

Former CA as President

The presidential polls are about a month away and lobbying for this post has begun full steam. Going through your August 13 report on this matter, I understand BNP is not yet firm on a suitable candidate. According to insider sources as reported in your paper, "the BNP chairperson prefers to pick a person who is tested and trusted." Well, how about the former Chief Advisor, Justice Latifur Rahman?

Justice Rahman is 'tested and trusted'. He displayed tremendous charisma during his tenure as the head of the caretaker government. He is no doubt qualified, well respected and the majority of the citizens like him. Even the Awami League has respect for Latifur Rahman or why else would they have agreed to hand over power to him?

All that brouhaha regarding the Chief Advisor's alleged prejudice following Awami League's election debacle last October was a cheap, face saving stunt. Everyone knows this and it should not pose as a reason to disqualify Justice Rahman.

Rumi Ahmed, Chittagong Extremists use hatred to promote their own agenda

Recent killing of a Jewish man by a neo-Nazi gangster in Toronto is an example how brutal elements can take the life of a person only because he is Jewish. This is not a new phenomenon. Hitler managed to work up a considerable number of his compatriots to a frenzy of homicidal fury against the Jews, when the latter amounted to only one per cent of the German population, and the post-war Polish government did even better: that paranoid and bungling communist regime produced anti-Semitism without any Jews at all (Poland's once thriving Jewish community were either killed during the war or emigrated after the war).

This also explains why Palestinian extremists continue their suicide bombings of Israeli civilians even when negotiations for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories are expected to begin. The Palestinian extremists are actually using hatred against the Jewish people to advance their own agenda that is

ian extremists show that hatred is not limited to any particular religion or group. Unless the world can overcome this hatred, there can be no peace in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Neo-Nazi gangs went to a Jewish pizza parlour with the explicit aim of killing a Jew. They thought they were carrying out the brutal tradition of their ideological mentor Adolf Hitler, even though he was an enemy of Canada and thousands of Canadian soldiers were killed by the Nazis in the battlefields across Europe during the World War II. It is high time that all acts of hatred must be dealt with sternly and steadfastly.

Mahmood Elahi Canada

Palestine

I found Tim Rabbi's opinion (August 12) about Palestine contradictory. He complained that the Americans don't care about the Palestine and then went on to say that he really likes the Americans. I see this contradiction in many of my friends.

If you don't like someone's attitude and actions but like them then at the end of the day your liking for the person gets the upper hand.

Finally I would like to add that without the support of the majority of American people (active or passive) "the few selfish people" wouldn't be able to continue doing what they have been doing for years.

Waheed Nabi Sheffield, England

"Alliance plans celebrations for year in power"

The news item "Alliance plans celebrations for year in power" (August 13) attracted my attention. This plan of the ruling party reminds me of its earlier celebrations of hundred days in office.

At a time when school children are being murdered, people dying of dengue with the government keeping its hands folded and doing almost nothing, corruption and terrorism are on the rise, I see little or no reason for the Alliance to plan celebrations of any kind. This government's success stories lie in its failures. Its successes lie in looking after themselves at the expenses of the people.

It appears as though we have lost on all fronts— material, moral and ethical. It is evident that whoever takes the reins of the government soon gains the license to do anything anyway he or she so desires.

Please go ahead with the plans for the celebrations! After all an ordinary citizen like me can do nothing about it except reaching to yet a higher state of frustration.

Shamsher Chowdhury USA

Remembering Bangabandhu

It is indecent and immoral to deny people the right to express their deep love, respect and sympathy for Bangabandhu on August 15. By creating barriers to commemorate the tragic death of the founding leader and his family, the BNP-Jamaat coalition government is trying to erase an important, albeit unfortunate, chapter of the history of Bangladesh.

A concerned Bangladeshi New York, USA

4 - s t r o k e autorickshaw

A news item appearing in The Daily Star of 12 August reveals that BRTC will arrange 4-stroke autorickshaw for the affected owners/drivers of 2-stroke 3-wheelers. I suggest that the corporation should take this opportunity to introduce fare meters in these automobiles.

A lot of irritation and skirmishes can be avoided by taking up this step.

MAH Dhaka

Either or...

Like Mr. Faruque depicted in his letter "Why this fuss about dengue?" (August 12), the lack of accountability and the false promises that our politicians generate before the election is so far from what they do

"How can we forget?"

