food drive to ameliorate the sufferings of the famine victims.

Hunger is a universal phenomenon; even in America many children starve daily. We have lot of charitable agencies here that provide free food for those kids. I am not aware of any such politically non-affiliated agencies in Bangladesh, excepting some foreign NGOs. The Daily Star has a reputation for being a proactive and development oriented organisation. I am confident that any measures they take will be highly supported by the caring public of this nation and beyond.

It can begin with a The Daily Star/Pratham Alo charitable fund or something similar. I am a poor student myself. Yet, I know that many solvent

'More secular than the West'

In a letter dated November 12, Azad Miah from Oldham writes "We're More Secular Than The West." He then goes on to ask how many minorities became powerful political players in other nations. Here are some recent examples.

Muhammad Sarwar is a Muslim MP in Scotland, and there are several South Asian MPs in the UK (Dadabhai Naorji, Nirj Deva, Keith Vaz, Ashok Kumar, etc). The European Parliament has at least one Muslim MP (Bashir Khanbhai). Several UK upper house Lords and Baronesses are also Asian (Shreela Flather, Swaraj Paul, Pratap Chitnis, Waheed Ali, Meghnad Desai, Paula Moziruddin (from Bangladesh) etc.). In Canada, the Governor General is a Chinese immigrant (Adrienne Clarkson). Indian-origin Ujjal Dosanjh was the Premier of British Columbia and S R Nathan was the President of Singapore.

Closer to home, India has many positive examples. Abul Kalam Azad was the first Education Minister (he designed the "bhai-bhai" curriculum which BJP is now trying to remove). Past Presidents included Dr. Zakir Hussain and Dr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Justice M Hidayatullah was Acting President in the 1960s, and Vice President in the 1970s. The current President A P J Kalam was also head of India's highly sensitive nuclear program. Finally, the former Chief of Air Staff of Indian Air Force was I H Latif.

Other minorities are also well-represented. The author of the Indian constitution, Ambedkar, was Buddhist. During Bangladesh's liberation, Maj. Jacob (later General), a Jewish officer, held an important post in the Indian army. The President in the early 80s was Giani Zail Singh (Sikh). Charan Singh (Dalit or "untouchable") was Prime Minister in 1979 and the President preceding A P J Kalam was another Dalit, R K Narayanan.

Can we show any comparable record with representation of Hindus, Christians, Paharis, etc in our country?

Naeem Mohaiemen
Brooklyn, New York

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PHOTO: AFP

and laws in the Constitution on the conducts of the politicians and their parties. Our politicians believe they are *rajases* and above the scrutiny of laws.

To bring them down to earth, the Constitution ought to make it compulsory for political parties to practice the use of the 'secret ballot box' within the parties to decide over issues, committees and leaders. This process will dump the dictators and keep the unruly ones under check.

It will also restrict the entry of businesspersons in politics to protect and enlarge their businesses. The party tickets to contest elections can thus become open to politicians and not to those sustaining and perpetuating the vicious cycle of greed, power and merrymaking.

Secondly, the judiciary be sovereign and independent of the executive and the parliament. The empowerment of the judiciary, by making it an independent body, will make it difficult or impossible for powerful politicians to sabotage or stall the process of law that may investigate their corruption or any other means unlawfully applied in politics.

The people of Bangladesh can rise and meet the challenge to overthrow dirty politics only if our voice is stronger and louder than the screams and groans of their scyophants.

However, to begin the reform or cleansing of our politics, we need honest and sincere politicians. And, since most of our politicians lack in credibility, only a massive move by lawyers to separate the judiciary from the executive can set about a chain of events for other necessary reforms and rectification to follow.

Will the lawyer cum politician, Dr. Kamal Hossain, step up to the task and give all he's got to this cause?

Nizam Ahmad, On e-mail

The story behind Riyadh blast

Western news media were very quick to blame al-Qaeda for the Riyadh Housing complex bombing on Saturday last and Richard Arrange wasted no time to call upon the Saudi Royal family to convince them that the family is under direct threat from within.

