



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.

Vote for whom?

By the grace of the partisan Election Commission my and my family members' names have been left out of the voters' list for the next election. Perhaps the Commission did not find it important to send its enumerators to unimportant persons like us although our house is situated at a prominent place in the city. But I do not regret, because for whom should I vote? Is it for BNP or is it for AL? I have seen both the regimes in power; they both are birds of same feather. It is the same coin, whether head or tail. We all know what AL did during five years of their rule: terrorism by the party cadres, creation of godfathers, plundering of public wealth etc. But the people of Bangladesh are conscious voters, therefore, they gave befitting reply by voting in favour of BNP. But at the end what they achieved excepting misrule, terrorism by party cadres, looting and plundering of public wealth, favouritism and nepotism, creation of neo godfathers etc. We saw Hasina boasting and clamouring for Zainal Hazari, similarly afterwards we also have seen Khaleda placing floral wreath on the dead body of a notorious criminal of the city killed in police firing while committing crime. Like Hasina, Khaleda also was found surrounded by her sycophants and her son by terrorists. So what is the difference between these two parties and their leaders? How do the voters would make their choice in that case, as they know these political opportun-



ists are out there to grab power and amass wealth at the cost of the teeming millions. The legislators become billionaires overnight in a country where 70 percent of the population live below poverty line. Is there no respite to such situation or any other avenue so that the nation can get rid of such elements?
Shapan Mazumder
On e-mail

With four advisers resignation due to their admission that they could no longer work towards the creation of an environment for a free and fair election, the crisis has further deepened. Bangladeshis at home and abroad are getting increasingly disillusioned to witness how rapidly the constitutional democracy in Bangladesh is bursting at the seams and the holes are getting bigger by the day.

The assumption by the President of the role of Chief Adviser and his constant failure to separate his role as President from that of CA is fueling this crisis. As CA, he is required to act on the basis of either consensus or the majority decision of his team of advisers. But he has been mostly doing just the opposite with his "go alone" approach. The President and Chief Adviser has proved thoroughly incapable of working as the team leader of a cabinet of ten advisers. Many critical decisions that the cabinet took were not fully backed by the Chief Adviser. Alternatively, many decisions which the CA took



were either not endorsed by his cabinet or were not even discussed with them.

We still hope that the President will change his approach and the conditions for a free and fair election can be established and sustained. However, if such hope is only a dream, the President should voluntarily give up the post of CA to save the nation from further agony and force the two major political alliances to agree to a consensus candidate to be appointed as Chief Adviser without any delay. Meanwhile, when he consults with our warning politicians, he should make

a reference to the Supreme Court to seek its opinion on the extension of time for conducting a free and fair election. He may specifically refer the issue of calculating the time of three months from the date of appointment of a Chief Adviser based on his consultation with major political groups. Holding election within 90 days will be laudable. But if such election repeats the experience of 1995 election and throws the country into further crisis, it may be wiser to rethink the constitutional requirement in the context of exceptional circumstances. It is also possible that the country has to review afresh the institu-

tions of governance after this election and has to make extensive constitutional elaborations and amendments if our democracy has to survive. Taking into consideration this possibility, one time exception of time extension due to extraordinary circumstances may be endorsed by the Supreme Court. Acting in conformity with the constitution is important. But more important is the survival and preservation of the integrity and transparency of the democratic system guaranteed by our constitution.
Professor A. T. R. Rahman
City University of New York, USA

Party fund raising

Report in newspaper on December 08, 2006 revealed Bangladesh Economic Society's General Secretary Dr. Abul Barakat's statement that 20 thousand crore taka will be spend in the forthcoming general election in Bangladesh. In this regard I have a small analysis of a relevant report in newspaper on October 16, 2006.

The former said "More than 3,500 Iowa Democrats paid \$100 each to attend the fund-raising banquet that kicked off with Clinton's speech. About 50 people paid \$10,000 per couple to attend a private reception with Clinton beforehand." It is the scenario of a single state of the US and in the fund raising inauguration day.

We are now a Nobel Prize winning nation. Can't we compare

between political fund rising in the US and Bangladesh? I think, yes, because Dr. Yunus' micro-credit model has been successfully used in the US for last two decades (and later many other countries of the globe).

Even before the partition of the sub-continent, the then major political party, Muslim League raised its fund substantially by taking 'two anaas' from its tens of thousands of workers (Abul Hisam My Life and Pre-Partition Politics of Undivided Bengal, Page 56, Bengali version).

After the liberation of Bangladesh, all the seated government parties have cried that opposition parties have been responsible for huge damages and losses of properties in the country. These losses must have to be quantified for each regime. Same thing has to be done with identical importance for quantify-

ing how much public money has unlawfully gone into pockets of government parties' leaders including ministers and MPs.
Saif Tinku
On e-mail

Isn't it unbecoming of them?

I am surprised to see the destruction done by some lawyers at the premise of law. How could these people do this kind of thing? I understand that Chief Justice had made some order, which he shouldn't have in this situation. But is this the right answer to his action? How could a so-called highly educated person use abusive remarks against CJ? There is a proverb that says that the truth of a man comes out from a small task. Surprisingly Dr. Kamal Hossain gave a press briefing where he only said about the CJ's action. But he didn't say

anything about the action that happened after that. He shouldn't have done this. My request to Dr. Kamal Hossain, please don't make any comment to cause anger among the people.
Rafiq
Finland

Camouflaged identity

As an expatriate living in Canada we all know about the Oct 28 incident (reportedly instigated by the killing of an AL activist by the student wing of the anti-liberation Jamaat). AL seemingly did the right thing by fighting back!

