

## Priorities of the new regime

The newly elected regime will soon become unpopular if it cannot stick to priority in taking action against some of the major political ills besetting the society. It must realise that it has to remove the popular belief that nowadays politics is good business, forgetting the service part.

Politicians should not become toll collectors. It is a practised art and is paying good dividends to the toots, at public expense. Changes in political offices should be made often and frequently. Government officers must be transferred during the third year of a posting no exceptions.

Suppress toll collection at different points, regardless of the temptation of the higher ups. Complaint registration booths, prominently marked, may be set up at all shopping areas and hot spots. The construction sites and factories have also to be covered. Monthly data may be released on action taken, including the names of the offenders. Legal action must be fast.

Remodel the students' unions, away from political activities, and concentrating on issues relating to the academia.

Open one-stop service centres in government offices. Less file work and documentation and signatures. Officers should man the counters and not clerical staff. This is a new concept. It works in Malaysia, why not here?

Remove the garment factories outside the cities. It would reduce house rents and traffic congestion.

Publish Code of Practice for private schools and tutorial centres; and NoteBooks. Announce revised educational policies and stick to it.

Make the Inspectors work or sack them, and appoint new ones on commission basis. Beef up the Inspection and Regulatory networks.

**Abd Dhaka**

The landslide victory in the eighth parliamentary election is a victory of no particular political party or parties but of the conscious people of Bangladesh who voted against terrorism, and for establishment of rule of law and peace. The people chose to give BNP another chance to prove their worth in words and deeds.

1. I would crave the indulgence of Begum Khaleda Zia to ponder over the moot points I am trying to make:

2. Terrorist, criminals, hoodlums have loyalty to none as they are soldiers of fortune. If these characters are harboured and used for any political purpose they will tarnish the image of any one who would use them. Over periods, giving indulgence and quarters to

these so called political activists have become the cause of the fall of many a government in the past and Begum Zia should very carefully bear this in mind.

3. Government servants serve no other body than the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Therefore, they should be taught to carry out the lawful order of the government and to stop thinking of any "moncho culture". Therefore, any person in the government machinery indulging in violation of government servants' rule of conduct should be immediately taken to task.

4. As corruption has pervaded over times in almost all the government departments, any person serving the government should be asked to make a declaration of his wealth statement so that his or her source of earning and wealth can be correctly assessed as checks and balances to curb corruption which has become a common phenomenon and the citizens got to pay the price for it.

5. As ice thaws not from the bottom but from the top, the seeds of corruption is sown by the politicians and because of this the pot is unable to kettle back. By the same token, politicians particularly those holding office of profit should be asked to declare their statement of wealth and to compare its growth when the would quit office.

6. I dare say that Begum Zia has been brought back to power this

time to see that the pledges made by her party to rid the country of terrorism and corruption should be given top most priority. Because the entire economic infrastructure would stand on law and order, security of life and property.

7. I should like to throw a caution to the wind for Begum Zia so that she may not succumb to sycophancy and sycophants. The nation expects of her that she would not allow sentiments to find any place in running the affairs of government nor should she allow any disharmony among the people belonging of their respective religion or faith.

8. Country's economy is in a shambles for which Begum Zia's government has to work very hard with profound advice from not the self-styled economists who have always done more damage than good to the country. If needed Begum Zia's government should not suffer from any complex to hire internationally reputed economist from outside like the way it was done by the then West Germany After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

Begum Zia has acquired enough of maturity in politics over her 18 years of direct involvement in politics. Therefore, the nation is rather confident that she would not repeat any mistake of the past.

**Mohammed Idris**  
*Lake Circus, Kalabagan, Dhaka*

## Recognising the Father of the Nation

We are writing in response to Ms Murshed's reaction (October 8) to Mr Anam's commentary on Bangabandhu. She does not seem to have taken time to think the issues through before writing her letter.

Mr Anam's articles are always incisive and well presented. Whether one agrees with his viewpoints or not, one has to give him credit for presenting scrupulously nonpartisan analysis of the problems plaguing this nation. This is definitely not the impression one gets of Ms Murshed's views. She is blatantly supportive of one major political party and equally obvious in venting her disdain of the other. If Mr Anam's appeals of the last five years and more have fallen on deaf ears, we have only our great leadership-in power and out of it- to thank for the perennial stalemate. We certainly hope Mr Anam will continue his efforts in making sense out of the nonsense we have made of politics in this country.