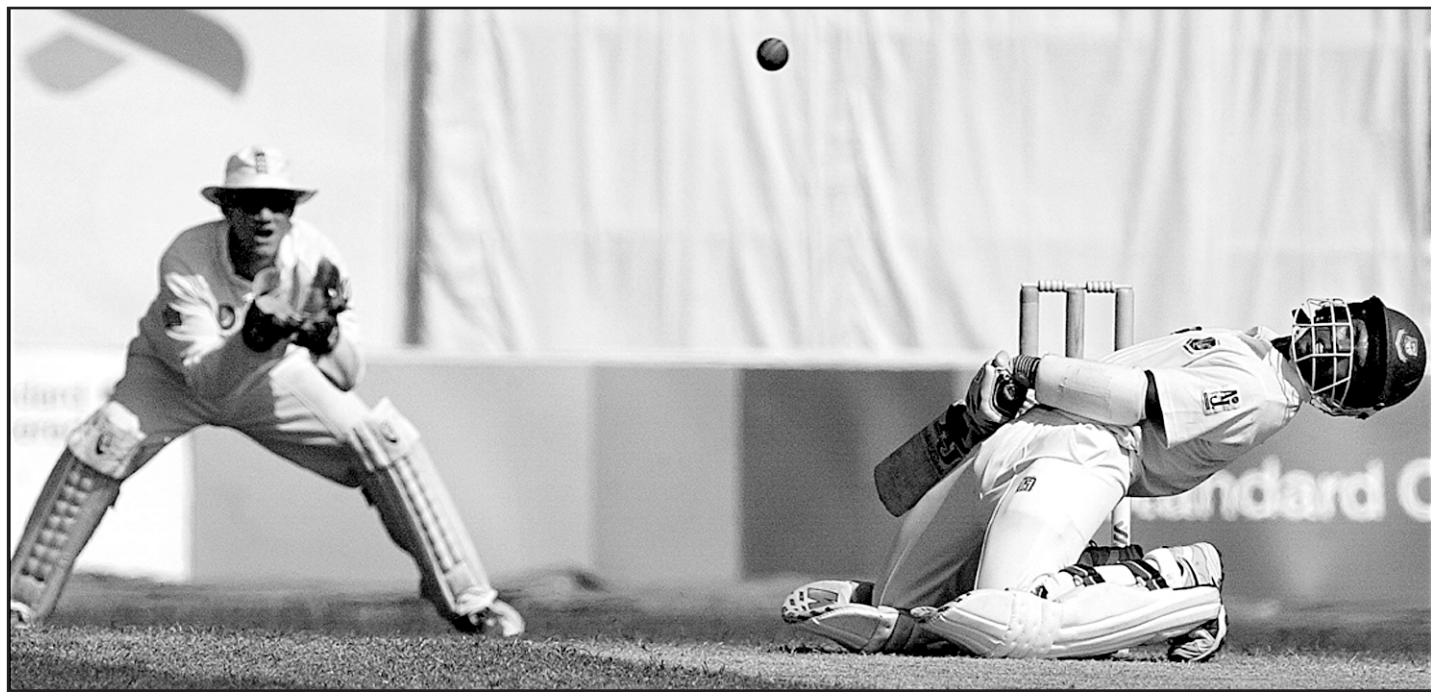
Notwithstanding that Saudi Ara-

Making history in cricket too

I watched recent matches between England and Bangladesh (the So-called Tigers...meeoow). It's really frustrating to see that there is still no significant improvement in the Bangladesh team. The only good thing that happened to the Bangladesh cricket recently was, probably, the appointment of Dave Whatmore as the team coach.

Bangladesh has already played 25 Test matches and some ODIs, but hasn't won a single test/one-day so far. I get scared whenever I think what would happen if Bangladesh keep losing like this. It will be history no doubt, but a palatable one.

Faiz, Dhaka



Knocked out... PHOTO: AFP

Let's talk radical about our leaders

The main opposition party, Awami League, is making lots of headlines with calls for the BNP-led alliance government to resign, only after two years in office. Especially the recent comment by the AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil sounds more like an ultimatum by an invading army, rather than the utterance of a democratic politi-

cian.

Why should the alliance government resign? Is it because of the pathetic state of our economy or the dangerous level of corruption prevailing in the country? If there are reasons for which the AL wants the government to resign, then its leaders can tell us exactly when any of these issues were better in recent years?

We have been dogged by these problems since the birth of our nation.

What is so new about this and why suddenly there is such an urgency to undemocratically kick the regime out of power?

Sheikh Hasina keeps boasting that she is calling for government's resignation in the interests of our country. But how can we be sure that Sheikh Hasina is not doing it for grabbing power? We smell a rat in the tactics and logic used by Sheikh Hasina. After two years in opposition following a disgraceful

When Cambridge scholar goes wrong

We are not a very tolerant people, I mean most of us are not, especially when it comes to something about Israel or the USA. But I thought someone studying in Cambridge University would be different.

