

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.



Army in the streets of Dhaka

I am an avid reader and a big fan of The Daily Star since its birth. I think the main goal of a newspaper should be presenting unbiased news. This newspaper's recent take on Army in Dhaka's street caught me off guard. Unless, I have missed, I haven't seen a single article in The Daily Star that renders deployment of Army in Bangladesh as a good idea for the time being.

No one likes to see Army in control of a sovereign democratic country. But in order to stop unwanted political chaos, it is pretty evident that help of our armed forces is required to the fullest extent. We are loosing hundreds of millions of dollar a day whenever our political parties try to stop the country from moving forward by staging meaningless strike. They don't have any regards for the welfare of the general population. I think they are hopeless in general and their primary goal is maximising their wealth by sucking this poverty-stricken country bone dry.

I am not a supporter of BNP nor do I endorse Awami League. I represent the generation who grew up after our well fought liberation war. Our generation is working very hard to move this country towards prosperous future. On the other hand, I see our corrupt politicians from both major parties hanging on to their past conflicts, playing meaningless blame game with each other at the expense of general population. This is totally ridiculous! This atrocity needs to be stopped at any cost before our country becomes a total failure.

Concerned reader, On e-mail

Vandalism in court

I would like to comment on the recent vandalism brought about by our most respected and so called eminent lawyers of our country, which has brought nothing but more shame and disrespect in people's heart for our judicial system. Moreover it has caused disarray and brought suffering to people who go to the courts to seek justice.

It is a shame to our country that we having such learned barristers with degrees from UK's most prestigious and prominent institutions actually vandalise the precinct of justice itself! It would be even a bigger shame for them to know that a 2nd yr LLB student of Cardiff University is writing this.

Muhammad Zeeshan Mohsen
Cardiff University, UK

Iajuddin's address to the nation



I was eagerly waiting to listen to the much awaited address of our Honourable President to the nation on the night of 10th December. Immediately after the address an incident flashed in my mind. It was back in 1982. I was traveling by steamer service Gazi to Barisal to conduct Honours Examination at B.M. College. General H. M. Ershad was addressing the nation for the first time after taking power from Justice Satter. Many passengers assembled at the VIP lounge to listen to the speech. The address over, an elderly gentleman proceeded to his cabin and made a one word comment, 'Cheat'. After listening to our president on the night of 10th December, I could not find a word.

A Professor of DU
On e-mail

Heading for a political quagmire?

We, the citizens of the republic, are much shocked to observe the dubious and controversial moves that are being taken by the president/CA. In the recent deployment of the army without discussing the matter with the ten advisers to the caretaker government the CA has undoubtedly failed to conform to the frame of neutrality. The CA in his address to the nation told that he took the decision with consulting with his advisers, but the advisers, namely Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Hasan Mashud Choudhury, CM Shafi and Sultana Kamal who tendered their resignation the following day, revealed a story that was very much close to yet another great lie. Or you may call it a misunderstanding, which is enough to push the nation to the brink of a political predicament from where there is hardly any democratically healthy retreat.

Unfortunately, the decision as to the deployment of the army had been loom-

ing over the Bangabhaban for quite a long time as we heard that the CA almost gave an order recently, which was warded off after a series of discussions with the advisers. Now the point -- good or bad, worse or the worst -- is that why the CA was so much leaning to the decision of deployment of the army when there was no need for it in the country? Looking for the answer to this question one does not have to wander much as the CA in his address to the nation confirmed that it (army deployment) was because of the fourteen party alliance, he told in a round about way. The point itself raises many questions as to his being incapable to be neutral the honourable President-cum-CA has finally succumbed to the pressures of his affiliation to the BNP.

Resignation of the four eminent advisers the CA points to the CA's biased position to the erstwhile government further clear as the advisers told to the press that

they were in no position to work as they were not being consulted as to taking the decision of the army deployment. Moreover, they were of the view that there was no need for such a move while the advisers were about to be successful in their endeavour with their package.

It is, unfortunately, likely that the caretaker government is going to face a graver situation as to its prime motive -- ensuring a congenial atmosphere for holding a free, fare and credible election. The British High Commissioner in the country recently in a meeting reiterated the point.

