

### The order of the day

Once again the nation is held hostage to the whims and insanity of our political leaders. The dismissal of the President is just one such example where sycophancy and political ignorance reigns above democracy. What did the President do that was so unconstitutional? Not having visited the grave of Late President Ziaur Rahman and not mentioning his name in a speech and not finishing off a speech with a salutation is now considered treason and grounds for impeachment?

If so, are we going to see Dr. Kamal Hossain, Dr. Zahir, Barrister Ishtiaque etc called to rewrite the constitution , where all of the above including the hanging of portraits of past leaders and re-naming of any structure built on Bangladeshi soil with the two posthumous leaders names become rule of law?

Can we not stand united and let Mrs. Khaleda Zia and Mrs. Hasina Wajed know that the nation is tired and frustrated of this all. When will these two leaders realise that Bangladesh does not belong to the families and cronies of Mr. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and General Ziaur Rahman, this land belongs to 120 million people and we too have a voice that needs to be heard.

**Farhan Quddus**  
Old DOHS, Dhaka

### Withdrawal of support

I've always voted for BNP. In the last election I spent 200 taka for BNP. But I've decided that I'd never vote for BNP again in my life.

They dishonoured the President.

**Md Jasim Uddin**  
One-e-mail

### Bangladesh and mazar culture

The recent incident of the resignation of the President reminds me of the novel "Lal Shalu" by Syed Olliullah. I hope it is still in the HSC syllabus because it will help the coming generation to understand the politics of Bangladesh. A mazar based politics!

**Fatima, Australia**

### Training for MPs

I was surprised that some of the

## Diarrhoea vaccine developed!



Vaccine: This won't happen anymore

It is indeed very interesting to watch BTV news reporting on the daily activities of the Ministers! What do they do all day long?

"We led the people in a movement together and we are committed to running the government together too" says an Islami Oikya Jote leader claiming its share in the government. If that's the criteria, then what about the rest of the people who took part in the movement, some directly and some indirectly? In that case, perhaps we need a 600 member cabinet to replace the present 60 one.

**Anjali Akbar**  
Azimpur Road, Dhaka

### Axe-wary

Do you really expect any positive outcome from BNP's much expected reshuffle? Mrs. Zia's first mistake was the jumbo cabinet and I find it unlikely that she will downsize significantly. Anyway, we have been waiting for this impending reshuffle for months now. Even if she does drop some ministers, don't be surprised when the Young Thugs of BNP accumulate even more power. BNP is officially owned by one

*Mymensingh*

### Hundi business

The government's attitude to the hundi business is not only wrong, but ultimately pointless. The hundi dealers are providing a market need and actually giving excellent service, far better than any bank.

As I am sure the Finance Minister knows, the most fundamental law of economics is where there is demand there will be supply. No government can ever control that. The hundi business has grown out of our Byzantine exchange controls and the sheer arrogance of bureaucratic interference in our personal finances.

What I do with my money is my business not some faceless official's. I am sure I speak for most people who have had relatives going to study abroad in need of pocket money or for treatment, that until the day the government stops trying to deny me my liberty I will continue to use the hundi traders for my needs.

The most sensible option would be to remove all exchange controls and let the taka become a free-

I am simply delighted with the news. It is perhaps the most important medical breakthrough particularly for the teeming millions of the third world countries who have been most vulnerable to the scourge of this disease for decades. Cholera Research Laboratory had earlier perfected the curative aspect of the disease some thirty or more years ago and now this vaccine. It will also go a long way in boosting the morale of the staff of the Laboratory, which in recent years for a multiple of reasons has been somewhat low.

It is time both for the Government of Bangladesh and international donor agencies to come forward and support the Laboratory even more. It may be noted here that this laboratory has to its credit high-tech research facilities and capacities to deal a number of other branches of medical sciences. The government should seriously consider sourcing out some of its own research programs and activities in the medical field to this Laboratory. One such area could be HIV/AIDS.

Finally I would like to request the Government of Bangladesh to bestow some worthy national award to the Director of the Laboratory Dr. David Sack and the Cholera Research Laboratory as an expression of well-deserved gratitude.

**Shamsher Chowdhury**  
Texas, USA

If a person requires sending money abroad for emergency medical purposes what alternative he has other than the 'hundi' system? If someone wants to take his family abroad for a vacation and he is not allowed to take the required number of dollars, what other option can he rely on other than the 'hundi' system? Someone wants to spend money to purchase things for his kith and kin, will our government give him that benefits? No. So what does he do?

Furthermore the government allows a fixed amount per year against production of the passport and ticket, which is too meagre. Another good reason for the 'hundi' system is the under invoicing of imported goods. If the government appoints a separate department other than the customs department, consisting of members of integrity from the business community and the government department, then this can be easily avoided. With VAT now included in the costs of some products and no credit to be taken, the attraction to do under invoicing will be more. So the government policy should review such decisions.

government is now actively trying to improve, there would be no need to curb the 'hundi' system, as it would die a natural death.