We are willing to accede that we should try to overcome our instinctive mistrust of people who were openly against the creation of Bangladesh, by words and deeds. That many have deigned to accept the reality of Bangladesh does not necessarily mean that they have done so of choice. The reality is that some have nowhere else to go, while others have stayed on to ensure that substantial properties belonging to their Pakistani parents and relatives can be retained by them. In any case one can still try to put the past behind us, but that does not exonerate the people who added to our pain and oppression at that time simply because of "the context of the time and circumstances that prevailed thirty years ago".

We thank Ms Murshed for conceding that "all Bangladeshis respect Bangabandhu as the Father of the Nation". Would she like to take up our case in high places, at a time of her preference?

We would like to end by thanking Mr S Abed for his excellent letter on the subject.

**Farzana Khair and friends**  
*Banani, Dhaka*

I am writing in response to the letter Ms. Yasmeen Murshed (October 8). Her criticism of the DS editor Mahfuz Anam's commentary was strongly biased. Ms. Murshed has every right to disagree with the opinions expressed by Mr. Anam but to say that the commentary was "presumptuous, patronising and premature" was not a very well reasoned.

I was quite appalled at the way Ms Murshed defended those who opposed the independence of Bangladesh by asking us to overlook what they did "in the context of the time and circumstances of that prevailed thirty years ago." How can she be so sure that people who once held anti-liberation views have been transformed into patriots after the independence of Bangladesh?

Besides in his October 7 commentary, Mr. Mahfuz Anam did not

describe any individual or any political party as "anti-liberation".

It is quite obvious that some political parties do not acknowledge Bangabandhu as the father of the nation and hence the issue raised by Mr. Anam is perfectly justified. Also, I think it is quite irrelevant that the appeal was made before the elected representatives were sworn in.

In my opinion, Mr. Mahfuz Anam's commentary was thought provoking and praiseworthy. I would like to thank him for his attempt to

as "Bangabandhu" nor as the "Father of the Nation".

Just brushing them off by calling them "caught in the trap of their own prejudice and coterie politics," "cannot think of new directions or suggest better because of the compartmentalised world they live in," "hatred, revenge, tit-for-tat is the only thing they know," and so on, I doubt, would bring any "reconciliation".

These are not the words and phrases that are found in the rhetorics of reconciliation.

and I do not really want to argue against that. I might be absolutely wrong in evaluation of Mujib. However, holding a wrong perception is a fundamental right I deserve as a citizen of a democratic country.

Who is the Father of the Nation-- is not a problem that has to be solved by national referendum, as it is not with such questions as who is the greatest Prophet. It is not an issue on which all the people of our country have to follow one single path. Unlike issues like whether Bangladesh should sell gas, or whether an acid thrower should be hanged; there are many issues on which individuals and groups could very well adopt different paths, as they like.

Democracy very much protects such rights to differ and that is called "Pluralism". Please restrict application of "Majoritarianism" only on issues where pluralistic way is not possible, and protect opportunities for peoples' right to differ. Otherwise, we would just head towards fascist prescriptions of "One state, one leader," "One state, one religion", and so on.

**Dr Omar Farook**, on e-mail

The clarion call by *The Daily Star* editor to the BNP chief Khaleda Zia to recognise Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Father of the Nation has created a mixed reaction among the readers. Some have unreserved accolade for Mr. Anam, while others see it as presumptuous.

From all these opinions one thing is clear and that is the issue is too controversial to be resolved by the decision of Begum Zia alone. The fact is, the concept of the Father of the Nation has become almost obsolete mainly because, it is a remnant of tribal politics and political thought and therefore, against the democratic spirit of the age.

Many countries have dispensed with such an idea. Can't we do the same? I think, it is better for us to follow the American model. They do usually refer to their founding fathers instead of a single Father of the Nation.

Following this precedent we can readily have three founding fathers of Bangladesh: Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman.

**A.F.M. obaidur Rahman**  
*Dept of Philosophy, J.U., on e-mail*

## People's mandate

The comments made by Mahfuz Anam in "Loosing an election is not the end of the world" (October 5) is one of the most honest and fair comments I have read in an English daily in a long time. I fully agree with what he has said in the commentary.

The two main political parties have destroyed Bangladesh. They have called Hartal for weeks simply because their demand were not met, without considering what would be the effect of Hartal on the fragile economy of this nation.

The politicians have always considered our nation as their sole property. But it does not belong to them. It belongs to the people. People only give mandate to a

particular party to serve their interest and prosper the nation towards democracy. The sooner the politicians realise this, the better.

**Mr Azad Miah**  
*UK, on e-mail*

I read your commentary "Losing an election is not the end of the world." Thanks for your thoughtful comments with reference to historical events.

The Awami League leaders must accept the defeat gracefully and forget about the results of recent election and look forward a better tomorrow. There is a definite result on "the power of positive thinking". We should prefer the positive in our daily lives.