However, a camouflaged Jamaat/BNP supporter under the name of "K S Roy" wrote a misleading article describing the incident.

Firstly, no Hindu would ever support the BNP-Jamaat alliance after the 2001 election where,

Hindu women were raped. Scores of people belonging to minority groups were killed. Some of them were even forced to leave Bangladesh.

To those camouflaged writers it is my ardent request "Please do not acquire false 'ethnic' names to express your views" You have no right to make a mockery of those innocent people who lost their dignity/lives after the 2001 election.
Washimul
On e-mail

GrameenPhone's logo

GrameenPhone's new logo resembles a screw ... a propeller screw. How symbolic! It aptly symbolises the shafting these telecom companies are giving the nation with their high call rates, frivolous marketing and hype. At least GrameenPhone is candid

enough to unabashedly acknowledge this through its logo.

Ali Shaw
San Diego, California

Maze of history?

History is usually the stunning story about a few. For instance, General Azam Khan compelled Iskander Mirza reportedly to hand over the presidency to General Ayub Khan who proved to be a bigger dictator than his predecessor, or A M Malek who wrote out his resignation on the back of a cigarette packet. Ordinary people rarely find any place in history, and the same tradition is being followed even to day, so the "search of the history or segments of it" is likely to lead to nowhere.

The majority in any country are the ordinary people, the common citizens. Likewise the real content of history should be the contribution of the people, as in 1971 War of Liberation. This is a shining

example. Yet the history of the Liberation War is about the people who are other than ordinary!

Any significant achievement and social progress becomes possible only through the people's participation. For this to happen communication and dissemination of information is mandatory and minimising the "atrociously big distance" while calculating and designing the people's "dreams within insulated chambers which eventually turn into nightmare" This then is a form of neo-exploitation - "powerful men and women" who have been empowered by the people, yet choose not to rub shoulders, though it be their responsibility, with the "mulling media" who are the link pins between the ordinary and the extra-ordinary. It is so obvious that the people have become puppets in the hands of the powerful for

may be, very strange reasons, which is, yet another "new dark cloud across the horizon."

Farida S.
On e-mail

Election Commission's advertisement

Bangladesh Election Commission published an advertisement for the scrutiny and correction of the current voter list in different dailies recently. I humbly draw attention to a shortcoming of the advertisement. There should be an appeal for the resettlement of duplicate voters to arrange for self-deletion of their earlier enrolment in the list as it is their moral duty. A recent study by an international organisation said that there are millions of redundant voters' names in the list.

Saif
On e-mail

For what change?



It's in reference to the article "For a true change" by Kazi S M Khasrul Alam Quddusi published in DS. Whenever we hear to or read of any changes, it whets our appetite, asking what change, metaphysical, morphological, mercurial, or ideological?

In his pleonastic venture I find only psychological change the writer wants the

politicians to. Before warping up he writes "political leaders also should start reforming their mindset, and read the minds of the people, so as to avoid being jettisoned. Another sentence he writes "the people of Bangladesh who fought against the overbearing British, the tyrannical Pakistanis, and unjust dictators have shown a fair

amount of resilience at the call of the time."

The writer grows pensive reminiscing our past but muffs up to bring forth a moot question which is, this sovereign country today is ruled by no Britons no Pakistanis but by the people of this soil. Spearheading mass movement may be synchronic and diachronic, frantic and/or

organised. Whereas in order to grow a democracy mature fostering of political culture, building on values of democracy, political awakening and socialisation as well as an enlightened civil society within must be required.

Where does that structure for fostering a democracy happen to exist in our country? Hardly can people in threes abandon those corrupt politicians in many constituencies since they prefer more corrupt ones. Politics is such an activity which is carried on in a human environment and is thus a product of the historical background, social set-up, physical location and climate etc. Such characteristics shall affect the political activity that takes place in a given area.

Now is psychological change prior to structural change or structural change first to come about for psychological change? In sociology, functional school of thought says Man forever with atavistic basic instinct deserves to be controlled by social institutions.

People of this country, not inured themselves to political

unrest, want qualitative changes in political structure to be brought about by the next elected govt. on the morrow:

- (a) separating judiciary from executive organ for the sake of full-fledged function of democracy and media freedom;
 - (b) appointing ombudsman so as to ensure good governance;
 - (c) making ACC go in full speed to choke the corrupt elements which stunt our GDP growth;
 - (d) unshackling police from the fists of ruling party letting them act neutral. It can change the feudalistic structure at municipal and village politics;
 - (e) bringing about land reform to free government (khas) land from the jostles of political coteries at grassroots level;
 - (f) practicing democracy within political party and no selection but election of woman MPs by direct vote saying no to nepotism;
- We do expect next government will address these points.
Roney, On e-mail

Deployment of troops

I hate filthy politics. My question to the people, politicians, media who are criticising Mr. Iajuddin for seeking help of the army, what are you so afraid of? Our troops will not do any harm to anyone, unless of course, someone destroys public and private properties. I ask our politicians to understand the simple fact that the army is here to protect the innocent people of Bangladesh to protect our businesses from looters, to capture the terrorists who are on the loose. In my opinion, the troops should stay put until the election is over, and that will benefit

all our political parties.
A citizen
On e-mail

Deployment of Army should be good news for the general citizens of Bangladesh except the political parties. It was long awaited and very much needed to bring the law and order back to normal, at least for now. Army is well prepared and much better equipped to handle critical situation than the existing civil administration.
A reader, On e-mail

