

A rejoinder

This is in reference to the letter "I need a boss desperately Mr. Minister (August 2). To my utter dismay, I'd like to state that I did not write any such letter. Some body else has written the letter using my name. The content of the letter is baseless and absolutely false. The writer has written the letter quoting my name to defame me for his personal gains.

Ghulam Sarwar

Deputy Director (Acting)
Civil Aviation Authority, Dhaka

The letter printed above used the name and e-mail address of the letter writer so The Daily Star had no way of knowing otherwise even after the usual checking.

Congratulations students

Thanks to the general students for their initiative in defeating the arbitrary and corrupt authority. This triumph not only proves the strength of general students but also emerges a new era of denunciation against crime and corruption prevailing in our society.

Dirty politics enter into every alley and by alley of our administration; negotiation with corruption becomes a common trend, keeping silence after observing crime turn into decorum of this society. Some outbursts of conscious citizens for justice and decency are necessary for this diseased domain though many would define it as breaking of law, lacking of discipline, act of terrorism and also intolerance. I would say we are more tolerant than needed.

Again thanks to the students (except JCD cadres) of Dhaka University. **Shamana**
DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka

"I congratulate the students at Dhaka University for achieving victory in their undaunted movement against repression. I express my solidarity with their cause for which they came out in the street. May God protect Dhaka University. **Dr. Gyasuddin Molla**
Professor of Political Science, Dhaka University

Don't mention the names!

On August 1, I observed that most of the dailies published the details of the incidence of the raid of Shamsunnahar Hall as described by the girl students who gave their evidence. And I assume all the newspapers will continue to publish the names of the students and other evidences as long as the Independent Judiciary Committee continues.

But I'm afraid that by publishing the names of the evidences we are seriously increasing the 'risk factor' associated with the personal security of the concerned students and teachers. Even though the students have achieved their initial goal of removing the VC and the Proctor of DU, as long as the same political party is in power and the White Panel is in the DU administration, one cannot ignore the risk of personal security of the students and teachers who played an active role in the recent movement.

So I would urge the newspapers not to mention the names of the students and teachers who would give their statements in this Committee.

Syed N Wadood
North Carolina, USA

There was a time when some media in Bangladesh used to reveal the identity of rape victims, the name and other particulars. That caused serious social problems leading to many victims to restrain from reporting. Realising the problem, media now restrain from revealing their identity.

Regarding the midnight atrocities at Shamsunnahar Hall the media should also restrain from revealing the identity, names, departments, etc. The first problem would be the security issue. The witnesses could face serious security threat as we have seen a case from media report. The second problem is the social problem. Many female students would fear social problems if it were revealed that they have been assaulted by male police and taken to the police station. Though those innocent victims have done nothing wrong, our society will punish them to some extent.

Even though the names and other identity make a report appear more authentic and effective, in this case they could cause more severe problems to the witnesses and victims. These fears could intimidate the victims and witnesses to appear before the inquiry committee, thereby deterring justice. I would like to make an earnest request to all media of Bangladesh to restrain from reporting any sort of identity information without prior consent of the individual. I would also like to appeal to the Enquiry Committee to dedicate proper considerations on this issue.

Zakaria S Khondker
North Carolina, USA

The spectrum of DU teachers

White, blue and pink are the colour of the teachers of Dhaka University. Is there any teacher in that University who lacks a colour? DU urgently needs colourless teachers to bring back academic atmosphere in there.

If bureaucrats are not allowed to do politics directly, then why should the university teachers be allowed to do? We want the personnel of our armed forces should not poke nose in politics, why should not we want that our university teachers should not do the same?

If the teachers of the private universities of the country can go without politics, then why not the teachers of the state owned universities?

The first and foremost duty of a teacher is to impart knowledge, not to do politics.

We, the humble citizens of Bangladesh, would like to know, how many teachers of DU are involved in research works and how many in full-time politics.

What makes us think that if the university teachers do not do politics then the politics of this country is doomed?

If any university teacher wants to do politics, s/he can do it leaving her/his job as a teacher, or after retirement, as like as many retired bureaucrats and army men do.

The very word 'VC' in the past used to evoke great respect among the general people, why does not it today? Is it politics that has washed off the greatness of that post?

The teachers of the state owned universities have proved, beyond doubt, that they are not eligible to

be aware of it. Though donors are persuading repeatedly, any decision, be it in favour or against, should be taken giving top priority to the national interest. Otherwise, the government would lose public support.