**Sabeen AH**  
Chittagong

### T&T and multi-metering system

T&T did it again! They were successful in their plan to increase suffering of customers by infinite times. T&T has no accountability and has done nothing to improve customer service or encourage use of technology. They are the impediment to progress in the telecom sector. It is anti competitive, monopolistic and corrupt organisation. T&T should not be allowed to increase anything or impose any further restrictions on consumer until it improves its services and get rid of its corrupt culture. There should be a public hearing of the T&T decision-makers. They should tell the public what they have done so far to justify such increase.

The government should take a US approach to telecommunication. There should be a governmental regulatory organisation similar to Federal Communications Commission and all telecom organisations including T&T should be accountable to it. T&T should pay licensing fee to the government just like all other ISPs pay to T&T now. The telecom market should be deregulated completely and competition should be encouraged. The government should allow and invite foreign companies to invest in Bangladesh. Let the one with best customer service flourish. T&T had 30 years to prove itself and I think that's enough time frame. They failed and they should be allowed to "die" as a corporation.

**Sherif Saeed**  
New Jersey, USA

### BTB billing system and service

Recently, BTB has decided to implement a new "multi-metering" billing system. And I am wondering exactly why the community has not vocalised enough of an objection to this matter. Not only I, but also the majority of the telephone subscribers, will attest that this billing system is not only expensive but unnecessary.

In most modern countries, local calls are free of charge. Instead of reducing the cost that we already pay, they have indirectly raised the price. Not only that, most countries do not allow a monopoly when it comes to telephone service. There are several companies that offer various plans each, which enables you to customise telephone service according to the convenience of the subscriber. However, the subscribers of Bangladesh have no option but to pay BTB's ridiculous charges and put up with their third class service. The BTB notice quotes that this system is for the "convenience of the valued subscribers". How is this of any convenience to me or anyone else besides the BTB itself?

In addition, to add salt to the wound, the service of BTB is absolutely atrocious. Phone lines are always dead and one practically has to beg the local linemen to fix the connections. And the begging usually has to be greased by an at

least 50 taka *ghoosh*. My telephone line in the Green Road area has not been working for the last 26 days. And each time I have issued a complaint to the office, I am told they will "see what they can do". So if these outrageous telephone charges are increased, will we, the subscribers be seeing an improvement in service?

Don't hold your breath because probabilities are slim to none. Something must be done to not only stop them from implementing these charges, but also to improve the service of BTB.

**Tanzila**  
Dhaka

### Division

'Division' is an administrative strata in our country which I strongly feel that has actually no tasks to do but spending crores of taka yearly for infrastructural and manpower management.

Our district administrations are strong enough to link the Dhaka based government with grassroots level and in fact the current practice is like this. For development, revenue income and crises management district admin do all possible tasks as per directives of the concerned ministries. So what's the role of divisional administration?

Divisional administration is nothing but a co-ordinating body for districts within the concerned division. But this job of co-ordination can easily be done at the ministry at thousand times lower cost and flexibility if the government wishes.

The divisional administration should be abolished as a major step to administrative reform to make the government more cost effective and the general people should be relieved from expanded tax net to run such unnecessary administration.

**Monika Saha**  
Dolkhola Lane, Khulna

### Democracy and our parliament

The people of Bangladesh watched a lively debate in the Parliament on June 18. The point of discussion was Sheikh Hasina, the Leader of the Opposition. Sheikh Hasina reportedly has made a controversial remark on Ziaur Rahman, the founder of BNP -- that Zia's dead body is not there in his graveyard. If she had made such remark then we must say that it was not likely from the Leader of the Opposition of a democracy.

But we are surprised to know that the matter was brought to the Parliament and there was a long and heated discussion on the issue. The attendance of the lawmakers was high. Every minute of parliament sessions requires Taka 15,000. The parliamentary discussion that was held on Sheikh Hasina's remark was quite long and most of the members were allowed to speak and we presume, a few lakh, if not a few millions, were spent on this debate. We do not know what the nation has gained from this discussion.

The Leader of the House, the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia while this debate was going on, was present in the JS. Under such circumstances can we say that we are heading towards democracy? Do our MPs have the kind of tolerance required to be a true democrat and turn Bangladesh into a true democratic country?

**Shafiqul Islam**  
Savar

### JS censures Hasina!

Terming Sheikh Hasina's remarks (she demanded DNA test of the dead body of the late President Ziaur Rahman) 'vulgar and filthy', the JS on June 18 unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the Leader of the Opposition.