We want to think that the future will be better than today that things can and will improve. Problems can be solved by our actions. I believe that AL leaders should portray a positive optimistic attitude such as defeat is not "defeat", but future hidden victories.

AL leaders must realise that pleasing all of the people all the time is not possible. A leader must be practical in decisions made catering to the majority, perceptive enough to realise when the majority is right and strong enough to take action without the support of the majority when the majority is wrong. At the same time AL leaders must be strong enough to stand by your convictions and accept the criticisms-- valid and invalid -- which are sure to come.

AL leaders must incorporate new strategies in leadership. Sometimes progress may mean maintaining the status quo. They must realise that patience and persistence are essential elements to bring them back to power.

**Obaidur Rahim**  
*IA, USA, on e-mail*

## Neptism all over again?

Why do we have to have our newly elected PM's sister on the cabinet? Have we not learned to avoid nepotism yet? Why do we need such a huge council of ministers? A poor country like ours cannot afford a big government, especially when our governmental culture is fuelled by flattery and strict adherence to meaningless protocol. Reality is, this is what a country gets when the choice is lesser of two evils. Has the vicious circle started rolling yet again?

**Anwar Babar**  
*Dallas, Texas, on e-mail*

## AL's reaction

How sad it is that we are not at all surprised by the reaction of the Awami League-- the losing party of the 2001 election! The AL chief has clearly and vehemently rejected people's verdict and threatened to take the protest to streets.

Sheikh Hasina has also declared that her party will not take oath as members of the parliament. If she does not take oath and goes to the streets resorting to hartals and the like, she would be rejecting the results of the constituencies where she lost and also would be dishon-

ouring the responsibilities of the constituencies that gave her mandate to work on their behalf.

This would not only punish the people who did not vote for her, but also the ones who did. "Celebrate victory if we win and blame conspiracy if we lose" philosophy will only reduce their popularity further.

We urge the Awami League chief to reverse her initial reaction and statements, to accept people's choice with grace and to work within the parliament as the voice of the opposition. We urge the winning party to show restraint throughout their tenure, to fulfil their promise of eradicating violence and corruption, and to treat the opposition with respect and dignity.

At the same time, at this critical point in our nation's history, we urge all political parties to initiate expulsion and support prosecution of their own party-members and leaders who are involved in corruption and violence. We urge them to unite against the use of student organisations as weapons. We urge them to respect and practice the essence of democracy, freedom of choice and tolerance.

**A Citizen**  
*Dallas, U.S.A., on e-mail*

## Use PSA judiciously

How the tables have turned! Last



## Hoping for a better tomorrow

With misty eyes and hope and dreams we watched the oath taking ceremony of Begum Khaleda Zia and the newly appointed ministers. Can we entrust them to materialise our dreams? Can we at last have what we have dreamt for years? Are they willing to rise over all controversies and personal grudges to serve the country? Have they matured enough? Millions of questions encroached our minds. Was it worth going to the polling centres this time or is it going to be another dream shattering experiences for us? Hope all this scepticism would be erased and a better tomorrow would usher in. May this be the beginning of a dream and the building of a nation we can all be proud of.

**Dr. Nazeen Anwar**, on e-mail

year, around this time, the Awami League was using the PSA as a divine licensee to arrest all and sundry except the goons that filled the rank and file of the Awami League.

I hope that the new government will use the PSA judiciously and effectively to restrain the Awami League goons and other terrorists and restore law and order in society.

**Mojammel Hossain**  
*Tokyo, Japan, on e-mail*

## Leadership and

future survival. Now it is the very basic question of survival and reincarnation with a new, friendly, more interactive image.

The party leaders have harmed the party through unethical, autocratic excesses and the voters have noted it for five years and have now awarded judgement.

**Alif Zabr**  
*Dhaka*

## Kashmir blast

The tragic incident of bomb blast and shooting at the Assembly

Building in the capital Srinagar of Indian-administered Kashmir on 1 October seems to have strikingly coincided with the visit of the Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh to Washington who has gone there presumably to convince the Bush Administration about the gravity of terrorism in Kashmir which also deserves their earnest attention.

The horrendous happening at Kashmir Assembly on 1 October has been condemned by Pakistan in unequivocal terms.

This dreadful incident has also been condemned by some militant groups of Kashmir. Some perplexed questions seem to lurk in the minds of many critics as to why the vehicle when hijacked for this heinous act was not hauled up, how could the militants manage to reach the entrance of the State Assembly which was supposed to be heavily guarded and how could they hood-wink the security arrangements which were strengthened after the terrorist attack in the USA or why should they choose the recess time of the Assembly for their attack when the house was nearly vacated by the members?