At this point of frustration and fear as far as democracy is concerned, we urge the honourable President-cum-CA to revise his entire decision and rise unto the occasion that demands a very subtle and neutral moves.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

BNP's 'No' and the nation

The whole nation is awfully and woefully on the tenterhooks at the dismal political deadlock with the national election just ahead and that is vividly reflected in the hundreds of letters appearing in The Daily Star, written by those from home and abroad. The letters indeed give one wonderful reading and provoke penetrating thought. There is seldom one who does not want end of the confrontational politics and an atmosphere of free and fair election in the country. But most of the writers' accusation directed towards Sheikh Hasina does not seem level playing though the current political unrest, as they term, is the fallout of both hers and Begum Khaleda Zia's inordinate lust for power. This is not a totally unfounded premise. Surprisingly many seem to be too prejudiced and so find nothing wrong in blaming Sheikh Hasina, rather squarely, for having put the nation and its election in jeopardy and uncertainty.

They are just echoing the BNP alliance while coming down heavily on AL and its alliance for blockade/agitation that caused scores of people to embrace death and made dent in the wall of the country's economy. But how amazing is it not to ask their conscience about whose were the mischievous scheme of things that fuelled the blockade/seige (or became the root of all evils)? The upping of retirement age of the judges by BNP-Jaamat Alliance made the neutrality of the CTG first victim, and that resulted in the demands for reforms of CTG. Then the Election Commission, the ultimate apparatus to hold free and fair election, was manned, without consensus, by those known to BNP-Jaamat as their own men. Moreover, three hundred election officials appointed only from among the JCD/Shibir activists and a voter list with over one crore fake voters delivered by the EC under the aegis of the 4-party alliance government made the reform proposals just heavier. But BNP-Jaamat alliance said

'no' to reforms. And you witnessed how the High Court directive for updating/correcting that list was flouted.

When there was countrywide demand for removal of the CEC and his colleagues the 4-party alliance said 'no' and even threatened the advisers of the CTG not to meddle with the election set-up. The nation witnessed the chronicles of later conspiracies in installing the partisan President also as CA of the CTG and making one of the controversial ECs (after departure of Justice M A Aziz) as the CEC, that finally called for legal battle, again in the face of BNP-Jaamat's 'no'. The uncompromising 'no' finally hamstrung the ruling by the High Court Bench against illegality of the partisan President holding the non-political, neutral post of the CA. BNP appointee Attorney General and former Law Minister resorting to unscrupulous dishonesty prevailed upon the Chief Justice to transmit their 'no' to the bench all at once by ordering postponement of the bench. And that stained the CJ too as partisan. The sanctity

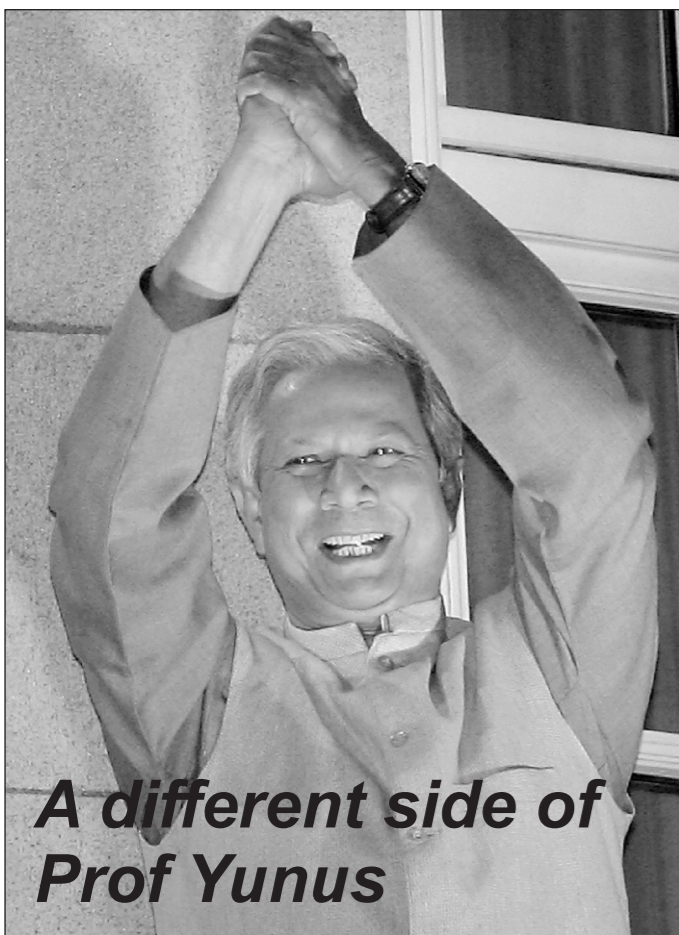
of justice nosedived and all hell broke loose on the sacred precincts.

