

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.

**National interest**

The government of Bangladesh recently sanctioned one more holiday that made the total number two in a week. This is an attempt to reduce wastage of fuel by various government officials.

I think the government should have addressed the more important political problems before addressing the issue of weekly holidays. Rising militancy, bomb blasts, loss of lives and most importantly our introduction to the world as a fundamentalist country is being possible due to the presence of terrorists in the country.

The government should respond to people's demand and get rid of Jamaat.  
**Anupom Kumar Chakraborty**  
Stanford University, Dhaka

**Reckless driving**

I am shocked to know that a bus hit a college-going boy in Chittagong on 30 November. The boy was critically injured. Now in our country this kind of acci-

dents are almost daily occurrences. Reckless driving is responsible for all these accidents. The drivers seem to think that the public roads are exclusively for their own use. They don't follow traffic rules and speed limits. Thus accidents have now become so common that nobody takes this matter seriously. On the other hand, the authorities have no concern about it. No wonder, the public often take the law in their own hands and manhandle the drivers. This is of course improper and illegal. But this shows how desperate people have become.

So it is high time the police authorities took up the matter seriously and moved effectively in the interest of public safety and applied the laws strictly.  
**Zafran Jahan, IIUC**

**Two children or one child**

It is in response to the letter "One child family" by SN Mamoon published on December 30. The

concept of one child family can be considered as an option in Bangladesh. But the way China applied it won't be ideal and practical here.

Communist and socialist mood of China enabled them to impose the one child theory. In Bangladesh the issue is a lot more sensitive. Rather, encouraging the poor to adopt family planning and have a two-children family theory all around the country will be more fruitful and practical.

**Istiaque Uddin Rifat**  
RUET

**AL, BNP and Jamaat**

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Moulana Matiur Rahman Nizami in his speech bitterly criticised the Awami League (AL). He urged the people to strengthen the four-party alliance for the next election. The mainstream political parties in Bangladesh have no vision in their political movement. AL, BNP and Jamaat are capable of organising meeting with thousands of people in Paltan and its surrounding areas but they cannot continue a movement. AL from its grand rally of November 22 started the election campaign and so did BNP on December 21. But Jamaat has no objective as an Islamic party. It supports all the activities of BNP, whether positive or negative for the country. AL and BNP are secular and have the same objectives, but Jamaat only blames AL for any mischief and claims that the BNP and Jamaat are twin brothers. As an Islamic party it would have criticised both AL and BNP. But it is not doing so. It is also involved in the blame game and it only blames AL!

Mr. Nizami said that the law of Allah couldn't be established quickly, but does it mean it will be established through sharing power? Mr. Nizami tried to explain Islamic rules in terms of existing humanity, human rights and tried to show the similarity between man-made law and Shariah law. It is not clear what he really meant.

Our political parties belong to the same category, as none of them censure the policies of the US and UK. All of them want to satisfy these countries. Jamaat has no special role in this respect.

**Taslim Hasan Sabu**  
University of Dhaka

**Value of T-shirt**

Somehow the death has occurred. "We will pay the victim's family compensation for the death at work. We will sit down with the BGMEA leaders tomorrow and take necessary steps as per their decision," said Anwar Hossain Manik, managing director of Titanic Product Ltd. He claimed that Titanic has maintained a sterling reputation in the garment sectors for the last 15 years. (The Daily Star, 31 December 2005). The garments sector of our country is the leading source of foreign exchange earning. Every country wants to pay attention to its booming sectors to enhance economic prosperity as well as to raise the living standard of people. Thanks to the sweat and blood of cheap labour, the garments sector has developed gradually. Although labour is one of the main inputs of every production, the workers are always ignored.

The news of Panna's death is nothing surprising. There are several unfair labour practices in that sector because of the absence of legal action. The relationship between workers and owners are based on a contract of buying and selling of labour, not a contract of physical punishment or compensation for death.

