

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.



PHOTOS: AFP

# HARTALS

Students are considered the backbone and future of a country, so their welfare should get first priority. But it is a matter of great disappointment that the opposition political parties do not care for them, they have no sympathy for the students. It is very unfortunate. The Dhaka siege and the 36 hrs non-stop hartal are a glaring example of it.

The HSC exams scheduled to be held on June 14 and 15 under all Secondary and Higher Secondary examination boards will now be held on June 24 and 25. Final examinations in many schools are also going on, these also have to be shifted for the inconsiderate and selfish attitude of the opposition political parties. One can easily imagine the frustration and the

mental agony of the students and their parents. Do the parties think that by this sort of actions their popularity will rise and people will through the voting centres to cast vote in their favour?

Nur Jahan, Ctg  
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Mr. Sanjay Kumar Nath of Chittagong has written a very apt letter of protest against the hartals and disruptions in society by both the government and the opposition. I salute him for his thoughts. I pray that a time will come when there will be no hartal in the country. I remember Sheikh Hasina categorically stating in a conference of newspaper editors that the AL would not resort to hartals when in opposition. Is BNP any better? No. On way to rid us of the evil



parties would be to elect independent candidates and those who have proven to be honest and patriotic in the past. Do we

have many of the latter? If nothing is done soon enough, there will be more chaos and bloodshed. Who will

gains? Think people, think! ...And do something about it. Javed Helali Pflugerville, TX, USA

**BAPA and trees**  
Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (BAPA) has been one of the active environmental stewards of our country for the past several years. It has successfully highlighted many of the environmental concerns in Bangladesh and, in some cases, succeeded in waking up the authorities to take action against environmental degradation. BAPA surely deserves high points for those efforts. In recent months, however, we read in newspapers and watched on TV that BAPA had been agitating against the cutting down of trees along the Airport Road for widening and easing traffic congestion. I was stunned to see such a negative attitude of BAPA - which virtually wanted to stop this development work on Dhaka roads. Trees are a renewable resource; hence, after the completion of any development work anywhere, new trees could be planted in a planned manner, and indeed, this is done in all parts of the world. BAPA said that road widening could have been done 'without' cutting the trees if it were done in a 'planned' way. However, they never spelled out what was their 'planned' way, though. I understand that some arm-chair urban planners hold high positions in BAPA executive committee. On the other hand, BAPA was completely silent when hundreds of trees were cut down in Kansat by the agitators to block the traffic on Sona Masjid Road, which caused damage of perishable commodities in trucks. To them, tree cutting for any development work by the government is 'environmental degradation', while tree cutting by agitators is sacrosanct and should not be criticised. BAPA, through their double standards on environment, has clearly demonstrated that their concern for environment is neither genuine nor impartial.

EC. I was wondering what other alternatives are out there. **Abdus S. Wahed, Ph.D.** Assistant Professor University of Pittsburgh

**Voter list**  
At the moment a lot of argument is going on about the voter list. After the verdict of the High Court, there is not much time to revise the list. However, there is no need to get frustrated. The Election Commission should start updating the voter list as soon as possible. They should appoint the enumerators to go door to door and update the list. As there is not much time, all the political parties should cooperate with the EC in this regard. **Sagar Ahmed** Dhaka University

deal with problems of the modern world. There will be new and young leadership in the Awami League and the BNP and they will be more sensible than the existing ones. Let's hope for the best. **Ekrum Belal** Founder Look-East Club

**CEC**  
I have read your article about the CEC. I am an expatriate Bangladeshi living in the U.K. Although I am not a direct tax payer but over the years I remitted the large sums of money and have paid indirect taxes to build a house and (very recently) to purchase a vehicle. The CEC and his two colleagues have wasted taxpayers' money in the preparation of the voter list against the Rules and Regulations of the Election Commission, just to please certain people. Furthermore, they are still not following the Supreme Court verdict. If they implement their recent decision, this will jeopardise holding of free and fair election. Being out of my motherland for 33 years or so, I am not totally familiar with our legal system. I feel that as a matter of principle, necessary steps should be taken to stop the CEC from carrying out unconstitutional activities. **M. Islam** On e-mail

criminals either by the support and services of their governments and law enforcement agencies and/or by having their own capacity such as having legal defensive weapons. But, there are countries where people/citizens are not allowed to keep and carry arms, rather miscreants and criminals have an upper hand since they do have easy access to arms and the corrupt bureaucracy/govt. departments help them thrive. The result is, people live under