The nation, since these blockade, sits-in and agitation began, had to have so many stunning 'nos' of BNP Alliance only to submit to their will and accept their well crafted set-up, done with utmost finesse, to engineer election results in their favour. And the way the CA Professor Iajuddin is running the whole show gives credence to the allegation that he is there as BNP's 'yes man' to fulfil its agenda. (Hence a new demand of his removal). Was it at all necessary for a government that boastfully claim of having done sweeping development and won the hearts of the people? When they look at the mirror they see in them phantoms of wrong doings; brutalizing of opponents, pervasive corruption, vicious spiral of prices, unabated load-shedding, wholesale nepotism and politicization of the administration, carnages and plundering of public fund which saw many of them rise from paupers to the privileged affluent, blur their own vision.

They are so afraid of their image and of hard times ahead that in answer to a journalist's question about demand of LDP for indictment of the corrupt former Ministers, BNP GS, Mr. Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan spewed his 'no' and told that the CTG in place is for holding the next national election only but nothing else.

The readers and letter writers must not be blind to behold and judge things as they need to be beheld and judged and without any prejudice when it matters national interest, more so when a party's surreptitious but calculated designs and machinations to come to power again through rigged election was/is virtually writ large. To right anybody's wrong, somebody must take the lead. AL is doing that together with like minded other parties even at the cost of human lives.

A. H. Dewan
Dhaka Cantt., Dhaka



A different side of Prof Yunus

I want to highlight the extraordinary teaching skills of Professor Yunus.

I was his direct student for a very short period (unfortunately) in 1976. I cannot explain in words how it felt to be in his class listening to him explain the derivation of "indifference curves" from slices of utility hills and the contrast between ordinal and cardinal rankings! I am now very amused to hear him say that he did not enjoy teaching "elegant economic theories" amidst deep and pervasive poverty surrounding the campus. Sitting in his classroom we never had a clue! Says a lot about what a capable professional this amazing man is.

If he could teach so well theories that bored him, can you imagine how he would fare teaching theories that he really enjoys? He was the best teacher I have ever had. To those who are skeptical about his recent innovative ideas on business and politics, I say never underestimate the power of his ideas. Bottomline: When Yunus talks, we listen no matter what.

Dr. Zahid Hussain
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Sorry state of shipping

A news item appeared in The Daily Star of 9.12.06 (page-16) under the heading; "underhand dealings with ship surveyors alleged". Surely this is not the first time allegation of the nature highlighted in the media. Substandard ships operating in our coastal and river water commenced with the free-style construction as well as operation of such vessels with utter indifference to rules/regulations since 1947 with the advent of new generation owners/operators and the gradual disappearance of the traditional inland ship owners.

It is indeed a matter of deep regret/shame that a vital sector of our transport system (the inland/coastal water transport), in course of last six decades has been transformed from a safe mode into its present status of being a system having no regard to the lives and cargo which it is intended, also duty-bound, to carry safely. The strange and most unfortunate part of this saga is that the old traditional operators mostly from abroad apparently provided a much better standard and service for nearly one and half century than what our owners of the soil are doing for the fellow countrymen. Perhaps many of our elderly compatriots/senior citizens will share my views which also equally may apply in the case of our railway system.

Therefore it will be entirely unfair to blame only the surveyors for the rots which now seem to affect the entry of ships to our major port due to frequent grounding/sinking of the aforementioned substandard vessels in the navigational channels. Negligence/indifference for a very long time has now led to this grave situation, where we may now be helpless or in position involving very costly economic consequences to all. Just think of a closure of Chittagong port due to the serious wreck/sinkage of a vessel of the type described in the news item; one should in fact shudder to imagine such a possibility which can virtually bring the export and import of Bangladesh to a halt.

