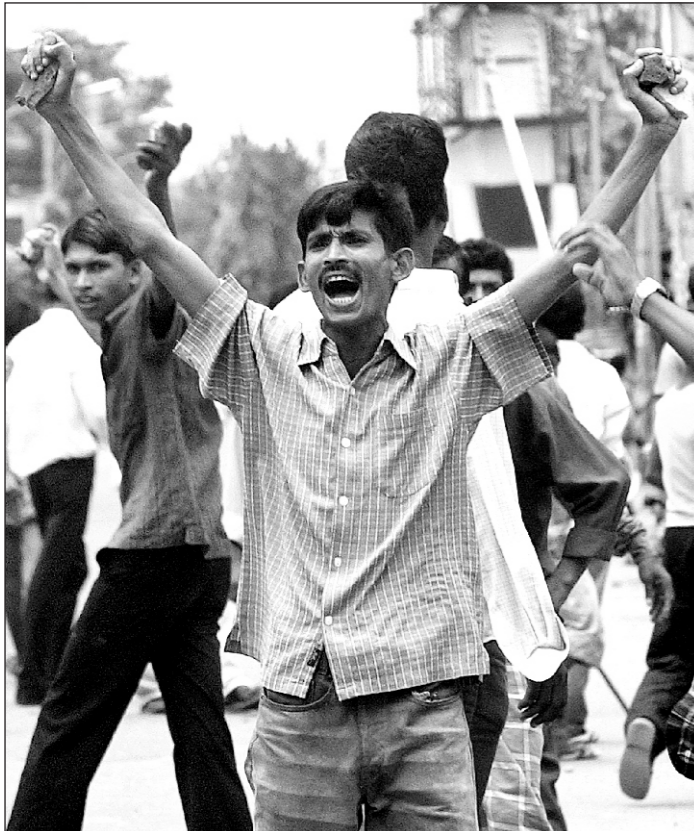


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# AL politics and the new generation



that much interest in AL politics. We need to find out the real causes behind this. My own analysis has revealed some of the causes as described below:

The AL always tries to focus on its role in the Liberation War. It is true that the AL played the key role in 1971. But to the young generation it does not matter that much. Besides, due to post -1975 propaganda concerning AL's role after the War (during 1972-73) the new generation people are left confused. Many members of the new generation have come to view Sheikh Mujib as an autocrat due to his initiation of a one-party system. Unfortunately, the AL has failed to convince the new generation in this matter.

The AL has failed to fight for the people in the contemporary context. As for example, during the current government's tenure, the AL could successfully organise the people to fulfil their demands on certain issues (like the electricity crisis, water crisis, price hike etc). The AL has missed the train again and again to be a people oriented party. On the contrary, from the beginning of the formation of this government, the only agenda that has been adopted by the party is toppling the government by any means. The

young people do not like this attitude of the AL.

The AL has no future vision. What is its plan for the next 10 years? In the present globalised world the younger generation wants to analyse the future perspective of the party. Unfortunately, there is no such future perspective of the AL that may attract the new generation.

At the organisational level, the AL has failed to create new leadership from the new generation. If it could give more emphasis on creating honest and sincere leadership from the new generation, then no doubt the party would be the most popular among the new generation. At present, the new generation thinks that it is a party of older people.

To make the party popular among the students, it could initiate some student-oriented projects (e.g. providing scholarships, initiating institutes).

If the leaders of the AL seriously think about the above-mentioned issues and take some positive steps then definitely the party will be popular among the new generation.

**Md. Anwarul Kabir**  
Assistant Professor & Research Coordinator  
American International University, Dhaka

Positive thinkers (from the older generation) of the country are more inclined towards the AL than any other party in Bangladesh. Perhaps, this is due to AL's historical role during our War of Liberation. If we observe the political arena of Bangladesh then it will be

revealed that most of the older citizens of the country (especially who are free thinkers and secular in mind) are the supporters of the AL. But what about the new generation? The people from the new generation who were born after the Liberation War are not taking

PHOTO: AFP

## Drug trafficking

The prosecution and the death sentence passed on Rabeya Khaton for possession of heroin underline the tragedy of the criminalisation of drug business.

Bangladesh can ill afford to have an illegal underground syndicate funded by drug traffickers. There is no way of actually stopping or even reducing the production and supply of these things. Add to this, the loss of tax revenue.

The government must respond vigorously to this problem.

**Rashid Mostafa**  
One-e-mail



It is not just a story of the upcoming elections, but has become a continuous process of political development. The word "hartal" that originally means "to strike or protest" now means--the time when the opposition parties would fight against police; offices, bank and shops "would" be closed (not any bank belonging to a protester), believing in our fate that nothing would happen when we

go out, and so on. Oh yes, one more thing: no private cars allowed.

They, the protesters, say the police attacked them. Nevertheless, they neither explain how they get such large amount of brick pieces for hundreds of workers in such a short time, nor do they say why they destroy public property.

**Tahsin Hyder**  
Lake Circus, Kalabagan, Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

I do not agree with Mr. Oneil Osman's reasons for which Bangladesh should recognise Israel. Israel is an illegal, Zionist state. These Zionists even persecute the real practising Jews with the same ferocity as they do when it comes to the Palestinians. It does not matter how advanced this Zionist state is and most of it is due to the United States & Britain. As a matter of fact, if there is anything called an "Axis of Evil", it is Israel, US & UK. You cannot reward a nation which has been committing rape, murder and land grabbing for 58 years. Their atrocities have not even reached the peak yet.