land, with or without financial compensation. No doubt, non-resident Bangladeshi professionals have a wealth of knowledge, skills and expertise that they can offer, and Bangladesh cannot afford to waste them for no reason at all. "A mind is a terrible thing to waste", especially where it is needed most. Benefits of creation of a Ministry of NRB can hardly be overemphasised, and therefore sooner the government of Bangladesh takes this matter into serious consideration, better it is for the

do. I am a seaman and had the opportunity to visit many countries of the world. I remember an incident while attending construction of an ocean going vessel in Japan. I noticed the foreman standing next to me in the scaffolding which didn't look safe. I asked the foreman whether it was safe. Quick came his reply "My weight is 75 kg and this wire will snap at 250 kg and if I slip the shock load on the wire will be maximum 150 kg. So there is still safety margin" In our country I have seen workers working at high alti-

appropriate in the present context in Bangladesh. A bureaucrat i.e. a civil servant serving throughout his career as an obedient official of governments one after another could hardly side himself publicly in the realm of politics. How could he evade his responsibilities of all the misdeeds that occurred under his authority as policy formulator and implementer? The same holds true with regard to those civil servants who soon after retirement become zealots as writers in the daily newspapers expressing criticism of the activities of the government and extending sermons in favour of accountability and transparency, as if they were angels all through their careers. I strongly believe that both the groups fall under the same umbrella and should not be allowed to undertake a role, which is not moral at all. **Kazemuddin Ahmed** Liakat Avenue, Dhaka

**Saleswomen in shops**  
The Saudi government is struggling to implement a decree issued more than a year ago aimed at providing more jobs for women. A recent survey in the Red Sea city of Jeddah found that out of 247 shops selling lingerie and beauty products only three employed women. This is an issue that can embarrass women customers and should be addressed in due seriousness in our context also. **Choudhury Hasan** On e-mail

**New leadership**  
The world is moving ahead and everything is very dynamic. The old way of thinking is not enough to take us anywhere. Trouble is, the old fashioned politicians are running the country and they have very little contact with the modern world. We need new leadership in the Awami League and the BNP who can bring about the desired changes. What was valid in the past is not valid now, and not acceptable either. If we, the so-called party supporters, destroy the national properties and businesses, we are shooting at our feet. We shall overcome all obstacles. Better days are ahead. New leaders will replace old leaders. Younger generations are educated and trained to

must enjoy the same. Please stop the "U.N. Global Gun Ban Treaty." **Abdullah Rakeeb** Badda, Dhaka

**Ministry of NRB affairs**  
In a recent article titled "Ministry of NRB Affairs" in the Daily Star (May 19, 2006), Mr. Zafar Sobhan explained the need for creation of a Ministry of Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRB), similar to those that already exist in India and Pakistan. Bangladeshis living abroad have been highly elated by this article and are eagerly waiting to know what the government of Bangladesh is doing to make it happen. The proposed Ministry of NRB will simply provide necessary administrative framework and facility to harness the vastly unutilised talents, expertise and wealth of non-resident Bangladeshis. Bangladeshis who lived in foreign lands, especially in the west, for a considerable length of time, have not only gained advanced knowledge and skills in their field of expertise, but also learned the proven techniques for application of those skills to the benefit of people. Furthermore, those who spent almost their entire adult life in the West have acquired a deep-rooted respect for hard work, honesty, integrity, fairness, justice, democratic principles and basic human rights, which would be highly beneficial to Bangladesh to bring about the needed changes and reforms to the society, if they return there. Every year, the government of Bangladesh spend a lot of heard earned foreign currency to pay foreigners hired as consultants and experts, whereas qualified and experienced non-resident Bangladeshi professionals in almost all fields can do these jobs equally well or even better in many cases, and probably at less expense. Given an opportunity and facility for service, many non-resident Bangladeshis will be happy to go back and serve the country they grew up in - longer they lived in foreign lands, greater is their yearning to return to Bangladesh and do good things for their mother-

threats of extortion, abuse and without any power to protect themselves. The United State has its citizens protected very well by the Second Amendment. And, we would have a better world if we could have such a right in all the constitutions of the world in all countries. But, unfortunately, the UN is doing exactly the opposite! They are trying to abolish the fundamental human right of a human being 'the right to defend oneself'; this right is given by Allah, the most merci-