Our government is not doing what is expected of it. They do not want to take the responsibility of ensuring a healthy ambience in the industries because of the pressure from the owners of the garment factories. As the garments are a forward linkage industry, their profit depends on the cost of labour. So the manufacturers are always concentrating on reducing the wages to have a robust profit. If there were backward linkage industries it would be possible to earn more

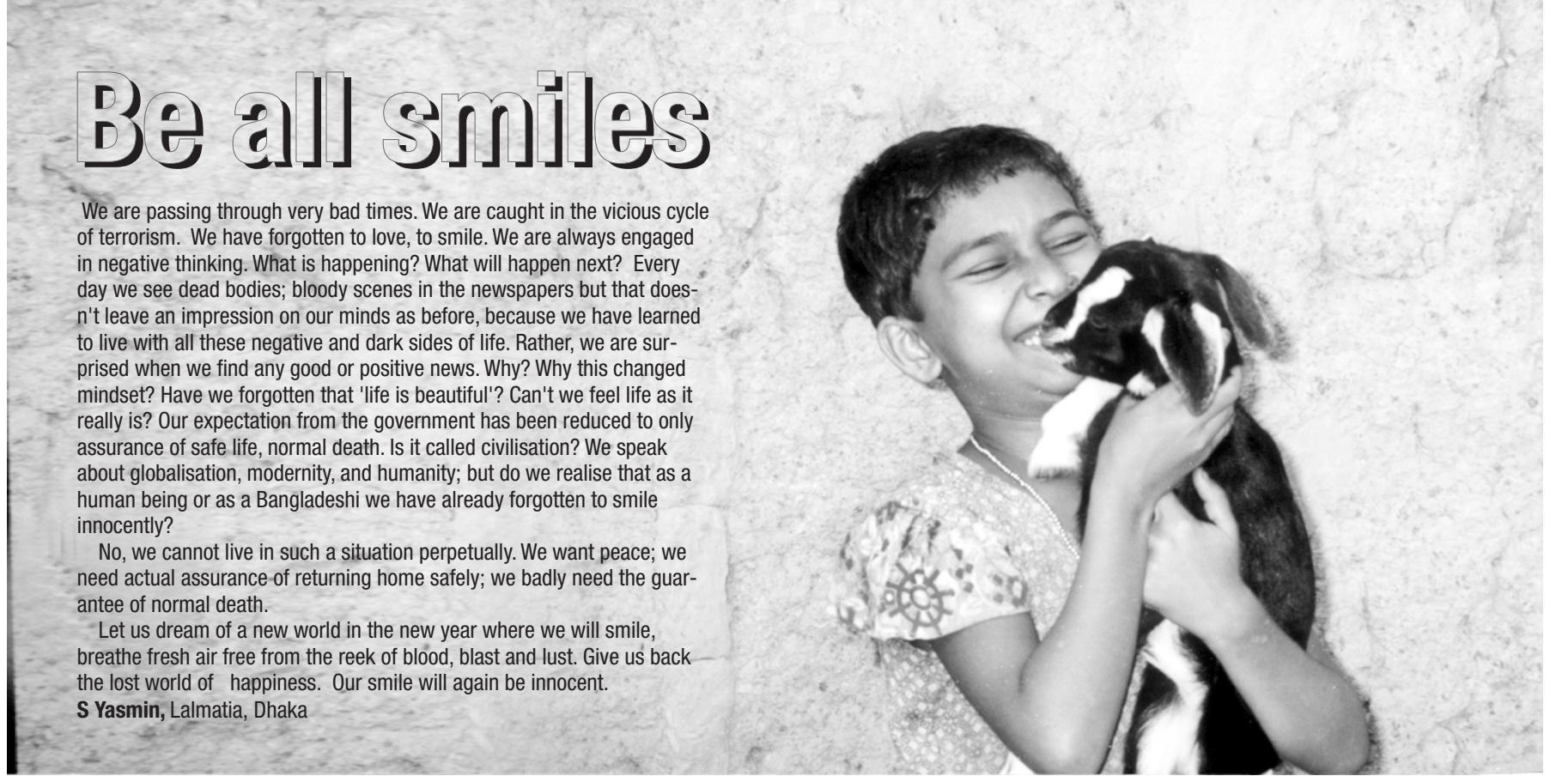


PHOTO: SHEGUFTA YASMIN

**Be all smiles**

We are passing through very bad times. We are caught in the vicious cycle of terrorism. We have forgotten to love, to smile. We are always engaged in negative thinking. What is happening? What will happen next? Every day we see dead bodies; bloody scenes in the newspapers but that doesn't leave an impression on our minds as before, because we have learned to live with all these negative and dark sides of life. Rather, we are surprised when we find any good or positive news. Why? Why this changed mindset? Have we forgotten that 'life is beautiful'? Can't we feel life as it really is? Our expectation from the government has been reduced to only assurance of safe life, normal death. Is it called civilisation? We speak about globalisation, modernity, and humanity, but do we realise that as a human being or as a Bangladeshi we have already forgotten to smile innocently?

No, we cannot live in such a situation perpetually. We want peace; we need actual assurance of returning home safely; we badly need the guarantee of normal death.