But when the ruling party MPs made derogatory remarks against Sheikh Hasina and that too in the presence of the Prime Minister it received no condemnation. It seems that the allegation of the opposition that the ruling party don't want the opposition to attend the JS seems to be true.

BNP was inviting AL to join the Sangsad for last few months assuring that they would ensure congenial atmosphere and the opposition would be treated with due honour. Besides the Speaker was also reiterating time and again that he would act neutral and try to hold the sanctity of the House. But from the treatment they have meted out to

the opposition it seems very much the otherwise. Is this neutrality?

**Jkobir**  
Mirpur, Dhaka

### Green Dhaka

Please Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), or anyone, plant 'wood tree saplings' on the road divider starting from, in front of Shyamoli Cinema Hall to Darus Salam Road leading to Mirpur No.1 *Gol Chakkar*, so as to cool, clean and purify the environ-

proposed. If violations are crimes then why wait, go ahead and nab the criminals as they are treated in cases of other crimes in general. The Prime Minister's order apparently has been "to immediately remove all illegal structures from in and around the Gulshan, Baridhara and Banani lakes" but no specific warning has been given to the violators. In original plan and till now two legal connections, one from Gulshan



A time to leave, a time to cry

## Adamjee Jute Mills

Adamjee Jute Mills, once the pride of Pakistan and later Bangladesh is being closed down on Sunday.

It is a monument, not only to the failures of socialism in general and the socialist experiments post '71 in particular but also to our failure of rescuing these nationalised industries.

Among the other Adamjee holdings were Adamjee Sons Ltd. I don't know much about that except that it was nationalised. Is it still running? What has happened to Khulna Textile Mills, Meghna Textile Mills, Dacca Tobacco Industries and Dacca Vegetable Oil Products Ltd.?

Reading about the closure of this monument to our political and social failings, I suddenly got curious about the Adamjee's who gave us these mills. Did you know that the then Crown Prince of Japan and the Queen of England visited Adamjee Jute Mills in 1961?

In 2002 the police fear to enter and the BDR keeps guard while the whole sorry edifice is torn down.

Draw your own parallels if you will.

**Biggles**  
Dhaka

## Attention Finance and Education ministers

This letter is in regards to *The Daily Star* report on the three schools sponsored by the Adamjee Jute Mills for the dependants of the mill employees.

I cannot help, but sympathise with the students. Their parents, employees of the mill, will be jobless and this should be no reason for these kids to stop going to school.

I draw the attention of our Finance and Education ministers. Please do something for these financially challenged students. Perhaps, all three schools owned by the mill may stop enrolment now, but close in phases over the next ten years? Close first grade at the end of the current academic year and likewise, go up a grade every year, for the next ten years.

**AA**  
California, USA

## Caught between tanks and bombers

Both the Palestinian and the Israeli civilian population have become a victim to the tanks and suicide bombers. Neither the suicide bombers will stop killing Israeli children nor the Israeli tanks will stop shooting Palestinian boys and girls. It is the civilians who have become the scapegoats.

This has been the story because of some insane leaders of HAMAS and the Israeli Head of State Sharon. These two parties are fully responsible for the plight of the civilians. I hail the US initiative to create separate states for these two different races. It is the right choice because both the races are different in religion, culture, language and number. President Bush should divide the land among these two nations because they cannot live together side by side without bloody conflict.

**Reaz Mohiuddin**  
Notre Dame College, Dhaka

## The view of an Englishman

The way the Germans treated the Jews was inhuman. However, the Western world soon forgave the Germans and look what a success story they have become. Even though they occupied lands that they didn't own and massacred many people, they were forgiven and given aid to rebuild their country.

The Israelis have not learnt. They occupy lands, massacre innocent people in their own homes and continue this process without a care. Maybe Hitler knew more than we did. After all, civilians were not told the full story by the media in those days. I think, the proof of the pudding lies in the eating.

Let me offer Sharon a piece of advice, and we can end the problem right now. Give the Palestinian people their own state, pull out of the occupied territories, and I bet you all will be well. The West



Losing the last space?

did that for the Germans and it worked, do it for the Palestinians (or do you have a different agenda), it's the proof of the pudding again I'm afraid.

I must say I can't condone killing by either party, but I can understand. I support the Palestinian cause, which I truly believe is just, and a state will one day be theirs, with or without Sharon.

**Rod Matthews**  
England

BNP MPs had actually demanded impeachment of the ex-President Mr. B. Chowdhury. I wonder if the honourable MPs are well versed in the Constitutional laws etc to determine if there was ground for an impeachment.

In order to avoid future embarrassments for the country, I think the government should come up with a training program for the MPs on topics such as the Constitution, the Parliament, the government (with emphasis on the duties of a President) etc. Moreover, from watching the MPs speak in the Parliament, I think this training should also include courses on Spoken Bangla, proper etiquette and manners etc.

