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PHOTO DR. NOZISH AHMED

## Moving ahead with the world

The world says we are better than we think (No longer LDC country) and we think we are worse than the world thinks (We need quota and duty free access). It does matter what we think about us as well as what the world thinks about us.

What the world thinks about us is our image around the world. Image is very important. It tells how other people perceive us. If they perceive us to be no longer an LDC country and we can compete against our competitors, they will invest here. That's what we need, foreign capital for our economic growth. Quota and duty exemption are short term relief for economically disadvantage countries. There is a saying that if you want to help someone to eat fish, teach them how to catch the fish instead of giving them fish. We should learn how to earn it.

What we think about us matters the most. Confidence is the basis for any successful negotiation. We have to learn how to play the game of diplomacy and negotiation. Sooner or later, there would not be quota and duty free access for our goods to the world market. So

what should we do? We should prepare for a quota-less market. We were fine when the US eliminated the garments quota.

Guns will not fight the future wars. If there is a war between China and the United States, it will be fought on economic grounds. Japan lost the Second World War but she is winning the economic war. Toyota is going to replace GM as the number one carmaker in the world. If we think we are equal to our neighbour, we have to behave like one.

We are negotiating a deal with TATA worth of 2.5 billion dollars. Soon we will have to negotiate deals with Vulcan Energy or another large corporation. We better learn how to play the game. We did not sign any treaty to join the highway deal.

We should look East. There is so much going on. We should be part of the Look-East caravan. We can grow silently getting on the growth trains of China, India and ASEAN nations.

**Ekram Belal**  
New York, NY

### Traders in politics

The ninth national parliamentary election is knocking at the door. The civil society and people are expecting a fair, non-controversial election. Although, the controversy over the electoral process, role of Election Commission etc have come to the fore.

But, the interesting point is that both BNP and AL are not concerned about giving nomination of their parties to the black money holders, muscle men, business groups and many other non-political individuals. As far as I know from the statistics of Bangladesh Economic Association 87% and 77% of the total lawmakers of BNP and AL respectively are nominated from the non-political forums.

As a conscious citizen, I also oppose the idea of giving nominations to the non-political candidates.

**MAH Nazim**  
University of Dhaka

### Islam as a way of life

As we know Islam is a fast growing religion. Is Islam only a religion or a way of life? So why are we taking it as a religion only? Where is the implementation of Islam as a Deen (the way of life) in society? Do we accept Islam as a Deen? The so-called Muslim society is being ruled by non-Islamic systems, ideas and thinking. As a result, Muslim peoples are also practising Islam as some ritual activities, not a way of life.

But as we know Islam has a political system, educational system, a social system and an economic system to rule the state and guide an individual. But now Islam is individualistic. In every land of the Muslim world the rulers are collaborators of the West and they are using Islam for their own benefit.

**Rushdi**  
Khalgaon, Dhaka

### America and 'political' Islam

Hamas' win has once again propelled political Islam to the centre of America's war on terror. However, Hamas' victory is not the first of its kind. Throughout much of the Middle East, Islamic parties have made unprecedented gains via the ballot box and marginalised their opponents—the modernists whose target is to secularise Islam.

Amidst this background, fundamental questions are now being

asked about the effectiveness of Bush's foreign policy in the Middle East and the wider Muslim world. While the US media debates the merits of Arab democracy and the success of the Islamic forces in Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and other countries, a fierce debate goes unreported within America's foreign policy establishment about America's relationship with political Islam.

The divergent views are not over the nuances of Bush's democracy agenda but are more about America's reliance on Islamic parties as the principal partner for transforming the Muslim world into an oasis of democracy and liberal values.

Oddly enough, it is amongst the neo-conservative movement that these conflicting views are the sharpest. On October 24 2005, neo-conservatives Daniel Pipes and Ruel Marc Gerecht went head to head in a debate entitled "Should the United States Support Islamists?" Gerecht, a strong proponent of using political Islam to buttress US interests in the Muslim world, argued: "The United States must support the participation of Islamists in democratic elections. Since the authoritarian regimes currently in power will not permit the development of democratic institutions, open elections should be the first step in the reform process. Islamist political parties must be included in these elections due to their significant popular support because a ban on their participation would discredit the electoral process—robbing it of legitimacy."

At present there are two schools of thought that dominate American thinking on this subject. The first, led by Professor Barnard Lewis and his disciples such as Samuel Huntington and the arch neo-conservative Richard Perle maintain that political Islam by definition is anti-democratic and anti-West.

Such circumstances leave the door wide-open for America's opponents—

those among western powers who seek to thwart America's hegemony in the Muslim world and those amongst the Islamic parties who desire to re-establish the Caliphate. In both situations the winner is political Islam.