I was very disappointed by a letter ('When teachers go wrong', Letters to the Editor, The Daily Star, 11 November, 2003). The writer, in anger, made some personal remarks (the caption of the letter being one) about a respected lady teacher (Rev Angela Robinson) whose only offence was to write, some days earlier, a letter stating some verifiable and statistically correct things about the state of Israel.

Our Cambridge scholar (I assume he is a student there) makes the mistake of thinking that a state and a person are one and the same thing. A state and its administration are not the same thing, just as the USA and President Bush are not identical. Hitler and Yahya are gone but Germany and Pakistan remain. So will remain the USA and the state of Israel even when Bush and Sharon are gone.

The writer's comments about child psychology are ridiculous. Children remember their association but do not always learn from it. Process of learning is something where teachers teach students to pick up good things and distinguish them from the bad and incorrect ones.

Telling good things about Israel does not necessarily teach the students or anyone that what the Israeli administration is doing today is also good. One important fact I know is that the number of scientists that Israel has today is several times higher than the total number of scientists in all the twenty-two Arab countries taken together (UNDP - Arab Human Development Report). What is wrong in telling people about this fact? In fact, we should take lessons from such facts.

I write this to apologise to a teacher who has been unnecessarily and wrongly criticised. I am not sure whether our letter-writer from Cambridge would, in future, be a little more tolerant about other's views and be a little polite before accusing someone.

AZM Abdul Ali, Uttara, Dhaka



All not bad about Israelis

basis. The inclusion of Nafis Iqbal in the one day squad had not also given any sign of selection maturity. How on earth did Maniruzzaman get into the best eleven while the morale of the team had been on a low flow after a thrashing defeat in Chittagong? Wasn't it imprudent enough to send a talent like Moni on the pitch to win over all the advertisers?

Well, the multi-skill theory introduced by coach Dave Whatmore is consistent with the strategy of ODI, but when uncapped and inexperienced player like Jamal Babu got preference to Durjoy, Sumit and the likes, it spelt trouble.

We understand that Sumon is not as much good in ODI as he is in the Test. He is a talented stroke maker. He plays ODI and yields poor run show. My point is why he is not being included for number six slot in ODI which demands aggression alongside patience? I think he must be successful at this stage, given his style of playing. Moreover, if we are under pressure to omit someone else from the team, it should be captain itself who is nothing but a captain. Bangladesh can not show off the luxury of bearing a player only on consideration of having the capability to lead the team.

Another thing is the non-consideration of Shahrar Hossain Bidutt for the opening slot. He's experienced, aggressive and a proven performer. One should have considered him before paying much attention to Nafis and Moni.

Cricket is more a psychological and tactical game. A cricketer has to show character, determination, grit and resolve to stay put in the international level. But it is the responsibility of the selectors to scout out who holds real potentials to succeed. We hope the selectors would bear sign of their cricketing maturity and wisdom and select a team that will yield good performance to make us proud. If they continue making wrongs, we must say we do not need a selection panel with such a poor standing.

Sulav Barua
Criminal Justice and Criminology
Middlesex university
London, UK

Wishing good luck to Bangladesh fans

As an England cricket supporter who had the pleasure of visiting your country for the two Test matches, could I please convey via the pages of your newspaper my thanks for the welcome we all received from the ordinary people and cricket fans of Bangladesh.

Our trip was fraught with potential difficulties relating to (among other things) language, and the fact that none of us had visited your country before. The fact that few of these difficulties materialised was entirely due to the help we received from people everywhere we went. Those locals who went out of their way to show us the best value places to eat and drink deserve a special mention. They know who they are!

A special mention must also go to the Bangladesh supporters we sat with in Dhaka and -- despite the efforts of the MA Aziz Stadium authorities who wanted to segregate us in an overpriced section -- Chittagong. It was good to meet so many knowledgeable supporters with such enthusiasm for the game.

Bangladesh supporters deserve a winning team. Under Dave Whatmore and with lots of hard work by the BCB in improving the structure of cricket at the lower levels, I'm certain that this will happen eventually. Please be patient though, and understand that these things will not happen overnight. Good luck for the future and hope that next time we visit, the two teams will be vying with each other for top place amongst Test-playing nations.

Harvey Brant ('Big Harvey')
Southville, Bristol, UK

Faulty selection dogs cricket performance

The omission of Habibul Bashar Sumon from the BD squad of the 2nd ODI against England has proved erroneous. It was a wrong strategy too. I do not get the point as to how Jamal Babu got into the squad and on what