**Eliminate crime, not guns**  
There are countries where citizens are well protected from

**London police blunder**  
As a Bangladeshi/British resident of London I am outraged at the recent shameful and arrogant manner in which two young Bangladeshi men were arrested from their home in East London. A contingent of 250 policemen were involved in the raid, working on information from the 'intelligence' services. This information we hear was from one source and not crosschecked. One of the men was shot by the police and injured. Both were eventually released from custody without charge. We must keep up the pressure on the British government to: (i) Start a public enquiry into this matter to determine the real motive behind the raid. (ii) Provide compensation to the two young men and their families for damage to their home, emotional and physical trauma and defamation of character that now hangs over them. (iii) Resignation of Ian Blair the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the person(s) in the Intelligence Service responsible for the misinformation passed on to the police. **Sandra M. Kabir** Executive Director BRAC, UK

**Voter list**  
Lots of controversies have arisen over preparation of a draft voter list by the EC. I suggest that the EC publish the draft voter list in their website constituency-wise, so that everyone has easy access to check the list. If anyone finds any anomaly, he may report it to the EC and thus help it to expedite preparation of the voter list. **Zabedin** Dhanmondi, Dhaka

**Safety standards in factories**  
I do not think that there is any country in the world which takes "Safety" so lightly as we

**Father's Day**  
In the modern busy world, we are always on our toes to do our own work and can't get ample time to show our love for others. The Father Day gives us a unique opportunity to show love and respect to our beloved daddies. Father is not only a man but also the key man of a family. He does everything possible for his children and family. He is the huge tree who always saves us from all kind of disasters. After mother, he is the most loved person to all the children. Finally, I would like to send my best wishes to fathers all over the world. **Shoaib M. Siddiqui** Dhaka City College, Dhaka

**Yellow fever!**  
Their fans cheered, screamed vehemently with joy, as if their team had won the match. But the fact is that their team lost the match against Brazil. Yes, that is Brazil; the opponents find something to cheer about even if their team lose! **Solaiman Palash** East Jurain, Dhaka

**A timely commentary**  
The commentary entitled "The trio and their election 'subversion' ploy?" published on the June 14 issue of The Daily Star was very timely and appropriate. As you mentioned in your commentary, like many of my friends residing abroad, I have lost faith in this Election Commission. We, expatriate Bangladeshis, proudly talk to Americans and other foreigners about our free and fair elections of 1991, 1996 and 2001. The CEC and his two colleagues have already put a dent on the face of the Election Commission and the nation. I don't think I can trust them anymore. To revive the image of the EC and to bring back our faith in it, they must go! It looks like they are adamant not to leave the

**US policy**  
The United States, the self-styled watchdog of the whole world, is always very much concerned about democracy, terrorism, human rights etc. They are very much focused on what is happening all over the world except the US itself. In 2001, the US attacked Afghanistan in the name of war against terrorism. We have seen that the war actually cleared the path for terrorism to spread all over the world. However, the US feels that Afghanistan is a threat to the world but Israel is not a terrorist country. Rather, when the Israeli helicopter gunships attack the Palestinian people, the US never opposes such brutal activities. What are we to surmise? **Md. Khairul Anam**, North South University, Dhaka

**Secularism in Nepal**  
Nepal has huge geographical and social diversity. The different peoples who live here have different languages, cultural traits as well as religious and philosophical concepts. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity are the major religions of Nepal although there are various tribal religions as well. Hinduism is predominant in the country. Hinduism and Buddhism are mingled into a complex blend, which is often impossible to separate from each other. Earlier, Nepal was fragmented into some 2,200 and 2,400 states. The Shah dynasty unified Nepal which continues to this day; so different social, religious and cultural aspects were mingled into one unbroken whole. For this very reason calling Nepal a Hindu country is not easy to justify. Nepal is proud to be called a Land of Buddha, proud to be known as the land of Everest. But have those Hindu fundamentalists ever realised that what they are proud of doesn't belong to Hinduism? Though there is harmonic coexistence between Hinduism and Buddhism, there is a significant number of Muslims and Christians. They have equal rights in their country. Democracy doesn't mean 51% of the population ruling the 49%. Proclaiming Nepal as a secular state is a milestone to establishing an ideal pluralistic society. **Sandarva Giri** Gono Swastha Kendra Mirazanagar, Savar, Dhaka

**Bureaucrats dabbling in politics**  
This is to refer to your editorial "Bureaucrats dabbling in politics - put a caveat on the immoral practice". I do appreciate the spirit of your statement, which is also absolutely

**Father's Day**  
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