Oli Md. Abdullah Chowdhury
Khasdobir, Sylhet

Thank god for the pressure from the ADB. The only viable option for Bangladesh is to export gas but no, we have to dither and keep avoiding the decision. I wonder what would have happened if Saudi Arabia had decided they wouldn't export oil.

The donors should bring on more pressure on our useless government as well. One idea that may work is to deny EU and American visas to our politicians. That would make them take this 'sensitive' decision in about thirty seconds.

The World Bank and the IMF should also suspend all aid to us until we take the gas export decision. Why should the international community help us if we won't help ourselves?

The one and only argument against gas export is that like in Nigeria, everyone in BNP will try to get a cut.

Satyajit
Dhaka

Unions

Sometimes it appears to me that the

tolerance is greatly needed to uphold the principles of understanding and acceptance. The human concept of freedom is not negotiable nor it can be compromised.

In this age of science and technology which is changing our social fabric and values everyday it has become imperative that we refine personal concepts to stand the challenges of our times. When crusades were fought during the Middle Ages, the faiths were not hurt, it was the trust between the humans which got wounded. Those were the times when the basics of the universal understanding were absent and therefore participants in those human tragedies can't be blamed anyway.

But this is a time when our vision of understanding has reached its zenith and time demands that we behave properly for a better future for our posterity. The term 'emancipation' traditionally applies to a person who is subjugated and needs freedom. On the other hand we need emancipation from our ignorance and lack of farsightedness as well. There are many among us who are still a prisoner of old ideas and are very reluctant to accept new challenges of our times. This reluctance brews dissension, antagonism and mistrust that is potentially harmful for a united humanity.

Asif
One-e-mail

NDI for AL

It is funny that AL has to hire an American based institute for advising, or rather teaching, them on the democratic process in Bangladesh.

The first few things that NDI should do is to teach AL to accept defeat graciously and not to complain about the finesse of vote rigging and to sit in the Parliament as an opposition party also. The other side of being advised by NDI is-- would AL continue to be advised on how to run Bangladesh if ever they came back to power?

FM
Chittagong

The insolvent Biman

The Biman Bangladesh Airlines (BBA) owes the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) a prodigious amount. BPC has allowed BBA little more time to repay the outstanding amount. The inevitability of the situation transpires that BBA cannot in any way realise such amount, as BPC has demanded within these paltry days. Even more Biman's effort to get a loan has been tipped into failure. So what next?

Having considered the present economic ambient of the capitalist world, the government can be

our country at the international sports arena. We are not getting results as per the standard of the sporting prodigies of Bangladesh. The one big problem with our countrymen is we always look for help from outsiders to solve our own problems. But it is evident that foreigners can only help to decorate your sporting tree when you have a rock-solid root.

Everybody knows the importance of age-group training to build-up the miniature adolescents as super sportstars. Nowadays officials are also concentrating on it but still not getting the desired result.

The Championship title of World Under-12 Football "Dana" and "Gothia" won by Bangladeshi teenagers (!!) pinpoints the exact reasons for our persistent downfall in all sectors of sports. We just cannot get the best out of our players because 15-17 years old boys are playing under 12 games and similarly 21-23 years participating in under 18 sports and training. I rather keep my mouth shut about the age of players crowding the below 23 years tournaments.

A miss-declared young player seems to be very successful in his early age but appears to be no match at the matured international level.

Back in 1984 I remember my registration with Rahmatganj Football Club when my birthday was mentioned 1969 instead of 1964! This 5 years lapse is a normal case as per the officials, coaches and senior players are concerned. I wonder how the experts and top bosses of sports in Bangladesh can keep cool after knowing all this misdeeds which is adamantly pulling our country down to disgrace. There is no short cut way to attain success. We all should work sincerely to raise awareness amongst the general sporting mass about the pitfall of age cheating thus paving the way for the genuine whiz kids to be nurtured at the approved and truthful age.

M. S. Hamid (Bobby)
Old DOHS, Dhaka

"State within a state"

Congratulations to Hasnat Abdul Hye for his forthright and incisive article on the recent shocking incident at Dhaka University. He is right in saying that the University Administration very often engages in partisan politics under the cover of the 1973 Act. The Act should be amended to bring balance between autonomy and accountability.

We, the taxpayers who bear the expenses want the university teachers to devote their energies in teaching and promoting educational atmosphere in the campus and not wasting their time in extracurricular activities including divisive politics.

The recent disgraceful event in the campus should prick their conscience.

