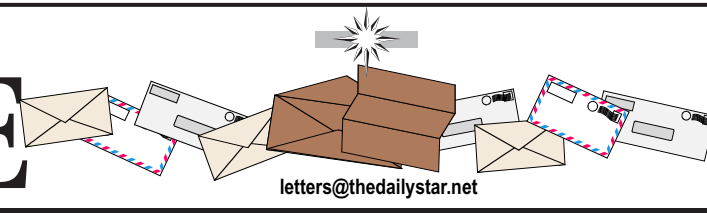


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Students and politics

It is a matter of great regret that a large number of students of our country are now involved in politics. Most of them are not grown up. Students join politics because of frustration, social injustice and adverse environment around them. They engage themselves in politics without knowing what they are doing. What they do for politics is governed by their immature passion. As a result, they have now

become the target of politicians who use them for their own purpose. Very often, students are misguided by the politicians. As a result, they remain active in different destructive activities. They run after money. I think the current political unrest has been created by our selfish and dishonest political leaders.

Md. Jashim Uddin
IUC

Photo session

I am drawn to a four-column spread photograph published recently in your daily. It shows the power elites seated in chairs in the front row and the winners of the 'DCCI Business Award-2005' standing in the back row. I am, however, not persuaded enough to agree to photographs that give prominence to the power wilders at the expense of news judgment. It smacks of feudal mentality of the power elites irrespective of party affiliations in our professed democratic polity. The referenced photograph, I think, devalued the image of our community heroes by relegating them to the back row, although the photo session was, in all certitude, occasioned to visually record the achievements of the DCCI award winners. In that perspective, they deserved to be photographed in the front row. If done, this gesture on the part of the power elites would have earned for themselves handsome dividends in the esteem of the fellow compatriots, and its impact on our sliding social values too would have been salutary.

It is time our political leaders focused on the need for meaningful social interaction before we embrace a democratic order vibrant with a human face.

Syed Badrul Haque
Lalmatia, Dhaka

Collaboration required

Today, the whole nation is grief stricken because of grisly grenade attacks, and the newly added suicide bombing. This is for the first time, in Bangladesh, the suicide bombers have revealed themselves as a violent force. Nobody is safe here today. The people don't have alternative ways except banking on their destiny. They have been traumatised by the unforeseen mishaps. In this critical moment, it is quite impossible for the ruling party alone to control the situation. All political parties, civil-society members and dignitaries should spearhead the movement against the militants.

S Islam
Dhaka University

Politicians and

militancy

The JMB is capable of carrying out widespread, organised attacks. That is where the real threat lies. If the government as well as all of us fail to recognise that threat in time, the culprits will only be emboldened. But it is a matter of shame that our political parties are accusing each other.

It's not a political problem. It's a national problem. But our opposition parties don't understand it. Cooperation of all concerned is necessary to bring the culprits to book.

Tanvir Ahmed
IUC

Use environment-friendly pesticides

The present drive is against the use of chemical pesticides because these cause serious damage to the environment, which creates health hazard for both humans and animals. So, it should be our prime task to help and encourage farmers to use any type of environment-friendly materials or techniques to

protect their crops against pests and diseases.

Meanwhile, it is gathered from a press report that farmers in the south-western districts are passing through an acute crisis of their wonder pesticide- "Pheromone" which is low-cost, highly effective and environment-friendly. It is understood that the National Resource Institute (NRI) in UK is the only pheromone producing and marketing organisation in the world.

May I request the concerned authorities of Bangladesh to take urgent steps to import pheromone as soon as possible?

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

New education system

A new education system known as "Unitarian Education" is being introduced in the country. I appreciate the idea of introducing something new but there is apprehension about the new system insofar as it relates to the word "Unification." If this method is introduced the country will face a great problem. People hoped that in this system Madrassah, English Medium and Secondary Schools would be set in harmony. But without touching Madrassahs and English Medium Schools and only changing Secondary Education we cannot get the desired results.

By degrading the standard of Secondary Education they will only create new problems for the education sector.

Nabona Sultana
IUC

Traffic jam

Traffic jam is one of the big problems of modern times. The causes of traffic jam are many. This problem is the result of rapid growth of population and the increasing number of vehicles. In proportion to our population, the number of roads has not increased. There are many unlicensed vehicles which should be brought under control. The drivers are not willing to obey the traffic rules. They want to drive at their sweet will. Overtaking tendency also causes traffic jam. The number of traffic policemen is insufficient.

It kills our valuable time and our works are hampered. It causes great problem to the ambulances carrying patients and fire brigade vehicles.

