

"Muslim cleansing..."

It is very nice to know that a member of the next generation US citizen (December 7) read *The Daily Star* and try to explain yourselves. But your explanations are quite hazy.

You request us to understand that the USA is not perfect. We know that. But please convey this message to your elected government because they claim to be so perfect that they do not waver a bit to bomb anywhere they want without any specific cause.

You say that this war is to bring justice. If any country attacked by the US missiles wants to bring justice by bombing your buildings down will it be possible for you to swallow this bitter justice? You say that this war is to liberate the innocent Afghans. Really you are liberating them from the bond of their strenuous lives! If you want to better the situation of Afghanistan then why are you continuously bombing down schools and hospitals? Please do not say that those were mistakes.

If you want to bring peace to the Middle East then why are you arming Israel with all possible weapons? And why are you blaming Ararat for all possible attacks if you do not possess any hatred towards the Palestinians? Stop arming Israel and peace will rush towards ME. If American Muslims are not being detained for their ethnicity then what they are being detained for?

Can you support the American policies towards Bosnia (1993) or Iraq or Palestine or Lebanon or Libya or Iran? Can you deny that these policies caused the death of millions of civilians and children in those countries? Can you expect that these people will love the Americans after suffering to death? Can you convince these people that this is not "Muslim cleansing"? I am afraid you cannot.

We appreciate your love for Islamic culture but at first try to understand why the hatred is brewing up. And please stop dropping bombs and aid of the same colour. These acts only reveal hypocrisy. Having Muslim friends has nothing to do in your understanding of the current situation.

A next generation Bangladeshi citizen
Bangladesh

"The case of a poor Asian..."

The article "The case of a poor Asian Bangladeshi Muslim" by Afsan Chowdhury (November 27) is one of the most analytic, honest and courageous articles that I have read. I would like to thank *The Daily Star* for publishing these types of articles. I share exactly the same feeling as it is portrayed in the article.

I am in the graduate program in a top US school where I rarely see any Arab in a graduate school. However, the most of the Arab that I have encountered (in a restaurant or in a shop), really don't possess very high opinion about us (Bangladeshis). They consider us as second class Muslims (because we are converted and don't know Arabic). Moreover, they look down upon us because we are poor (miskins), even if you are an educated person and the Arab is in a menial job. We see a lot of anti-American slogan in the Arab world. But you will be surprised to see that most of the Arabs that I have encountered are always much nicer to the white Americans than to us.

On the other hand, the white Americans really treat us with respect and they often show interest to know about our country and the culture. If we look at the history, we can see that Arab countries have not done many good things for us. Most of them didn't protest against Pakistani atrocity in 1971, while they funded a lot of our Madrasah system that pumped up the fundamentalist force in our country. We should learn from the history and not blindly support the Arab world, when the USA has always been a very supportive force in the 30 years history of our motherland, Bangladesh.

AN
A Bangladeshi living in US

America's resolve

The brilliant display of American airpower, which broke the back of the brutal Taliban regime in Afghanistan and paved the way for the opposition Northern Alliance to liberate their country, is an example of America's leadership in the world.

Gas export and the government's position

The people of Bangladesh should not allow export of gas for the simple reason that the revenue would not enter the economy of Bangladesh. Most of the money will be siphoned by corrupt politicians that plague our government. It is a known fact that many of our politicians own houses in UK and USA, including the terrorist like Tokia Shagor who owns a house in Long Island, south of NY. With gas export, the level of corruption at the highest level will increase.

Furthermore, recent history indicates that the ethics of the foreign companies doing oil and exploration work in Bangladesh is questionable. Under such circumstances, it would be suicide for the people of Bangladesh to allow their government to make such a decision on their behalf.

It is time we learnt that we cannot and should not trust our government to handle an issue that will affect Bangladesh for a long time to come. Unless the people of Bangladesh can ensure adequate oversight over gas export, it should be used for internal use only.

Mojammel Hossain
Tokyo, Japan

With the Talibans on the run, life is slowly returning to normal in Afghanistan. Joy in the streets of Kabul, despite poverty and hunger, is quite palpable.

