

Right to Security

A High Court Division of the Supreme Court has issued Rule Nisi upon the government, police administration and Dhaka University authorities on a writ filed by Advocate Salma Ali in a matter of grave public importance.

In specific terms, the court has directed the government and the police to take action against persons engaged to maintain law and order at the DU campus when those conscience-pricking incidents took place on January 1 and 11.

We wholeheartedly welcome the pro-active role of the judiciary in matters touching up on the fundamental interests of citizenry.

Coming to the corrective steps of the police after those two incidents we find that: (a) DMP Commissioner AKM Shamsuddin has since been replaced by Matiur Rahman, a former DIG of Dhaka Range; and (b) the new incumbent has dropped something of a bombshell by telling the press that policemen could now shoot a mugger, toll collector or a terrorist in hot pursuit if all attempts to overpower and catch him had failed.

We think bombshells or adhoc measures are not the things that are going to radically improve police performance. The law enforcement agencies will have to be placed on a solid footing with more funds allocated to them so that they are properly equipped and have the proper kind of training imparted to them to handle the situation effectively.

Save the Royal Cats

HOW cruel and exploitative man has been of the wild life finds a poignant expression in the size of the current tiger population in the world which stands precariously reduced to 4,622 from roughly 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th century.

In Bangladesh, consciousness about environment and eco-system is still at a very nascent stage. Although we have actively participated in international conventions on environment and ecology, the ground reality is that we have not quite lived up to our responsibilities.

Break the Stalemate

CRICKET has come to a standstill in spite of the MCC tour of Bangladesh. The situation has reached a point where the BCB and the CWAB (Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh) are turning away from each other leaving cricket on the edge of a precipice.

Cricket has always been a seasonal game in Bangladesh and it is only in recent years that we have seen it played for a longer time following the introduction of day/night matches and the season progressing into the months of May/June.

Let's be Democratic—Within and Without

by Maqsd Alam

FOR the last twenty years our politicians are virtually keeping the entire country hostage for their own selfish interests.

The major problem lies with the practice and understanding the concept of democracy. Let us first define the term 'democracy' for which we have fought for centuries, say starting from the British colonial rule, and we are still far from achieving our goal of a truly stable democratic government of our own.

Keep in mind that dictatorship or any other form of authoritarian rule will lead any society backward because the human nature is driven by profit making incentives that society has to offer.

In our highly respected Parliament, the voting that takes place on various sensitive bills that are introduced in the House are called open ballot voting.

Women in Bangladesh are not lagging behind in politics as one can see both our Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition are female.

As a matter of fact, the elected president in the United States, who is also the head of the government in that country, cannot run for more than two terms even if the same party is elected more than twice.

As the president in Bangladesh is not the head of the government, he is simply the head of the state with no administrative power when the prime minister is in the office.

THE western adage - 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks' is very appropriate and applicable to Bangladesh's old politicians.

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space.

Strange maladies Sir, Strange maladies have infected the society; hence it is necessary to coin new words to focus on the social impact.

A section of the disgruntled and greedy society feel that the country needs an armament and rearmament phase, to flush out the honest and the meek, where quantity will prevail over quality, and dissent has to be muffled violently.

The regime is partial to applying strictness in restricted areas, giving priority first to the party interest (there is no other way of explaining some of the silent and loud policies).

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The 30 additional seats in the parliament is making the democratic processes even worse so that any government can function on its own without the participation of the opposition party in the parliament.

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generation take over the leadership role, I sincerely hope that in future we, the humble citizens of Bangladesh, will not fall victim to our leaders' mistakes.

The legal system including the law enforcing agencies like police force should be allowed to function independently without any party affiliation and be better paid with modern equipment and communication system.

We, the people of Bangladesh are innocent victims of wars, injustice, anarchy, strike, and God knows what more lies ahead.

Our leaders often give us the common lame excuse that our democracy is a baby and it needs more time. Well then, it is our leaders who need more knowledge on democracy and meaningful politics.

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Teaching Old Politicians New Tricks isn't Easy

by A H Jaffor Iah

The big unanswered question before us is - will it be possible to teach our old politicians new tricks? If the answer is affirmative then there is a hope for our destitute and impoverished nation.

it can form coalition with like-minded legislators from another party. Once an administration is formed, then it is allowed to run the government for a fixed period.

Perhaps in Bangladesh the politicians have a vague idea how democracy functions. For example, if one party loses a fair election then they would quickly assert that they would not join the legislative body.

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misplaced kindness. Open partially is a hidden menace. The Ministry of Industries has been denuded of the luscious fruits and is neglected to enjoy the unpalatable leftovers (SOEs, public sector).

The younger generations are being taught the wrong principles through bad examples. Now the armed cadres in the political parties are being reinforced to fight it out openly with arms, to maintain the political supremacy of the political parties.

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involving innocent lives or that of some top leaders. This is not unexpected, as violence will take its ultimate toll, regardless of affiliation.

AZ Dhaka.

When will the government wake up?

Sir, I was deeply shocked at the death of the LGRD joint secretary, Nikunja Bihari Debnath, who was stabbed to death by muggers on the DU campus on January 11, 2000 while he was returning home from the railway station.

The law and order of the country will not improve unless the government wakes up from the slumber and tackle the situation keeping in mind that the protection of the people is their first priority - not to contrive ways to remain in power.

Nur Jahan Chittagong

Different strokes

Sir, The World Bank Country Director's interview to DS (Jan 10) and earlier on the development of the electric power sector in Bangladesh had sufficient depth and breadth for enhancing the awareness level of the consumers, in respect of the technicalities involved at high policy and management levels.

Then there is the invisible hurdle of nepotism and corrupt practices at ALL levels in almost all areas (civil, political and public sectors): policy, financial management, operation, and maintenance, at a time when the global market forces are at work (the disadvantage of the LDCs, as seen in Seattle); and decentralisation is a recurring refrain. Almost all developing countries have to go through and surmount this unpleasant phase of national development.

A HUsnaid Dhaka

Unfortunate

Sir, We are so unfortunate that even our martyrs are not spared from the destructive politics. On the 14th December '99, our Martyred Intellectual's Day and on 16th December, our Victory Day the general people could not lay wreaths at the memorials due to chaotic situation.

On the Victory Day, again some unruly people created chaotic situation. They scattered flowers from the Smriti Shoudha. It was really unfortunate. Our martyrs made their supreme sacrifices for the nation but we have totally failed to live up to their expectations.

be formed in the future to avoid such vandalism. We must remember that these sacred places are not for destructive politics. We go there to pay tribute to our martyrs not to show our unruly behaviour.

This type of politics must change.

Sheikh Akhtarul Islam Dhaka

Encroachment upon public thoroughfares

Sir, Not only the hawkers and vendors have illegally occupied the public roads and streets and created traffic jams but almost all the shop-keepers in the city have illegally expanded their legal area of ownership and encroached upon the public thoroughfares displaying and selling their various goods, commodities and merchandise. They have even placed tables, almira and chairs on public roads to run their business. These create barricade and hindrances for the members of the public to move freely.

We fail to understand as to why the members of public are deprived of their civic right to move freely on the public thoroughfares and the law enforcing authorities, especially the DCC and DMP, are sitting idle? Would the law enforcing authorities help restore the constitutional right of the members of public to move freely from one place to another?

OH Kabir 6, Hare Street, Wart, Dhaka-1203.