If the authorities really want to have a better and a safer transport and traffic system, they should enforce strict traffic rules so that the drivers are bound to obey them. Moreover, they should remove faulty vehicles from the roads.

A sufficient number of traffic policemen should be deployed at important points.

Fatema Sharmin
IUC

Taxnet

The Hon'ble Finance Minister has been campaigning for realising taxes of various names and natures from the 'public'. He has made all out efforts to net even the small fries. Even those whose annual income is less than Tk 150 thousand have been netted without considering the present price level which is bounding up unbridled. It seems he is determined to show the international aid and lending agencies that he can accomplish such a difficult mission. He is now going for stringent laws to deal with the tax-evaders/defaulters. His intentions are apparently honest, no doubt, but there remain a few questions which he has to answer to justify his action plan.

A. It is quite known that most politicians, at least those holding public offices, are pledge bound to preserve and protect public interest. But how can they become rich overnight? B. Even the minister himself knows the names of officers and employees, even such petty ones as 'inspectors' and 'meter-readers', of various ministries, including his own, who own fabulous assets both fixed and liquid in this capital. How is that possible?

C. It is known to all that crores of taka are wasted by way of loss and mismanagement or pilferage every year. Those responsible for such colossal loss and pilferage have seldom been brought to justice. Why? Whose money was that?

We, the common citizens, pay taxes of various kinds to get the services we lawfully deserve and expect them from various government agencies and departments. But everywhere we have either to pay bribes or suffer unspeakable harassments to get things done. Even our life and property are not safe nowadays, not to mention our basic civic and human rights. We are not safe in our jobs or other vocations. How long will this continue and what is the government's plan to make things better?

It is hoped that we, the common people, will be given satisfactory answers to the above questions.

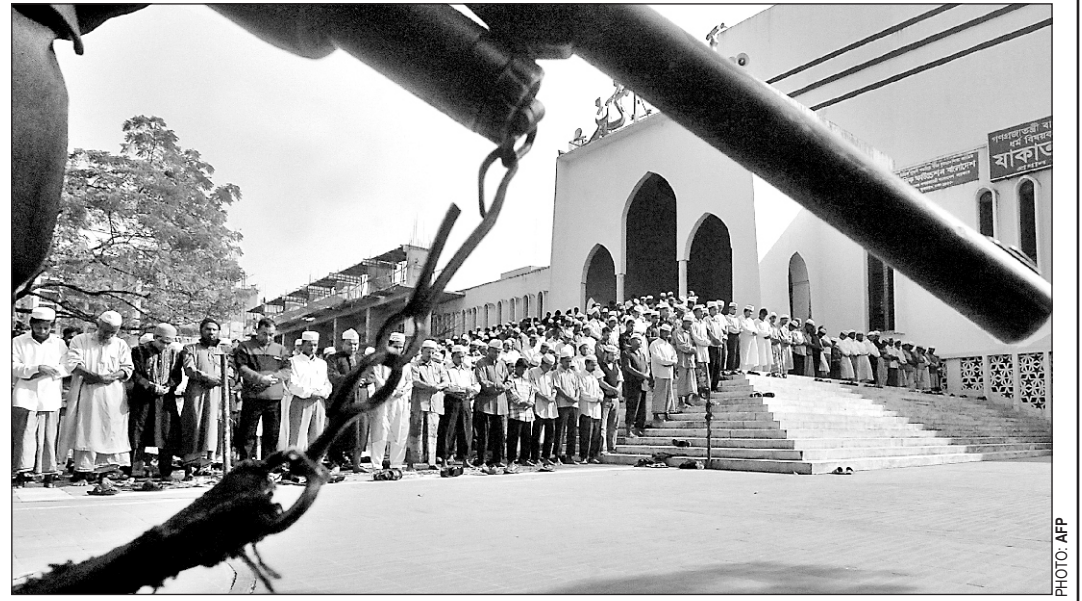
M Shaikat Ali
On e-mail

Jamaat and politics

Our security

We are a peace-loving nation. At any cost we want peace. But now we are going through a serious crisis. This crisis revolves around our security. Some people are trying to establish their wrong notions of Islam by suicide attacks.

Two years ago most of our news media published the news of Bangla Bhai and Abdur Rahman - the leaders of JMB. But at that time our government dismissed it saying that they were the creations of the media! But now the government hardly realises that it had made a mistake. And their wrong thinking led our beloved country to great trouble. Why didn't the government take it seriously then and why our detective



branches could not find the existence of Bangla Bhai and Abdur Rahman two years ago? But I don't want to go into this question now because this is not the time for raising any question. This is the time for us to do something to stop bomb blasts.