Anwarul Islam
Lalmatia, Dhaka

I enjoyed reading Mr. Hasnat Abdul Hye's column "State within a state" (August 2) where he has shown the excesses of misuse or abuse of power by the police and indulgence in politics of our university teachers in the name of autonomy, forgetting their moral duties and pointed out some ways to get rid of these malaises.

About the neutrality of a VC he says, "To facilitate neutrality Vice Chancellors in a university should be appointed from among outstanding scholars of other universities so that he is not beholden to his 'supporters'." I agree with him that this process, if implemented, has a possibility to facilitate our university VCs to be neutral. Still a VC will enjoy the same administrative power and facilities and after some time he may lose his neutrality when he will get acquainted with the university well. Besides, there is a possibility for a new person to suffer from a sense of perplexity to take a decision at the beginning stage of his office in a new environment.

Teacher politics in our universities is mostly centred upon the posts of VC pro-VC and treasurer. Among them the VC post is the most attractive one to the teachers because all administrative power is centred on the VC. In fact the unique centrality of all administrative power on VC is

Home or abroad: Which one is more at home?



Safety: A matter of choice?

On July 24, 2002 The valiant officers of Ramna Police Station brought girls out kicking and screaming from Shamsunnahar Hall of Dhaka University to take them to prison. Talk about human rights!

I am at present studying in Grand Forks, North Dakota at the University of North Dakota, and I remember the day my *Abbu* bid me farewell at the airport saying "ma, watch out... there are both good and bad people. Keep with the good and stay away from the bad and you will be fine". So far so true.

I arrived alone, scared, in a new country ready to call it home. Coupled with images of the New York Times calling New York City the most crime infested city lurking in my head, I was scared that I was leaving real home and security behind to find God knows what.

But now thousand miles away from home I live in a secure residence hall where watch is constantly monitored and since I work for the housing, we not only have padlocks on each and every door but also have individual keys, alarm systems, video cameras. Threat to violence is taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

Things are just a tad bit different here than in Bangladesh. A Justice does not arrive the next day to sit on his soft cushion and listen to 40 girls' woes for an hour and let everyone know that the "documentation" will be completed in half a month or so. Is it life's irony that I am safer than those girls at home ever were? What exactly is being done to help these girls?

At the end of the day you really don't want to ask your daughter if she prefers to stay and study at home because it is "safer", or study and live abroad on her own. Hopefully you and your daughter make the right decision.

Sabrina Amjad
University of North Dakota, USA

"Great Army"

This is in response to Mr R. Ali's letter 'Great army' (August 2). I had the same experience the other day. My wife and me were going to Uttara in the evening. The man at Jahangir Gate stopped my vehicle and enquired about my destination. When I told him that I was heading towards Uttara he curly asked me to go back and take the old route via Mahakhali Rail Gate. It was Wednesday the 31st July and that road was unusually crowded.

Anyway, I did not argue, as I knew it would not be of any use. They are a law unto themselves.. This I am stating from another



No entry

experience of mine. Years ago a friend was lying critically ill in the CMH. On my way back from office I decided to visit him and approached the Gate near the rail crossing after the Navy Headquarters. They stopped me. When I told them about my destination they asked me, this time very politely, to leave my vehicles (which, incidentally, was a yellow plated one) behind and take a rickshaw or walk. I told them to check my car or take custody of the blue book and other papers to be returned on my return. But they would not listen. Their objection was against the car not against the person.

If a vehicle can enter through Jahangir Gate and exit through the Banani Gate why cannot it exit through the other gate? Why are people required to inform them their destination before they are allowed to enter the Cantonment when there are government orders declaring it as a new route (at least, for light private vehicles)?

I whole-heartedly support Mr R Ali's suggestion. That's why I am writing this letter.

AZ M Abdul Ali
Uttara, Dhaka

In response to the appeal of the letter writer I accord my full support to the contents of his letter (August 2).

It is surprising that none of the popularly elected governments take steps to open up thoroughfares through Dhaka Cantonment or the BDR Headquarters at Pilkhana. This could ease some of traffic woes of the city-dwellers.

In recent past an expert study found that conditions could be improved by shifting the Cantonment out of the city. The democratic government remained silent to the remarks of the then C-in-C that instead Dhaka should be shifted away.

A comment by a political leader with regards to tail and wagging seems to be applicable to many contexts.

MAH
Dhaka

enjoy autonomy. They are but obedient to our 'good for nothing' political parties, and carry their dictates.