Though it will take many years and a concerted international effort to return Afghanistan to normalcy, the defeat of the terrorist regime is a hopeful sign. A tentative step in this direction is the agreement signed by different factions for an interim government. American military intervention made all this possible. Yet, only a month ago, many commentators and observers were clearly critical that Afghanistan would be another Vietnam. The bombing seemed to be only leading to mass demonstrations in the neighbouring Pakistan, where the government might be toppled because of its pro-American stand. The Northern Alliance seemed to be no match against the stubborn Talibans and are useless to provide any meaningful support on the ground.

They were wrong on all counts. Within three months of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, the campaign against Talibans and their foreign legions has gone better than any one dared to predict. Though the war against terrorism is far from over, the war in Afghanistan is almost over.

Pakistan, which was instrumental in propping up the Talibans,

Mob attack

A new trend has started in the daily life of Dhaka and in general in Bangladesh. Mob beating muggers, mob killing the muggers. Some of us might see it as a good sign. But don't!

The populace in general, who struggle for life, who loves their family, who cheers in the stadiums, who sends its youth to school, college and universities, who attend the *boi-mela* (book fair), who are *din-mojosors* (day labourer) in one way or another, is becoming the killers! And that's certainly is not a good sign.

When people in general is pushed to the extreme, it becomes mob. When police does not arrive from a station 100 yards away, then people probably have no choice but to turn into an angry mob. In a sense, they are doing their duty of saving the person who was being mugged.

But they are not stopping there, they are going a step ahead. Instead of 'catching and turning the culprits to the police', they are killing those culprits!

In first nine days of this month, a total of fourteen people have been dead by mob attack!

While people are doing their job, in a sense, what are other

between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance in this respect.

"Women rights are still being violated in Afghanistan ever since the fall of Kabul and important cities in the country to the Northern Alliance, and we are not safe at all," she said. Alleging that the print and telemedia were "wrongly projecting" that women rights had been restored in Afghanistan after the downfall of the Taliban, Sahar Saba asserted that Afghani women have

barbaric acts of violence of Israel on helpless Palestine people as they are rudely shocked at the wanton retribution of September 11 by raining 6500 pounder devastating bombs on Afghanistan killing innocent people who have nothing to do with the Talibans or terrorism. That small group of pro-Laden doesn't necessarily reflect the psyche of majority Bangladeshis. Hence, Mr. Goschal's incendiary generalisation on Bangladeshis doesn't seem

crafted. May be a little too well crafted for a 7th grader.

We expect to see more of her thoughts in future.

Mohammad Zaman
North Carolina, USA

Viqarunnissa University

It's good to know that another private university-- Viqarunnissa

should not ignore the truth. What we tolerate today will embrace it tomorrow. So we should always be against this kind of oppression.

I found *The Daily Star* did an outstanding job on writing investigative reports and my salute goes to the writer and the Editor. Thanks again and keep up the good work.

Mohammed Anwar
Dallas, Texas, USA

Forced retirement

The new government is sending a few public servants to retirement for their alleged involvement in the "Janatar Manch" (December 11).

It is surprising, however, that all of them belong to the administration cadre. What about the officers belong to the Foreign Service? There are a few director general level officers in our foreign office's current set up, who took up leading role in forming the Janatar Mancha. Why should they go scot free?

If the new government think that they are doing the right thing by showing the exit door to a few administrative cadre usurers, it should then also look into the involved foreign service officers who are expert in changing their colours diplomatically.

M. Hassan
New York, USA

"Towards more justice"

Your editorial "Towards more justice" (December 10) in the context of the statement of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bangladesh that the people "may be" losing confidence in the judicial system sadly brings home the fact how the judiciary has declined since 1947.

I would like to respectfully submit to the Hon'ble Chief Justice that it is no more a question of "may be". It is true that the "problems can't all be traced to the courts alone". But are the courts doing enough within the given constraints?

If I may suggest there are several ways in which the High Court in particular may expedite disposal of cases. First, the practice of lawyers reading their written application page by page in the court may be dispensed with. It takes a long time



system. No government ever tabled the reports in the parliament nor were they debated and reforms enacted. The participation of the peoples' representatives in those reports has been a big zero.