**Abid Mustafa**  
One-mail

### Stop kidding with

## Squandering political capital!



AL prides itself in educated leadership. That leadership might have missed the class where they teach about a monkey climbing an oiled bamboo. Every time AL goes to the right direction, it ends up taking a step backward.

Last month's long march was a step to the right direction, and a success of huge proportion. It created mass interest, galvanized huge crowd, and remained mostly peaceful. It ended with a declaration that AL would the job they were voted for: they will go to parliament. To add to all this, a propaganda victory was dished out by the ruling party through frantic blanket arrests. Then AL slipped. They called a hartal.

This is a good way of squandering hard earned political capital. Fear drives a hartal to success, but the party loses points to commoners' grudge. The lower income people who suffered most in the blanket arrests will not count this hartal as a settlement of score. They will count it with prison days as one more day of lost income. An added disadvantage for AL is that every time they pronounce the word hartal, people remember their unconditional pledge not to call it from opposition. Still a bigger loser in hartal is democracy itself, because it takes away others' rights.

Hasina likes to say she struggles for democracy for the people. Well, the best way to safeguard democracy is to practise it. Why is it so hard to keep in mind?

**Ashish Ahsan, Uttara, Dhaka**

### 'baby products'

Yesterday we were shopping at a popular department store, as my son aged only three years and a half, likes the place. We saw cornflakes of various brands with different tastes and flavour. Among many, one product was attached with a Tiffin Carrier, 'free'. Naturally, it drew our attention and we chose it without any hesitation. After paying the bill of Tk. 235=, we went to another shop nearby and it was identified that the expiry was only 2 weeks from the date of purchase (08-02-06). We rushed back and informed the shop administration

there. I was totally furious, what would happen if we had a 15-day trip somewhere outside the city, leaving this baby item back at home! I was again more astonished by the shop manager's statement as he said, "It's a business strategy of eatable products to give a short expiry time." They refused to pay back my bill and remarked, "It's already saved in billing computer." We strongly protested and it rather turned into a hot exchange of words. Later they agreed, as my point was a valid one, on the condition that we had to buy other products of equivalent price. But we just asked for our

cash money. We won and walked out (4:30pm) of the shop, surprised regarding the future of my baby.

The mobile courts should be back to business, for there are too many anomalies in manufacturing and marketing of various products.

**Tanvir**  
Purana Paltan Line, Dhaka



PHOTOS: AFP

# Tigers DO IT AGAIN

We've beaten another world champion. After Pakistan, India & Australia we beat Sri Lanka. The Tigers added another golden feather to their hats. Bravo boys, you have made us proud. It's an answer to Ricky Ponting who is skeptical about the future of Bangladesh cricket. Three cheers!

I congratulate Dave Whatmore for his contribution to the team. He's the man behind the triumph. He transformed Bangladesh from a weeping boy to a vigorous young man capable of tarnishing the reputation of the mighty opponents. He's the messiah of Bangladesh cricket who pulled the team to a smooth path. Bangladesh won 8 ODI matches during his time. He has changed the mindset of the players. He's the wizard.

I congratulate the team.  
Soon Bangladesh will win Test matches along with ODIs.

**Solaiman Palash**  
East Jurain, Dhaka

We have defeated all the world champions, except West Indies. So it's West Indies' turn to lose to us in the very near future! We have been showered with a lot of criticism by other cricket teams, especially England. I do hope that day is not far away when we will beat England, and will justify our Test status as an effective member of ICC. Many famous cricketers (Like Dennis Lee of Australia) despised us in the yesterdays, but we have responded to them by defeating their own country.

I hope and expect that the boys will maintain their consistency in the days ahead. Last, but not least, a humble suggestion for other teams "Don't try to experiment with

Bangladesh." It could be very costly!  
**Sweet**  
Dept of English, RU

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After a poor show in the First ODI against Sri Lanka, Bangladesh Cricket team was well prepared to pay back the debts to the enthusiastic cricket fans of this country. History was made on the newly prepared venue of Bogra when the Tigers beat the former world Champions Sri Lanka for the first time.

It was really a well-deserved victory for the Tigers.

Batting, bowling & fielding --in every department our boys simply outplayed the Lankans.

Once again they have proved that they have the potential to beat any team on their day. I would like to congratulate the Tigers for giving us this victory in this great month of February.

Coach Dav Whatmore and Chief Selector Farooq Ahmed deserve applause for converting this team slowly but surely into a winning unit.

The Tigers should not be carried away by this win.

I hope they will once again come up with all the guns blazing to do something special for us yet again!

We all are looking forward to that happening!

**Nazmus Saquib**  
Notre Dame College, Dhaka

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The ODI victory of the cricketers against Sri Lanka forced me to write again to you to congratulate them heartily. Once again, the Tigers have proved the critics wrong by displaying skill, passion and talent in the

second ODI against Sri Lanka at Shaheed Chandu Stadium.