We want to respect our teachers, the nation builder, from the core of our heart. The colourless teachers of DU may come forward and take their stand firmly to rescue the University's prestige.

Faruque Hasan
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Gas: To export or not to export

According to the report of *The Daily Star* (August 3), donors continue to coax the government to take a positive decision to go for gas export to India from the existing reserves to qualify for further investment and funding in energy sector. On the contrary, there is a clear indication that the utilisation committee for gas will recommend the government not to export gas from existing reserves determined by the other committee to be 12 to 16 trillion cubic feet. As Bangladesh is largely dependent on foreign aid, the government is facing a dilemma.

If the government decides to export gas, the opposition will certainly call for an agitation. Public sentiment is also against gas exporting and the government is

entire country is held hostage by public sector trade unions. Biman could not be privatised because of union opposition. Adamjee was looted thanks to the unions. Titas and BTB are run by and for the profits of their trade unions. Let's face it; the very advent of trade unionism was a curse on this world and there is truly nothing worse than a CBA agent.

I have a gas connection in my factory. The gas meter is in a small shed, which is always locked apart from the annual inspection by Titas extortionists. These people after checking the meter put a little sticker on it to ensure that they know if it is opened and tampered by anyone else. How long do you think this little sticker lasts before peeling off? When these guys come back for their inspection they claim that you tampered with the meter and will be fined a year's bill. Or you can pay Tk. 50,000 to be forgiven.

Shonku
Dhaka

Freedom of expression

We are grateful to *The Daily Star* for its most liberal and generous policy, which allows us to express our divergent views on various subjects. In a civil society this attitude of

Islam guides a faithful to such a lofty world where there is no place for bigotry and ignorance. It gives the humanity a very clear instruction and also allows maximum freedom to choose the right path. Our actions in our everyday life are the barometer of our clear perception of the creation and above all the universe. Every individual has a distinct responsibility to make a contribution in making this world a better place to live in. This onerous responsibility can only be carried out if we accept the sovereignty of knowledge in our life.

Akbar Hussain
Toronto, Canada

What is BDR doing on the border?

This has gone too far this time! How many innocent Bangladeshis have to die every month at the hands of BSF? And what on earth are our BDR *jawans* (!) accomplishing on the border instead of protecting the lives of our countrymen?

Is it good enough to yell out to some BSF commanders for a chaff 'Flag meeting' that does nothing but add grievance to a family and insult to the country. As a citizen of this country I demand an answer from our government, the BSF and their bosses!

enjoined that Biman be let to go liquidation. In other words, such sick state-enterprise like Biman should face its own fate under market reality, for it cannot make any profit. Procuring a loan for Biman, at any rate, just means sending Biman under life supporting machine, from which recuperation is virtually implausible. So how long will the government save its break down off?

Khairul A Choudhury
Londur

Dhaka Mayor and dengue

This is too pathetic and disturbing to know that our Mayor and his crews are not ready yet to handle the crisis that citizens of Dhaka are about to face-- dengue crisis.

Dengue crisis is nothing new and yet how come it is OK for the Mayor to tell us that the delay for not spraying the affected area is not his fault. People suffered last year and our Mayor should have been ready to handle it this year. Why could not he import the necessary larvae killing chemicals before the rainy season began this year?

A Ahmed, Dhaka

Age tricksters

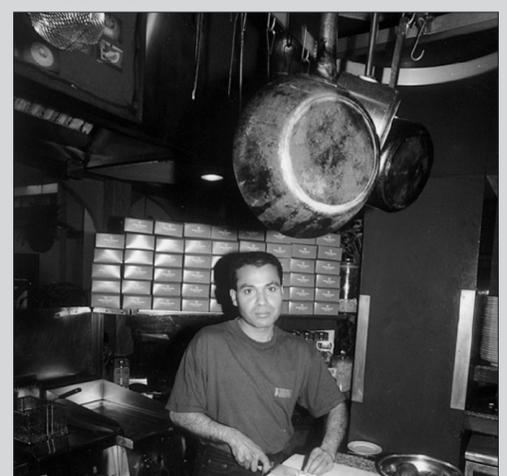
The going seems to be too tough for

Let us remember Tomi Miah's predecessors too

Tomi Miah has made news. As a trailer to Tomi Miah, I would love to remember many more Bengal adventurers who made news in the past, not in this country, in Britain. I limit my account to the eighteenth century only.