Let us dream of a new world in the new year where we will smile, breathe fresh air free from the reek of blood, blast and lust. Give us back the lost world of happiness. Our smile will again be innocent.

**S Yasmin, Lalmatia, Dhaka**

profit without reducing the wages. The owners' association holds more power than that of labour organisations in any capitalist society. As a result, influential people always suppress and oppress the deprived groups.

So we should remove this discrimination by changing the existing system. We should show a greater sensitivity to the cause of the workers.

**Abdullah Mamun**  
Dhaka University

**Voter list**

The general election was held on October 1, 2001 to the 8th National Assembly. The next election is due in December, 2006-January, 2007. There would be a gap of over five years since the last election. The voter list used in the last election was finalised in mid-2001.

Renewal of the list is essential since some elderly voters might have died by this time, some

found newly eligible residing in the area concerned should be inserted. Preparing the list afresh means listing the eligible voters without consulting the previous one. If done with utmost sincerity and honesty the outcome would be the same.

Since the opposition thinks some valid eligible voters enlisted previously may be deliberately excluded if the list is prepared afresh, the EC must follow the renewal mode to come up with an authentic list acceptable to all the parties.  
**MAS Molla, Dhaka**

**Land grabbing**

Land grabbing is a crime. The CS Mouza maps and lands records are regarded as authentic public documents. These maps clearly show the canals, wetlands, ponds, homesteads etc. This public document is a time tested authentic document admissible in every court of law. The people are the

hensive and exhaustive because the legislature cannot contemplate all the complexities and the problems of various natures that may arise with the passage of time. What we need now is a will to do good to people.  
**Md. Khalilur Rahman, Dhaka**

**Dirty politics**

Bangladesh is a green delta in the lap of the Bay of Bengal. We are proud of our country, which is blessed with huge and promising human resources, natural resources and a golden heritage. But all our pride and glory are valueless when we could not build our nation for more than three decades after becoming independent. It is a matter of great regret.

There is no gain repeating the fact that our first and foremost problem is dirty politics, which has been persisting for a long time and stands in the way of our development and democracy. Our politics is such an arena

our rising economy. It stops economic activities, hinders education and blurs the image of the country. Our politicians fish in troubled water. They are directly involved in activities that run counter to the interest of the nation. Undoubtedly, the mainstream of politics is responsible for the difficult situation that we find ourselves in right now.

Our politicians understand only mudslinging, which is a dirty game. They divide the nation when unity is badly needed. They never learn from past mistakes. The world thinks of tomorrow when we think of the past. So the world is running while we are walking. I think it is high time to hold fast the reins of our dirty politics which breeds only violence.

But who will bell the cat?  
**Al-Hassan Mahmud**  
Savar, Dhaka

**Form national government**

war is not carrying the nation forward. We have to try an alternative way of governance.

We can rise to the occasion, if led properly. Where are the leaders who do not seek power?  
**Abdad Khan, Dhaka**

**Music**

Listening with rapt attention to soft instrument music often takes one to a silent zone out of the din and bustle of our daily life. Of course not all the compositions are soft, touchy and soothing. Recently, I bought a DVD containing music mostly on piano and guitar. Interested music lovers can also get a copy of the above album for enriching their music collection.

Meanwhile, for the last several years I have been collecting cassettes, VCDs, etc. containing soft instrumental music of popular Bangla, English, Urdu and Hindi songs. Anyone having such music collections may contact

**Reek of blood and cordite**



PHOTO: AFP

Bomb blasts are a major problem in Bangladesh. The country, named Bangladesh, has become a heaven for terrorists. Bomb blast is now a daily affair. Even the innocent people of our country are being killed and the judiciary is being attacked by terrorists. The JMB is carrying out these attacks for promoting its own agenda. It is bad news for us that the government and the opposition are not taking any effective steps to stop it. Rather, they are blaming each other, without finding the way of solving the problem. If immediate steps are not taken against the perpetrators, the existence of Bangladesh will be at stake. So, the government and the main opposition party should come forward to save Bangladesh.

If the government is sincere about finding a way out, there is no reason why it cannot attain its goal.  
**Jakia Mahmooda, IIUC**

Suicide bombing or terrorism of JMB is not a simple problem. It has to be uprooted immediately. But how? The opposition Awami League is directly or indirectly saying that Jamaat and BNP have links with JMB. On the other hand, coalition partners BNP and Jamaat are claiming that the AL is spoiling our image abroad. But all these activities don't help us in any way. Actually no party is patriotic enough to assess the situation objectively. That is why we are facing this problem.