CMA
Dhaka

Jewelry shops on the rise

It is interesting to note that the number of gold jewelry shops in the city and in the bordering towns are too many and high. It is not in consonance with the overall progress and development of our country. Being one of the poorest countries in the world, we have tremendous progress in the number of gold jewelry shops. It appears astonishingly inconsistent, eyesore, imbalance and contrary to our poor financial performances in other sectors. If you look around shopping complexes like New Market and Baitul Mokarram you will be amazed to observe that numerous mushroom like jewelry shops are turning up every month replacing other shops existent earlier there.

The reason behind such abnormal development in this particular sector is easy to explore and explain. No doubt, this business has become highly profitable. And there is none to check and monitor these jeweleries for their supply of genuine gold ornaments, even if, they supply adulterated gold, there is none to identify and question them on the spot.

In developed countries, even in: Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, there are government surveillance teams who check the jewellery shops regularly and if found any adulteration or deviation in their supply, they forthwith seal that shop and take the seller/shopkeeper into custody under non-bailable section. That is why, in those countries none can think of buying and selling adulterated gold ornaments.

Gold jeweleries are taken to be a hidden treasury for black money and illegal money. This encourages smuggling. It also encourages tax evasions, black money and Hundi business.

I'd like to draw the kind attention of the authorities concerned to take

tackle: the monomaniac opposition, licking its unexpected wounds, and the lakhs of terrorists holding the whole society as hostage (despite arrests of 1000 persons a day for the last couple of years). What has happened to the deterrent effect?

Old style politics and management simply won't do. The government has to change its mindset. The 100-day programmes carry little meaning, when actions do not produce results.

A Mawaz
Dhaka

Security to Sheikh Hasina and Rehana

I like to request the Mohila Awami League that since the government is not doing anything for the security to Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, they should do something for their beloved leaders. If Awami League truly love Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana they can create a fund and offer the same facilities to Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana.

Sheikh Rehana lives mostly in the UK. There are many private firms who offer private security both in Bangladesh and in UK.

Klanto,
Jhalakati

Fading railway service

Once our railway service was majestic and maintained alike. This was conveyance for governmental duty journeys. Those days have gone, now the high ups, MP and ministers prefer other modes of conveyance for duty journeys.

Thus, railway has guardian, but none to face complaints and address them. With promises of rasy picture, Inter-City Trains of added facilities and comfort kicked off at a higher fare rate. As days have passed, the burden of fare on passengers remained the same, but services, refreshments etc. added each have slipped one by one with excuses.

It used to start with welcoming address, news/music etc., but now with the noisy recordings or none. Often passengers are riddled by questions, are the bogies not to be cleaned for year? Are these compartments designed and furnished not to be maintained to make it fit for comfortable journey? In absence of routine maintenance, each carriage has turned into a ramshackle. Most of the seats and various parts are fastened either with wire or by nails in place of standard fasteners. Faulty faucets repair in toilets is another engineering feat that often turns the toilet unusable after use by a few.

Most of the Inter City Trains come across one or two prayer time. The Railway is very considerate for the 85 per cent of the passengers' faith and have designated a compartment "as place of Namaz". But to reach that room, crossing all bogies, devotees of all ages have to learn acrobatic skills. In Ramadan afternoon, when sugar level goes down a devotee can hardly reach the place of prayer as that is at front end, behind the engine complex. This reminds us about Aesop's characters, fox and stork that invited each other to a dinner, but cunningly denied enjoying it.

We urge the Railway Minister to travel in any compartment to have an experience of a promised comfortable train journey.

AR Choudhury
Uttara, Dhaka

Choosing options

Our politicians can't choose options in the right way, because the approach is generally subjective. The latter is due to lack of inner strength. This comes from public backing, which is not available in a divided nation. This focus on the politics is disturbing and distracting; because change of regime has no effect. One side of the triangle (of stability) is missing.

AH
Dhaka

Friday as weekly holiday

The government's failure to take such an easy decision on such an important issue for the country's economic health portends a grave future when brave decisions on difficult issues will be called for.

M Ai,
on e-mail



warranted.

I assure Mr. Goschal and Mr. Elahi to wait a little longer when definition of terrorism and extremism will be re-written in the wake of the US-led pulverising air-action in Afghanistan giving her a firm foothold at the door of South Asia and in the vicinity of central Asia where world's biggest reserve of oil lies.