Now the government is trying its best to

nab the bombers. But it is impossible for any government to control the situation alone. All political parties must come to a broad consensus on combating the menace.

Md. Khairul Anam
IUC

Thanks a lot, Mr. Humayun Haider, for your letter on Jamaat. I appreciate your feelings. I do also support your right to express your opinion on any national issue. Jamaat has become a focal point of Bangladesh politics and is overrated by the media.

If we go by parliament position of political parties Jamaat is now the third political party in the country. I guess they got more than three million votes in the last national election. But still I do not see Jamaat can form a government as a single party in the near future. They will have to take shelter of big parties like Awami League and BNP.

Are you in a position to analyse why big two parties need Jamaat's support to do politics? Please also analyse the pattern of cast votes since 1970 in Bangladesh. Do you advocate banning of Jamaat as a political party?

Ersad Mazumder
Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka

Lynching of

Meanwhile, the law enforcers baton-charged the protesters.

We notice this repression on the workers is very regular in our country and there is none to stop these illegal and cruel activities.

Savar tragedy, Titanic tragedy and all such incidents will take place again and again. I think the government as well as the BCGMEA should and must play a significant role to prevent such atrocities. We don't want to see any more incidents like this.

MAH Nazim
DU

Terrorism in Bangladesh

Terrorism is taking a pernicious form in Bangladesh. It has spread and entered every vein of this society. The root cause of this may be poverty, social and political instability and the exploitation of the needy by the greedy. Our politicians play a vital role in this respect. They use the terrorists for political purpose.

Poverty compels the poor peo-

ple coalition is under pressure over issues like militant activities, price hike of daily commodities etc.

We expect the parties to come to an understanding on national issues.

Anupom Kumar Chakraborty
Stamford University, Dhaka

Bhutan: On the way to democracy

The tiny Himalayan Kingdom is heading towards democracy after nearly a century of absolute monarchy. In March, the Buddhist Kingdom framed a draft constitution that aimed to set up a two-party democracy in place of a half-century-old royal decree under which Bhutan has been run. Is monarchy withering away from modern politics? Nowadays, politically conscious people cannot afford a monarchy. Their right to speak, vote and govern has been denied by monarchs for centuries.

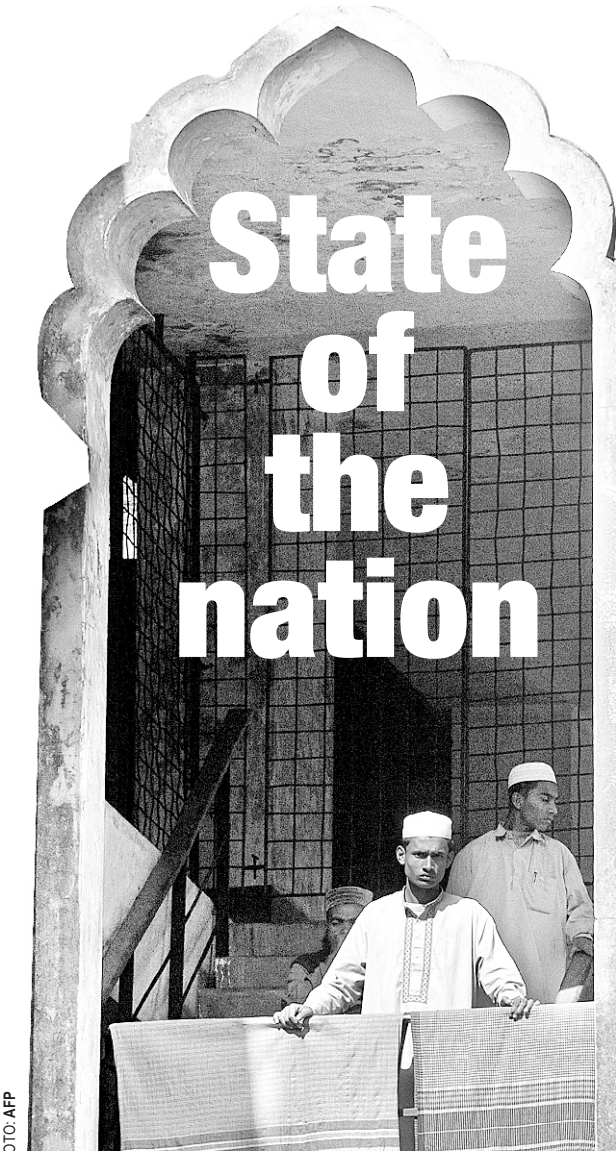
As we know 'Truth always trumps'. A noble-born does not always mean a good ruler. Geniuses are probably made, not

they need from the people for their personal aggrandizement. And to persuade, often force, the people to give their support to the politicians, the latter have to use their tools, a gift for gab, in such a way as their goal is achieved. Think of the content (mainly promises) of politicians' speeches before election and the content (mainly their brilliant speeches (?) showing progress and development achieved or to be achieved) after election if they win. And to make their speeches (whether given in pre- or post-election time) successful they invariably emphasise a particular quality, i.e. histrionics, which is demonstrated by both linguistic and para-linguistic aspects: bombast, body language, such as raising and waving a hand (sometimes both hands), pointing an angry or warning finger, and using rising and falling intonation interspersed with high and low pitches, often resulting in hoarse, croaky voices, especially during electioneering.

