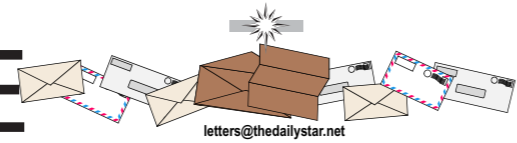


# TO THE EDITOR



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.



## Power crisis

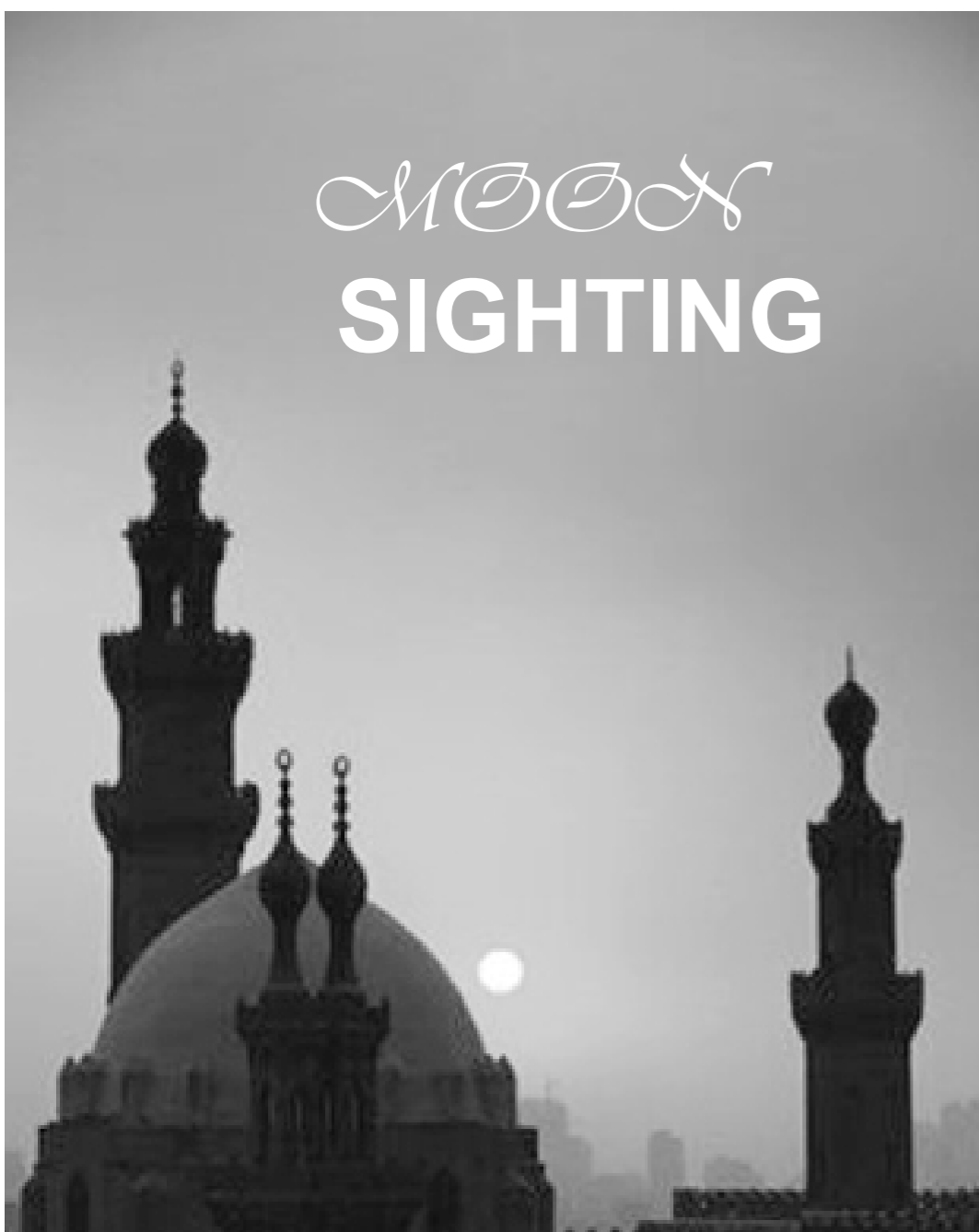
The ruling duo of BNP and Jamaat is definitely playing a cruel game with the people whom they duped into voting for them in the last election. The present outrageous load-shedding and mismanagement has exceeded all limits of tolerance. In the last month of their rule, the government approved

multiple projects and commissioning of new power stations to appease the voters. Even hoodwinking has got limits. All these years they were sitting on the projects and could not take important decisions. They are so apathetic and oblivious of the country and peoples' needs! In their 'misrule' BNP-Jamaat has

added only a limping 80MW Tongi power station which has tripped more than 75 times after becoming operative! The shortfall is around 2,000MW. BNP-Jamaat is leaving a very unpleasant and heavy task for the next government. They are pushing the country into "Aiyame Jaheliyat"(age of

darkness) both metaphorically and practically. Load-shedding and electricity deficit will continue to affect our industrial, official and domestic lives for at least five more years, even if the next government is sincere. The next government should prioritise and decide on the power plants with capacity for genera-

tion of at least 3,000MW within three months, and act quickly. The BNP-Jamaat coalition deserves to be thrown into the gutters for their inefficiency, sky-high corruption and anti-people activities. **SNM, Dhaka**



The sighting of the new moon has been creating confusion & uncertainties resulting in inconveniences, controversies & troubles for the Muslims at large. Even this year at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, it was announced so belatedly at 7:15 on Saturday evening that some people had already left for the Tarabi prayers in the mosques. Some sections of people even disregarded the announcement & started fasting a day earlier than the rest. Now even some political parties are blaming others for the confusion. So why can't a mechanism be developed that can rid us of this problem for good, to the satisfaction of all concerned. There is a general perception that the new moon has to be sighted by someone & has to be corroborated by others. But in this modern day and age, isn't this somewhat out-dated? The last few days had been fully overcast over the whole of Bangladesh when the moon was supposed to rise, so how could anyone see the thin sliver of the moon? It was practically impossible. Can't we depend on the almanacs? After all, the early Arab Muslims were very good in astronomy & they were the ones who refined this art into an exact science. Obviously, our Moon Sighting Committee depended on calculations when it announced on Saturday that the first day of Ramadan would be Monday without sighting the moon.