**Kazi**  
TX, USA

### Axe falls on cabinet soon!

Will this axe be a fair and neutral one? If the axe yields to lobbying and 'other' motivation and makes mere exchange of ministries then we will be where we were! Hope the Prime Minister makes no mistake this time and puts right people in the right places.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia delayed the reshuffling of the Council of Ministers to allow them to show their best performances. Now, after nine months of evaluation, she is ready to announce her decision about squeezing the size of the Council of Ministers. My question to the honourable PM is, was this necessary? They are all so-called veteran politicians so was she not aware of their performances before putting them to these important portfolios? Are the people of Bangladesh guinea pigs on whom the Ministers are supposed to experiment?

family and no dissent will be tolerated. Expect to see more leaders with any inking of independent thought to be dropped while the Family keeps on consolidating power with their Gauleiters in place.

**Tristram**  
Dhaka

### Parliament

I am so happy to see the AL in parliament. They are finally doing their job, to harass and harry the BNP. And BNP has given plenty of fodder to be attacked on as well.

Just bringing up the issue of BNP's coup against the President is enough to silence and embarrass the Treasury Bench.

But for Gods sake, stop walking out of parliament on silly points of order. Someone please explain to AL that there is much more political capital to be made in being martyrs to BNP's unfairness than petulant sulking.

**Pan**  
Dhaka

### On gas export

According to different survey reports, the amount of the gas reserve in Bangladesh is limited. We are using gas for power supply both in the industrial and domestic sector. We don't know the actual figure as the sources differ in their data.

According to the survey reports, we may use it for 15 years more. Certainly it is not enough. Because only 2 to 3 per cent of our population are using gas. If we really want to give a chance to the rest, we have to end the on going misuse of gas and ensure every one the facility of using gas, and then consider exporting it.

**Rafiq Bin Hai**

floating currency.  
**T Ali**  
Dhaka

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It seems that the government is once again playing 'doctor' with the economy trying to use short-term methods to curb the deep-rooted 'hundi' system.

It can be said without any doubt that there is a need for a new legal financial system to replace the 'hundi' system. However, it is unfortunate that the government fails to realise that the reason for the establishment of the 'hundi' system has been inefficiency and inadequacy on the part of the current financial system. If the current financial system adequately takes care of the needs of consumers, no need would arise for the 'hundi' system to flourish.

Rather than wasting precious manpower, time and resources on curbing the 'hundi' system, which is fulfilling a need in the society, the government should take a closer look at its own financial arrangements and relax the foreign exchange rules so that ordinary people can take care of their businesses and personal requirements through legal means. Every individual with a genuine need should be allowed to take money out of the country as long as he is able to show encashment certificates of such foreign exchange proving the genuineness of his expenses upon his return and also show the details of such expenses in his income tax returns. The last reason for the 'hundi' system is the delayed receipt of remittances by the senders. If this too can be organised for which the

## "Atta Turks"

As a Canadian of Greek origin living and working in Dhaka, I felt it my duty to respond to Mr. Akbar's article "Atta Turks" (June 27), in which he misleads the Bangladeshi reader.

The Greek revolution against the Ottoman Turks began in the city of Kalavrita in the Peloponnese in 1821 under the Greek banner: "Freedom or Death."

Mr. Akbar insists that "400 years of peace came to an end arrived when the Greek armies arrived to occupy Turkey and take revenge against Muslims."

400 years of peace for whom? Perhaps for the Turks. But not for the Greeks, the Slavs, Armenians and even Arab Muslims. Perhaps Turkey's current human rights record against its own citizens serves as indication of what the Greeks went through for 400 years under Turkish brutality.

It was the Turks that massacred priests, nuns, monks, devastated churches, ancient sites, forbid Greeks from attending school, stole Greek wives and daughters to serve in the harems, empalled and chopped Greeks for not denouncing Christ.

It was the Turks that ripped young Greek boys from their moth-



Turks and Greeks: A disagreement with history

ers to indoctrinate them against their own people and serve in the Turkish army.

Greece-- the glorious cradle of civilisation that gave the world democracy, the Olympics, Homer- had its development stopped dead in its tracks by the Ottomans. Greeks under the Turks felt as "peaceful" as your Muslim brothers and sisters today feel under Israeli occupation.

Mr. Akbar also fails to inform the Bangladeshi reader about the bloody 1922 Smyrna Massacre in which the Turks destroyed the city and ruthlessly killed and expelled 1.5 million Greeks and Armenians. Yes, you are right Mr. Akbar, to understand Turkey you must look at the history of Smyrna and not Istanbul (Constantinople).

And on a last note, in response to your gratitude to God for not allowing the Greeks to win...if your's is a God of Love like mine is, then its best to not give Him credit for our bloody human affairs.

**Antonia Antonopoulos**  
Dhaka