In this connection, I would like to take the liberty of pointing out that in your edition of November 30 the picture of a group of agitating people brandishing unsheathed sword beside the letter regarding extremism in Bangladesh was indeed indiscreet and irrelevant. Anyone

Robert Kader
Chittagong

Freedom fighters, not separatists

As a Kashmiri I find it very disturbing when *The Daily Star* refers to freedom fighters in Kashmir as separatists and call mainstream leaders such as Syed Geelani as militants.

Kashmir is and never was part of India according to the UN resolutions. By calling those who are fighting the Indian occupation forces as separatist imply that Kashmir is legally part of India. If people like Syed Geelani are militants then who do you call moderates.

Jamil Ahmed
Houston, Texas, US

Osama bin Laden and extremism

This refers to the letters by Mr. Goschal from Denmark (November 28) and Mr. Elahi from Canada (November 30) dwelling on the cult of extremism as they perceived in Bangladesh.

Every democratic country has its group of dissenting people. However much they may support bin Laden or the like overwhelming majority of Bangladeshi is a level headed and secular lot who voice against all kinds of injustices and iniquities perpetrated here and in any part of the world. They condemned the abominable terrorist attacks on the US on September 11 as vocally as they are against the

outside the country may have a feeling that the photo was taken from somewhere in Bangladesh. When the western world is out looking for scapegoats in its so-called war on terrorism, the ill-pasted photograph sends a wrong signal-- nay a dangerous signal across.

M. Gholam Mostafa,
on e-mail

Nabila's letter (December 10) is well

female students learn to operate in an environment comprised of females only?

Or has the university authority arranged for a business work environment comprising of females only?

Mohd Naved Ferdous Iqbal
Student of BBA-5th semester
The University of Asia Pacific

Thank you

Here in the USA, I read *The Daily Star* everyday. But where most of the newspaper had the tendency to hide the minority oppression, I found your organisation did not hesitate to write an investigative report on it.

If a single Hindu suffer in Bangladesh due to his or her religion, beliefs, that's a disgrace for the country. As a Bangladeshi, we all should feel sorry and should try to do something for them to protect their religion and beliefs.

Please go through these web sites and you will know what is going on in Bangladesh.

<http://www.amnesty-usa.org/news/2001/bangladesh12052001.html> and <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/ASA130062001?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES:BANGLADESH>

These reports are from Amnesty and the other one cannot be wrong. When people from all over the world see this kind of report on Bangladesh, this does not bring any good to the country. We cannot and



and is quite unnecessary as the judge has the application before him and may already have perused it. Secondly, the practice of lawyers to take adjournment on any excuse should be denied after one adjournment and that also on very solid ground. Thirdly, judgement may be pronounced in the court and the judge may dictate the full text of the judgement later in his chamber.

Fourthly, oral evidence and cross-examination of witness may be conducted by an Advocate Commissioner in the court premises instead of in the court. This will save much valuable time of the court.

I am sure the process of judiciary may be improved in many ways by the courts without dependence on any other agency. There is need for some system to make the judges aware of the perception of people about their administration of justice. Other than are a few journalists who take a keen interest in the subject there is no opportunity for the people to express their opinion about the judiciary.

As for the government the less said the better. By appointing Law Commissions and fixing the remuneration and other perks of members including foreign tours to study the judicial system in other countries the government thinks they have done their duty towards the people. Several Law Commissions have produced voluminous reports and recommendations. But very little has changed to improve the judicial

immediate steps forming ordinances and laws alike relevant welfare laws of Malaysia and Singapore in this regard and thus save our people from being cheated and our country, from consequent financial decay and social ills and evils.

Imran Khan
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

No political discipline

Unless political discipline trickles down to the lowest level, the future of politics and that of the nation is bleak. A local BNP leader in Feni was killed by alleged BNP terrorists when he told them to refrain from exacting toll from a shop (December 2).

Power attracts evil, for its misuse, which is against public interest. The political leaders evade public discussions of political anarchy and godfatherism, and the system loss figures in our politics never see the light of the day. This system loss affects the other sectors, and the evil grows bigger and bigger.

The terrorists inside the ruling parties have to be curbed first, before the outsiders would be scared. Charity, and discipline, begins at home. The PM has assured people of quick action, but the news reports never stop in dimension or frequency. Another disturbing noticeable feature is the tendency to kill at the first chance.

The regime has two sides to