Now since speeches are the politicians' tools of the trade, the language spoken day in, day

It is depressing to read the newspapers these days. The government cannot even monitor the education sector properly. There are more madrassahs (100,000) in the country than the total number of villages; and the exponential growth rate of religious schools have never been publicised or noted in the review reports submitted to the parliamentary committees, and the cabinet.

There is allegation about indoctrination of the young minds (students) in these schools. The future adverse effects on the new generations were never publicised for public awareness. Why this hush business at the official and policymaking levels? The basic purpose of education is to develop an open mind (light comes in, and goes out). One-track minds are



dangerous and harmful to any society.

The Islamic banking sector is a new phenomenon, hence the public regulatory agencies have to introduce more detailed monitoring during the initial phases, and point out the pitfalls during the experimental period.

The basic problem is with our culture of governance. The public leaders concentrate on regaining power, and indulge in platitudes (one reason the local governments are being discouraged with the dictatorship of the local MPs). Trying to remain popular is the end goal of the politicians. Serve and sow it don't point it out yourself. We use too much adjectives in our politics.

Solution? Simple: remove and throw out bad politics starting with the hypocrite 'leaders'.

AZ, Dhaka



Repression on domestic workers

tic workers do not refrain from torturing the kids mercilessly. In some cases, the repressed domestic workers even succumb to their fatal injuries. We find no words to express our indignation for such heinous acts.

The child domestic workers are really very unfortunate in the sense that they can't help offering themselves as domestic help even in places far away from their own houses, although at such a tender age, they (the infant domestic workers) were supposed to pass their time playing, singing and dancing.

Wordsworth, the British poet, once wrote: "Heaven surrounds us in our infancy." But in practice, in their (child workers) working places almost akin to hell, these ill-fated children are regrettably destined for inhuman and merciless torture and repression. But such cruel acts need to be stopped. The real culprits must be brought to book and exemplary punishment meted out to them in order to put a brake on the escalation of such deeds of cruelty.

M. Anwaruzzaman, Comilla

It is deplorable that repression on child domestic workers is rising alarmingly (Source: DS, December 12, 2005). A notable number of incidents of torture on child domestic workers got press coverage in the last three years. It is regrettable that even some educated employers of these domes-

garment worker

Seventy six percent of our total national income comes from the garments industries. One hundred percent of this contribution comes from the workers. But the owners and managers always maltreat the workers.

From this scene, we got another dead body. Panna was lynched at the Titanic Garments located in the city's Mirpur-11. From the news we came to know that the garments workers were working late at night. Panna, a juvenile garment worker, had no warm clothes to wear. So, he was suffering from cold when he was getting ready to go to a nearby restaurant for having meal. He took a T-shirt from the factory. The supervisor of that garment factory interrogated him and wanted to know from where he got that shirt. Finally he was beaten to death.

After this incident, the garment workers came down onto the road to protest the beastly act.

ple to make a living out of terrorist activities. Again, many of the educated people in our country are jobless. So the causes behind a sharp rise in terrorism are very much present here.

Kanatin Nahar
IUC

New Year

If we make an exhaustive calculation on the political situation of our country we will see that it will witness a tough battle for power this year.

The main opposition Awami League and fourteen other parties are asking for reform of the constitution. They have also demanded that the government step down. They will not participate in the coming election if the coalition government does not accept the proposal.

The fourteen party alliance has got enough support on this issue. On the other hand, the ruling

born. Thus a low-born can even be a superb leader. Democracy does not believe in blue-blood. It is the champion of *vox populi*. Long live democracy.

Dr Nasima Zaman
Associate Professor
University of Rajshahi

Politicians and the tools of their trade

Each professional group has its own tools physicians have medical equipment, carpenters woodworking instruments and so on. In the same way politicians have their own tools speeches.

One thing is common among all the categories of professionals, and that is they use these tools to improve their professional skills and acumen. In doing so they have to provide services to people in return for some gains. But the politicians' gains, unlike those of other professionals, are primarily support in the form of votes, which