Begum Jahan, who married William Watts, the Calcutta Fort William Governor of Palashi days, went to London (1760) not with her husband from whom she was divorced in 1758. She was adept in music, dance and decoration. Her talent took her close to elite societies of London and Liverpool. She died in 1812. According to contemporary newspaper reports, even British cabinet members came to attend her rituals and pay their last respect to her. Amelia was her daughter. Another prodigy, she married Lord Charles Jenkinson, son of the first Earl of Liverpool. Amelia's son Robert Bank Jenkinson or Lord Liverpool, became the Prime Minister of Britain (1818-1827). Prime Minister Lord Liverpool once said in a dinner speech that he was 'double civilised' because in his vein flowed the blood of two civilisations- European and Indian.

Sheikh Deen Muhammad, contemporaneous to Begum Jahan and a former sepoy of the East India Company army, went to Ireland in 1783. He set up a Hooka Club in Dublin. Later he shifted his business to London. At Oxford Street, London, Deen Muhammad established the Hindustani Coffee House (1811), the first Indian Restaurant in Britain. Like Tomi Miah, he also wrote a book, an epistolary account (1792) of himself. He kept his family background in a shroud of mystery. From very detailed description of Dhaka City that he made in his account, it may be inferred that he



A history of Tomy Miah's

was an East Bengal boy. As an extension of his business, Deen Muhammad established a Turkish Bath and a Hindustanee Hot Bath in Brighton. In these baths, he tried to help rheumatic patients through Indian methods. In his bathhouses, he also introduced Indian hair dye and champo. Both the items became later world famous. His champo became today's shampoo. Deen also set up a 'five-star' sort hotel in Brighton. He died in 1852. His obituary appeared in many British newspapers.

Sheikh Ihtesham-ud-Din visited Britain and stayed there for one year (1767/68). He wrote in Persian his perception of British life and society. His book was later translated into several European languages. As a classic, the book is still in the world market.

Mirza Abu Talib Khan lived in Britain for three years (1797-1799). His three-volume travelogue in Persian was rendered into English by historian Charles Steuart in 1813. Later the book was translated into many other European languages. As a world classic, Abu Talib's book is still highly esteemed. Abu Talib met Oxford academics. At their request he made a presentation there on 'Indian Women' which has been published in the *Asiatic Researcher* (1801). According to Abu Talib's account there were about five thousand Indians living in England most of whom were, of course, *ayahs* and *laskars* or sailors and some of them achieved distinctions in their businesses and avocations.

Sirajul Islam
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh

report, realises that a stronger JCD could have quelled the DU protests, what does that mean? A stronger better-armed JCD could have beaten up students in sufficient numbers to silence them? I wouldn't be surprised if Lucy and Shanta become State Ministers soon. My only request would be for *The Daily Star* to remind us of that when they get their nominations.

MA
Dhaka

Extremism is at the root of the Middle East crisis

Tashbih Sayyed, editor in chief of weekly *Pakistan Today*, recently wrote: "Yasser Arafat is supposed to be the leader of his people (Palestinians)... But if the bloody events in the region are any indication of who has the authority over the Palestinians, even a blind person can see that it is not Yasser Arafat. The masses follow the instructions of Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad. These groups do not want any peace with Israel. They want its destruction."

This is a surprisingly candid statement from a prominent journalist from a Muslim country like Pakistan where Israel is singled out for the plight of the Palestinian people and suicide bombers are eulogized as martyrs. But now moderates are making their views heard. As Mr. Sayyed further pointed out: "And since not just the Palestinian main street, but the entire Arab masses are controlled by the mosques and madrasses occupied by Saudi brand of Islam - Wahabism, spewing venom against every non Wahabi, they have Israel's destruction as an article of faith. Because the Palestinian mind does not accept the existence of Israel, it being composed of 'all historic Palestine', all the maps displayed in the Palestinian controlled territories do not show any sign of Israel. ... Without a declared change of heart and mind on the part of Palestinian leadership, award of a state would appear to be a reward for homicide bombings and other acts of terror all over the world... And it only takes a pack of misguided, devoted and die-hard homicide bombers to make the world's only super power to succumb to their demands."

It is time that the world should listen to wise people like Tashbih Sayyed.

Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Bush and Blair

The United States wants to invade Iraq and guess who else is on that boat? George W. Bush's trusted friend Tony Blair. At times Mr. Blair is also referred to as the White House's biggest spokesperson. It is ironic to see the once mighty British Empire has now been reduced to a 'yes' man.

A Citizen
On e-mail