Around the world there are countries where they started Ramadan 2 or 3 days earlier. In one country, Iraq for example, a section of people started the fasting one day while another section a day later. Even in our small country there are pockets of small areas where the people are doing the same. The countries on the west of us and also on the east had started their Ramadan earlier. We may be the last country to officially start the holy month. Isn't it ridiculous that 30th Shaban or 1st Ramadan is on different days in different countries & even in the same country? I am afraid it will be the same situation regarding the day of Eid-ul-Fitr also & subsequently the beginning of other Islamic months. Can't our Ulemas get together, or better still, can't the OIC or some leading Islamic university arrange some modalities to sight the moon or base the sighting of the moon on calculations far ahead of the actual happening? A foolproof, universally recognised & accepted procedure will be in keeping with the modern-day advances, realities & circumstances. This will stop the absurd & troublesome situation prevailing in the Muslim world in this very important matter.

After all, Islam is a justly balanced, sober & practical religion and if we keep pace with the modern times, I believe it will not be against religious conventions & edicts. **Sayed A. Chaudhury**  
Gulshan, Dhaka

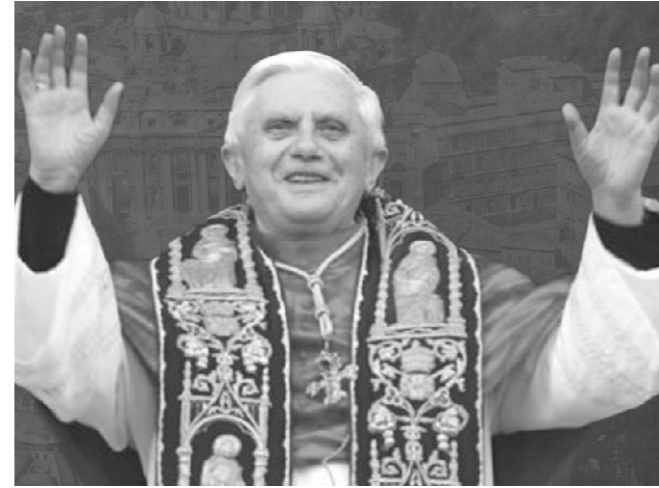
**Traffic jam in Gulshan**  
The residential area Gulshan has become a busy commercial hub of the city; it has gradually lost its residential "characteristics". As a result, a huge number of multinational and national corporate houses have set up their multi-storeyed office complex in Gulshan. Most of the offices are on the Gulshan Avenue and most of them have no parking space. This is a problem that nobody seems to bother about. Is anybody listening?  
**S.M.A. Rakib**  
Uttara RA, Dhaka

dates are allowed to simultaneously run for five parliamentary seats. While the candidate running for multiple seats effectively increases his/her chances of securing a parliamentary seat, the additional expenses of a by-election are borne partly by the public. Thus, the provision to run for up to five parliamentary seats enables candidates to benefit partly at the public's expense. Second, does by-election pose undue hardship for a certain class of candidates? Compared to the financial strength of a candidate running simultaneously for multiple seats, the financial strengths of candidates competing against them are usually drastically less. These candidates tend to not only lose in the election, but also become financially worse off by by-election time. A fresh candidate didn't have to spend money for the regular election and stands on a higher ground compared to his/her competitors (who competed and lost in the regular election). Such unevenness is artificial because the fresh candidate is literally tag-teaming the opponents. Third, when a candidate wins in multiple constituencies, he/she keeps one constituency and relinquishes the others. During the by-election, voters must vote for a different person who runs in place of the multi-seat winning candidate. In this circumstance, it is normal for voters to be confused about their true representative. Fourth, the problem of a "regular-

election-following by-election" becomes further complicated as voters in that constituency already know of the ruling party. It is plausible that voters who earlier voted for the candidate who did not represent the ruling party will now vote for the candidate who represents the ruling party (i.e., to make their vote 'count'). This possibility can further reduce the opposition party's number of parliamentary seats. Lastly, although such has never been the case, it is hypothetically possible to have two of our major opposition parties to win exactly equal number of seats. If both parties have candidates winning from multiple seats, the government cannot be formed till by-elections take place. Such a delay can put the country in a limbo. In light of the above mentioned drawbacks of allowing candidates to run in up to five constituencies, some possible reforms ought to be discussed in the parliament. Clearly, it is too late to discuss such a sensitive issue at the moment. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the next government will carefully evaluate the merits and drawbacks of the multi-constituency election provision. **Sultanul Islam Prodhan**  
**Dr. Noushi Rahman**  
Pace University, New York

## POPE'S COMMENTS

Pope Benedict should have apologised for his speech, which offended our religious sentiment. His comments undermined a major religion. This not only made him controversial but also created tension in the Muslim world. The Pope needs to remember two things: First, he is the highest religious leader of Christians who is supposed to have respect for all prophets, especially the one treated as the best human being that the world has ever produced. Second, the relations between the Muslims and the western world are bound to be strained by such comments. **Md. Hamidur Rahman Khan**  
East West University



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