I believe the political parties have to change their attitude. They have to reach a consensus on how to remove terrorism from this land.

We see and hear that after being arrested JMB bombers say, "We want to establish Islam in Bangladesh."

I am sure suicide bombing or terrorism of any kind is not permitted in Islam. The religious leaders should play their due role in getting this message across.  
**Md. Yusuf Alam Masud, IIUC**

We achieved our independence at a great cost. After 34 years of our liberation, the country is again floating on a stream of blood. The suicide squads of JMB have made our lives miserable. We are passing our days amid great uncertainty. JMB is a threat to our existence.

We expect that people of all classes will come forward to solve the problem. But we see that the political leaders of our country are doing nothing, except blaming each other for the ongoing crisis. That is really disappointing.

**Bahni Barua, Islamic University, Chittagong**

We are facing serious problems. People feel insecure as terrorists are operating in different parts of the country.

The law enforcers are trying to catch the criminals, but the situation is still very tense; nobody knows who will be the next target of violence.

The government should intensify its efforts to contain terrorism.  
**Farid Ahmed, IIUC**

**Tourist spots...**

Bangladesh offers ample tourist attractions. The facilities for tourists have also greatly improved compared to the situation prevailing only a few years ago. Much of the country has been relatively untouched by modern technology and development, which is why foreigners find the rich flora and fauna and colourful tribal life so enchanting. Some of the better known tourist attractions are: Srimangal (the tea capital), Mainamati, Mahastangarh, Paharpur for archaeology, Rangamati, Kaptai and Cox's Bazar for sight seeing, and the Sundarbans and Foy's Lake for scenic beauty. These are the prominent tourist spots; we need more spots that are

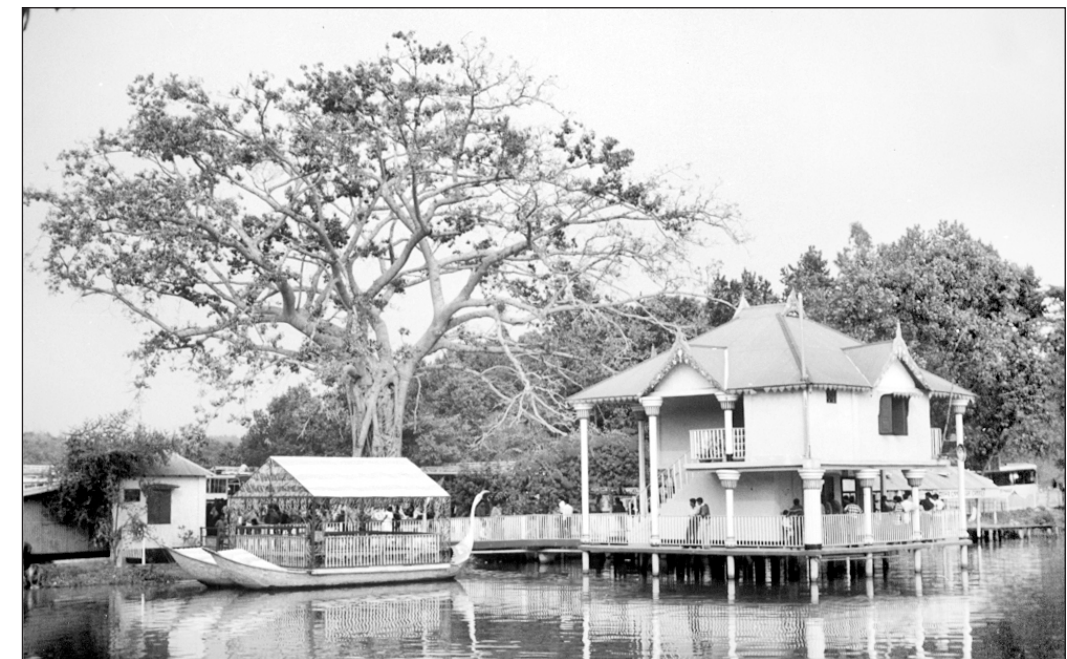


PHOTO: MD. SHAHEEN HOSSAIN

might have changed the residence and many have reached the age of 18 to be eligible to vote.