However, in my opinion, the one & only reason why Bangladesh should recognise Israel is to allow the Bangladeshis to have a free access to this illegal Zionist State of Israel, so that we can help the

Palestinians recover their land!  
**Syed Husain**  
Old DOHS, Dhaka

## World Cup: fickle fortune

It was in the darkest part of midnight but the lights of most houses were still on as the greatest show of earth was going on. When the match Brazil vs. France was over, I received an SMS from one of my friends. He wrote that never in his life he got such a shock like the defeat of Brazil. I really wanted to know how much emotional attachment a man needs to have to support a far away nation and what is the real meaning of World Cup. Another England-supporter friend said that she had lost all the attraction for the rest of the World Cup as

England had to go home. These incidents are amazing. The World Cup football is really showing its actual beauty. Some are crying, some are bursting out in joy.  
**Shoaib M. Siddiqui**  
Elephant Road, Dhaka

## Dynastic politics

Like Tarek Zia, Joy is also joining politics. So, can we call our political system a monarchy? Not probably, because there are still parliament, election, political parties etc. But we cannot call it democracy either because leadership is coming from the same families and political parties do not have democracy in themselves. Then, what is it?  
**Mainul Quadery**  
West Bakalia, Chittagong

# Begum Rokeya



There is a special part in annual sports of every school, that is, "Dress as you like." A few years back I attended a sports day wherein I found a little girl dressed as 'Begum Rokeya' (as we find her attire in text book). I asked the child whether she knew anything about the noble lady she imi-

tated. She said 'no'. I felt like writing something for letting the new generation know about the great woman.

Begum Rokeya was the first woman who showed the light of education for Bengali Muslim women. She was born in 1880 at Pairabondh village of Rangpur. Her upbringing was in a family where she had to veil herself from the age of five.

She was married to a highly educated liberal hearted youth of Bhagalpur. She had a great thirst for knowledge and noticing her eagerness, her husband encouraged her to pursue education. But her husband Shakhawat Hossain breathed his last only nine years after the marriage. Childless Rokeya felt the

sorrows and deprivation of women from her own experience. And she realised that sorrows and bereavement of folk women would not come to an end without education. She came forward to promote women's condition by setting up a Pathshala for the girls at Bhagalpur in Bihar. She expired on December 8, 1932.

Once in a meeting arranged for women she commented, "You would perhaps be surprised to know that I have been crying for women's education for the last 22 years. Women are so unfortunate that there is nobody to think or cry for them."

**Rubab Abdullah**  
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

## Save historical monuments

The centuries old Darasbari mosque in Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabgonj district is in bad shape due to lack of proper maintenance and supervision. It is one of the many cases of historical sites and structures being ruined due to lack of proper maintenance. Article 24 of Bangladesh Constitution stipulates that the state shall adopt measures for protection against disfigurement, damage or removal of all monuments, objects or places of special artistic or historical importance or interest. A few years ago the archaeology department submitted a proposal for the maintenance of the dilapidated mosque but the government rejected it.

Matters must improve in this important area.  
**Rashedul Haque Khokon**  
Dept. of law & Justice  
Rajshahi University

## Afghan suspects in Guantanamo

I wonder if I might inquire as to why these people have had their properties and possessions removed and been forced to retire to this particular concentration camp with scarcely sustenance sufficient to survive where they are yet being held virtually incommunicado and without charge or trial of any kind after all these years?

I wonder if I also might inquire as to whether anyone in the world can expect similar treatment for criticising the US government?

**Mr. David Oltmann**  
Brockville, Ont., Canada

## Earth-carrying truck

In Bangladesh, we do not have any specific guideline as how to carry earth, mainly clay soil and sand, from one place to another. Therefore, vehicles ranging from open trucks to push carts are used for such purpose.

These vehicles are in such bad shape that clay and sand often spill out and this causes great damage to the road.

In cities like Dhaka, the special 'Red Dhaka Clay' that spills out from trucks becomes hard and creates undulations and 'ruts', which reduce the worthiness of the roads. This way passengers lose comfort, drivers lose proper control over the vehicles and costs associated with traffic delay, accident and vehicle operation increase manifold. Furthermore, since the once smooth road surface becomes undulated, the wheel load and the sudden 'impact' load cause the disintegration (deterioration) of the road surface in an accelerated way. During rains the situation worsens. The clay turns into slurry and again reduces the skid resistance of the road surface increasing chance of accident. This way traffic delay as well as severe accidents occur quite frequently. The clay slurry also wipes out the valuable road marking, clogs the road side gutters and stretches the over burdened storm drainage system. If we consider the dust during the dry season or clay slurry thrown by the moving vehicles during the rainy season, the discomfort of pedestrians increases further. The same situation prevails in other major cities as well as townships. The national & regional highways as well as district roads suffer a great deal. As construction activities will increase in the coming days, need for transporting earth will also increase accordingly. Special dump trucks could be procured and supplied in great numbers. As an ad hoc measure, control should be there so that the earth on the truck is compacted and covered with tents and plastic sheets etc to prevent spilling out of earth.

Above all, we should start an awareness campaign among the stakeholders. A stitch in time saves nine! The authorities concerned should take immediate steps so that taxpayers' valuable contribution is not squandered due to the greed and folly of a few transport traders.

**Engr. Hafizur Rahman Arman**  
East Bashabo, Dhaka  
**Israel issue**