It is indeed unfortunate that India seems to have embarked upon 'war of words' against Pakistan through electronic media since the tragedy of Twin Towers and the Pentagon with a view to malign the image of their neighbouring country which is now grappling with gigantic problems both at home and frontier. When economical, political, social and regional securities are at stake following the terrorists attack in the States, it is time for the two stalwarts of the sub-continent to 'wag tail not tongue'.

It would be wise for the two countries to use the words that help to build bridges, not barriers, between them.

Terrorism to day, committed by the insurgents, the militants of the so-called fundamentalists has now menacingly become a big evil in many parts of the world. It may be an outrageous outburst but essentially a symptom resulting from oppression or long drawn social or political injustice in a region, which needs to be seriously probed into and properly addressed.

**ARMF Hadi**  
*Dhaka*

## In a fool's paradise

My attention has been drawn to a comment made by the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina. The former prime minister has alleged, "While in power, our popularity did not decrease, rather, we gained more popularity".

Unfortunately, Sheikh Hasina is very ignorant of the mandate of the electorate.

She should accept the polls result graciously and save the party of any further embarrassment.

**AA**  
*California, USA, on e-mail*

## War on humanity



The whole world is shocked at the terrorist attacks on the United States. We condemned such horrendous violence. American President George W. Bush immediately declared a war against terrorism. After four weeks of that declaration US-British forces are now carrying out air strikes on Afghanistan.

America is in war with 'terrorism' but it is a global war. Investigation, discussion and cooperation are the prerequisites of this war. A UN official said, 'Military action should be its final step'. Every country should act conscientiously in rooting out terrorism from its own soil.

Afghanistan is now the target, as it has given shelter to Osama Bin Laden, although America has not yet disclosed any evidence

against him. More than 6000 innocent people were decimated in New York and Pentagon in the September 11 carnage; similarly, this ongoing bombings on Afghan may take many innocent lives.

America should bear in mind that whether the victims are Americans or Afghans, they are human beings. We, therefore, expect America to retaliate more sensibly than those wretched terrorists, for the sake of humanity. America as a 'peacemaker', modern civilised country, should desist from any sort of drastic retaliation that may jeopardise humanity. This is a war against terrorism, not against any particular religious sect or a country. So please take time and find out new ways rather than massive military operation. At the dawn of the 21st century the world does not wish for an exhibition of muscle power. Please stop this vengeful attack.

**Shamana Yasmin**  
*Department of English, DU*

Much has been written about the ruthless attack on World Trade Centre, where thousands of people lost their lives. May God bless their souls. But less are being discussed about the fate of millions of Afghans who are seeking shelter to save themselves from the US strike against Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan. These refugees who are knocking at the door of Pakistan, Iran, and other Central Asian countries are not being allowed to cross the borders. It's not that these countries do not want to help them, it's the already ruined economies of these countries that have tied their hands.

The greatest human catastrophe is beginning to unfold. People who are fleeing Afghanistan have no money with them. They are

the poorest people in the world. Not only the Taliban are to be blamed for their miserable state but all the "civilised nations" must also share the blame of this crisis.

When the Soviet military retreated, none of these so-called "humanity loving" countries rushed to build Afghanistan, which was totally ruined by Soviet forces. Millions of people died, millions became disabled, some left with permanent injuries and scars, and millions suffered from trauma and fear. But nobody heard their voices. All of these countries that are now aligning to eradicate the evil in Afghanistan did not even bother to help these people then. The poverty, hunger and sufferings give birth to rebellions. The money these superpowers invested in war if they would have invested even a fraction of it on these innocent Afghans then the condition of this poor country would have been different.

Every country has sent their journalists in this region but they are more focused on sensational stories rather than poor Afghans. They are showing the movies of brutalities, ruined structures and destroyed Russian planes in Afghanistan but only a few of them are projecting the sufferings of Afghans because of the US decision to hit this country. New generation in Afghanistan has not seen the prosperity, they only know missiles, tanks and the sound of bombs explosion. Two decades of wars have caused immense damage to this country. Now the third decade is also not bringing any good news for them.

The hunger of power has totally ruined this country. Instead of talking war world leaders should try to bring peace in this world. They should listen to the grievances of the ill-fated people of poverty stricken countries. Instead of selling them arms they should send food and donations.

Unfortunately people don't learn anything from wars. World War I, World War II totally devastated the world, now the preparation of third world war is going on. Hope the peace prevails and the cloud of war gives way to prosperity and happiness in this world.

**Shah Affan**  
*Canada, on e-mail*