The concern of the media, giving due importance to such impending calamity ought to be appreciated

but why the authority or the trade body like FBCCI is not making any noise on such important issue? We all know the fabrics of our society to be in all respect almost degenerated hence we can sleep over and allow anything like this to happen without concern! Only good governance, order and respect for rules/regulations by all concerned can save us from a calamity that can easily happen with callous attitudes of all those responsible under the current state of the management of our ports and shipping sectors. Let Almighty give us the sense to wake up before we see any thing like a disaster of the nature.

Z. Rahman, Gulshan, Dhaka

10 questions to the politicians

I have carefully read Janab Abu Talab Mahmudur Rahman's letter [DS-06 December 2006] written from Kuwait and have carefully noted down its content. I am not quite sure if I am the bravest amongst the available politicians but I think that anyone claiming himself/herself to be a politician would certainly like to reply to Janab Rahman's letter without much hesitation. I also feel that he deserves a reply, so that politicians as a whole are not laden with all the blame and responsibility for whatever is happening in our beloved country. Answer no.1: No, not always. Answer no.2: Yes, undoubtedly. Answer no.3: You have asked a sweeping question, whose reply is that not all politicians that you come across are shameless. Men and women who come from a good stock and indulge in political activities know how to behave and how to differentiate between good and bad.

Answer no.4: Most of us, I agree, are driven by muscle rather than brain because there is an acute dearth of intellectuals and educated people amongst the ranks of the politicians today. Conversely, we have a plethora of musclemen and musclewomen roaming around everywhere. Half-read or half-educated people are found occupying the highest seat of power today unlike the times of Shere-Bangla Fazlul Huq or Husein Shaheed Suhrawardy -- political giants of the sub-continent.

Answer no.5: We feel that our political opponents do not give a damn to our legitimate demands terming everything that we say or do as subversive. Our backs are pushed against the wall leaving us with no option but only hard line. Personally I think that any 'oborodh' or blockade should be confined to the person or institution which has become controversial and not the whole country. Presently we are trying to do exactly that.

Answer no.6: Sorry dear, where is that blessed democracy in our country which you are talking of? Is it on paper that you see or on our lips? You may say we have a mockery of democracy or if you are more generous we may say, we have a semblance of democracy. Show me, which of the political parties except the CPB or the dreaded 'Jamaat' follows democratic traditions [and ways] within their 'homes' in our country? None, you would agree. Where are the solid democratic institutions which nurture democracy? Then why talk of democracy and compromise at all?

Answer no.7: No. Politicians are just a minority numerically, but very strong otherwise due to their fertile brains! Answer no.8: Sometimes the people in general also make mistakes and choose the wrong people to rule the country. It is then that the country goes to dogs and innocent lives are lost. Selection of right persons through ballot is still a far cry in our country, since we go by the 'Markas' or symbols which represent various parties. Not necessarily all nominated candidates of my chosen or favourite party may be angels. Therefore you see, where do we make the basic error?

Answer no.9: Agreed. But to revert to sensible politics will take enough time; at least a generation. Answer no.10: No, not at the moment, because it is a free for all affair. Once I am elected or any Tom, Dick or Harry is elected there is no way to bring him back to senses or the right track if he goes astray. For five years s/he is gone!

I would love to respond to your further queries if any.
AK Faezul Huq
Advocate, Supreme Court
Baridhara, Dhaka

Congrats Bangladesh Tigers

Bangladesh cricket team has white-washed Zimbabwe in recent home series. Though Zimbabwe is not a very strong side now-a-days but the consistency, which Bangladesh team showed, is really commendable. They have proved that they have improved a lot. Though the difference between two teams were not always huge but our team won most of the matches comprehensively and convincingly. Also the upcoming young cricketers, who were discovered in the current series will be a wonderful asset for our team and surely they have the potential to serve the team for a long time. The consistency of the team vice-captain,

Shahriar Nafees, really charmed all the cricket lovers of our country. Besides, senior players also did very well and showed their commitment. It was a team effort and it was definitely a huge mental boost for Bangladesh cricket team for better success in the future. They are winning matches and being able to show that they can also do it. We hope all the very best for our cricket team and wish they make the flow of winning a habit. Congratulations Bengal Tigers.

Shoaib M. Siddiqui
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