I especially take the honour of congratulating Dav Whatmore and the match winners Javed Omer, Ashraf, Aftab, Basher and co.

**Mohammed Fahim Hara**  
Dhaka

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It was Wednesday, 22 February, 2006. Unfortunately, electricity was not available on RUET campus. At 10 o'clock in the morning we were waiting anxiously for restoration of power. What could we do? The cricket match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka was on. We were waiting at the TV room of our hall. But no views were available as there was no electricity. About 50 students were present at the TV room. One of our friends brought a radio. We started hearing. Hurrah! Out! Catch! We won the match. Congratulations, Bangladesh!  
**Sadat Shahriar, RUET**

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Congratulations to the Bangladesh cricket team for winning the second one-dayer at Bogra. In the past 15 years of being an avid follower of cricket fortunes of almost all the Test and one-day playing nations, I have a bit of advice/comments.

Whenever I hear comments from the cricket fraternity about dropping Bangladesh from the "regular" Test playing nations, it feels a little odd. For one, these same nations came through quite a horrendous history.

Not very long off, Sri Lanka had a bad time on the field (when they started their cricket history in the early eighties). Bangladesh cricket does not do itself a bit of

justice by losing matches by whopping margins.

But then, given that there is no shortage of talent and enthusiasm for the game (akin to that for football), things will soon change for the better. That has been evidenced by the under-19 team's performance in the recent World Cup.

Despite losing in the quarter-finals stage, the team did evoke a sense of uncertainty and uneasiness in the opponents (like England). That is wonderful news! It is not very difficult to envision the day when the same could be said of the regular teams. Note that there was a time when the Ceylon cricket team could hardly compete with the Tamil Nadu team in the Gopalan trophy matches. Things change as talent rises to the top.

The only way this can be done is if the Bangladesh cricket board studies the development of Sri Lankan cricket at the grassroots level, borrows their strategies and leverages and adapt them to the Bangladesh setting. The other thing that could help us is if people get used to Bangladesh winning and not treat it as a kind of Kumbh-Mela-like thing. That will inculcate in itself a culture of winning.

I am sure like Sri Lanka and many others before them (like India, New Zealand, Pakistan and Zimbabwe), one day Bangladesh will become a de-facto respected member of the cricket community. And of course, it is these countries that feel a sense of de javu with their own cricketing histories. To the players, I wish them good luck, and hopefully I will see many more victories on the cricket field. And to the cricket supporters, get used to

the "thing"! And yeah, do not worry about the nonsense emanating from folks like Ponting.

**Stan**  
Madison, WI, USA

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It is never easy being a BD Cricket fan. It can make you a heart-patient.

This team plays 10 matches without even as much as giving a hint that it can play cricket. And just when the fans are starting to despair, comes back with a bang and upsets the appercart. It doesn't matter whose appercart is it, on that day.

I stayed up until 3:00am watching the match on internet 'live-streaming' and enjoyed it with BD fans on Bangladesh Cricket Discussion forums. It often surprises me to even recall when was the last time I stayed up so late to watch an India game. Yes, I am an Indian and no - I am not about to change my passport anytime soon. It is just that I wanted this team to win - desperately win - win damn it.

And till I decided to go to bed, they had done enough to raise hopes. And also to dent some!

BD fans are the most passionate supporters of their team. If there is one thing I have started to hate and fear most (besides the lizard on my hostel wall a few years back), it is seeing that sad and resigned look on the faces of BD fans every time BD loses a match. It is not difficult to see that expression at other times too - say at the fall of Ashraf's wicket for example.

When I woke up this morning, I just hoped I wouldn't see a headline like "Bangladesh lose again". They just didn't deserve that. At least not by the way that they had played

until I had decided to go to bed. And boy they amazed me - the only thing I could think of at that moment is that famous "BD players doing somersaults" on the ground and fans flocking the street in jubilation comparable to none.

This was a hard earned win - no flash in the pan and not attributed to any particular individual. While bowling, Rasel started it, Kapali gave it the boost, Aftab sustained it, and Rafique & Mashrafe gave the decisive push. While batting, the openers played the most interesting style that I'll see - "You beat me, I hit you for four and then you beat me again". It is as if it was a staged drama. And it seemed well staged until two quick wickets soon after raised the memories of many of the earlier losses. I didn't follow after that but I read the analysis and it seems that while Ashraf's knock was the key component, the decisive partnership between Aftab and Kapali sealed the match. Bangladesh have just lost Ashraf and are 5-wickets down and need more than 50 to win at almost run a ball - any other day it may sound like there was only one outcome. Thankfully, no one told Aftab and Alok about it.

A historic win it is and a fully deserved one too. And at just the right time.

**Good Luck, Bangladesh Cricket Team.**

**Surendra Shukla**  
Florida, US