But a controversy is going on between the government and the opposition as regards preparation of a fresh list or renewal of the previous one. Even the Election Commission itself is divided on the matter. Dr. Kh. Mosharrar Hossain a minister of the government-- finds no major difference between the two modes of dealing with the voter list. I find a significant (though seems minor) difference between the two modes. Renewal means verifying the previous list taking that to the field, if some persons are found missing, those should be deleted from the list, and the persons

owners of these assets and the government machinery is in charge of keeping these in their original form and protect them from land grabbers. If individuals occupy or try to occupy whole and/or a part of any public property, the law enforcers should intervene and foil all such attempts. The managers should spontaneously rise to foil the attempt and the trespassers must be brought before the civil and criminal courts. That laws are weak and inadequate is a plea not acceptable to the people. Failure on the part of the custodians of public property to do what they are required to do is tantamount to a serious lapse.

There may be inadequacies in the law. All laws are not compre-

where there is a painful lack of harmony and understanding-- the cardinal principles of politics. There is no place for the practice of democracy. So what can we expect from our politics? A sick mother can never give birth to a healthy baby.

Politics has already paralysed our highest seat of education by turning it into a killing zone and a second home for the hooligans and miscreants. Politicians don't lose anything as their wards study abroad. And our students also blindly lick the boots of politicians who are slaves to their personal and political interests alone. So violence repeatedly raises its ugly head here and there.

Our politics is a great threat to

It is time to form a national government, as the nation is passing through an artificial crisis of identity. Some hidden minority groups are trying to impose some national philosophy by force and threats.

The coming elections may be postponed till normalcy returns. Remaining in power, or returning to power are not the current issues. The party comes after the national problems. Bangladesh must cultivate the culture of national consensus, when it is needed.

The suicide bombers are not impressive with their distorted philosophy. They should have no place in the society. Our politics has been unstable since 1972; and the political leaders have not found the solutions. The tug of

man-made.

Our planners should pay due attention to the issue of tourism. There are many other places here, which are still ignored or remain undiscovered. People will welcome all these places gladly when they will come to know about them. In the winter, people go for picnic and we usually find that a selected few picnic spots are rather overburdened. If the rich of each locality or region volunteer to create new picnic spots in their areas, general people will be benefited and it will also be a good business for those promoters.

**Zishan, Dhaka**

me for an exchange recording.  
**Professor M Zahidul Haque**  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

**Dream not fulfilled**

We are proud to think that Bangladesh is a democratic country. In 1971, our freedom fighters sacrificed their lives for the country.

But we have not lived up to their expectations. We must realise what a debt we owe to those valiant sons of the soil.  
**Md. Imran Hossain**  
Islampur, Dhaka

**ROLE OF OUR INTELLECTUALS**

We are very proud of our intellectuals because they play a key role in all-important matters. Their contribution to the Liberation War will ever be remembered. The intellectuals opposed the atrocities of the Pakistan army with everything at their disposal. They inspired the common people to free the country

from the hands of the enemies. Even many of them laid down their lives for our freedom. But at present the country is passing through a great crisis. Corruption, killing, terrorism and many other antisocial activities have become commonplace. The standard of education has fallen sharply.

The rate of unemployment is increasing day by day. This ultimately leads the young people to commit many social crimes. The economy is not marching ahead. Moreover, our cultural and social values are going to be badly affected by the influence of western culture. I think the government has failed to perform

its job in this regard.

It is high time the intellectuals stayed beside the common people. Their pen is a strong vehicle for bringing about the desired changes.

**Rezbana Alam**  
IIUC

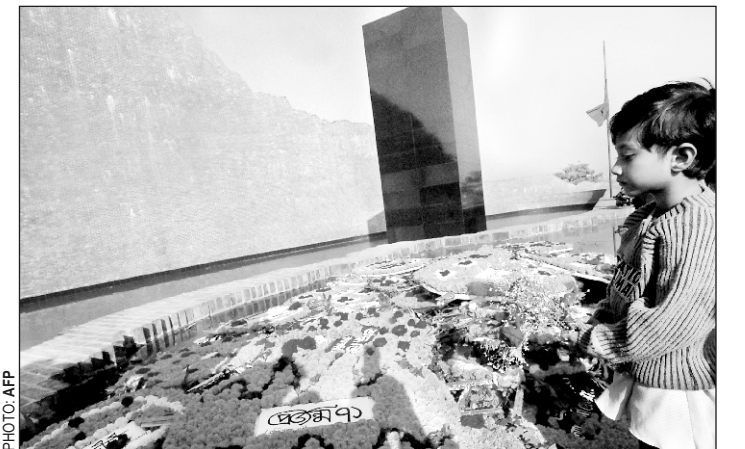


PHOTO: AFP