This is in reference to the letter "How can we forget?" (August 6). The Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf wrote in the visitor's book at the Savar Mausoleum on July 29, "... the excesses committed during that unfortunate period are regrettable..."

We note with open heart that this was the first time a Head of the State of Pakistan at least gave a statement like this. We sure hope that Pakistan will soon follow this up with an unqualified apology for what they did in this country in 1971. The real friendship between Bangladesh and Pakistan can be ushered in only after that.

AKM Sajjad Ali Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Pervez Mosharraf's "Sorry"

Have we overlooked the language of Pervez Mosharraf's sorry and terming it as an apology like the ruling class? He has the audacity of saying that he "regrets the excesses". He doesn't even mention who committed those and even goes further to suggest that Pakistan shares the sorrows of the tragedy. But he was clever enough to talk more about the "tragedy".

Let me tell you their tragedy is the loss of the colony named "Bangladesh" -- that they couldn't hold onto; and the greater tragedy is that they had to surrender to the joint command (a laughable one indeed- as to the whole world it means simply India). They do not feel any remorse for what they have done in 1971 and I'm a witness to that. You know what Niazi said in his last statement? Last year he publicly said that Dec 16, 1971 was the darkest day in the history of Muslims. Well, one can judge their feeling very well after that.

What the ruling party is trying to preach? And what is the reason behind all these dramas? I must say that I am thoroughly disgusted. As an afterthought, hats off to Mr T Ali on his short but very crispy and fitting comment about the two families (Daily Star -- 9th Aug, 2002)

after puts me into a dilemma. I also agree with Mr Faruque of our hypnotic state when it comes to voting and also be reluctant all year long about the happenings as if that's what was supposed to be just like the writer stated why make a fuss about dengue!

Your August 13 issue added the negligence of the DCC that prior to an alarm by the experts they fall behind to take measures and also the mayor's inadequacy, as he is yet to sign the approval for the supply of larvae.

Zaiami Dhaka

DU bus service

The Dhaka University bus service extremely poor to say the least. A large number of DU buses ply in different route. Most of the time these buses are loaded with some unknown faces. The students have to face unpleasant experiences when they use this service.

The bus-staff hardly pay any attentions to the students nor do they carry out their duties sincerely. They use these buses as if these were their own property. Some unknown people who, understandably are not supposed to be in these buses, often occupy the seats. It is also apprehended that many of these people get in to these buses in exchange of money in collaboration with the staff.

The DU authorities should take some punitive actions in this regard to refrain the bus-staff from carrying out this malpractice.

Ahmed Tarun Dhaka University!

No 'Straight from the Heart'

How is that there was no 'Straight from the Heart' by Afsan Chowdhury for last two weeks? His column is something I really look forward to on every Tuesday morning. Can he be requested to write more?

Mahboob Alam Baridhara, Dhaka

How come there wasn't any Afsan Chowdhury column this week? Last week also there wasn't any of his write-ups.

One of the main attractions in The Daily Star is Afsan Chowdhury's column and we really look forward to his write-up. You could at least give a notice informing us that there won't be any column of his for we were remain really eager to read his article.

Sabrina Samantha Purana Palta, Dhaka

Afsan Chowdhury is on medical leave.
Editor

Wheat scam

How much do we have to suffer under this government? Isn't there any respite for us? Now the government is trying to feed us with wheat which "even goats won't eat!"

Why is the government taking such a long time to bring those responsible to justice? Isn't the government yet convinced of the rotten quality of the wheat which their people bought to feed the people of this country? How much more evidence they need?

Arif Chowdhury Bogra

Student politics is not the problem

Many who recently wrote on this subject seems to have echoed one message more emphatically - that



Question time: 1971

Mahmoud Saeed Abu Dhabi, UAE

It's a fact that we are known for our hospitality and warm welcomes to foreign guests. This characteristic of ours has taken a new dimension when the government 'consciously' invited the military dictator of Pakistan to visit Bangladesh.

Pakistan Army, playing an active role against the liberation of Bangladesh, now the President of Pakistan, it was shocking to see him placing floral wreaths to monuments of martyrs.

Shehzad Bin Shams International Students' House, Delhi, India

objectives. Regrettably, over the years what has become a problem is the increasing politicisation and criminalisation of the student groups by the mainstream political parties, mainly to pursue the latter's narrow political objectives in educational institutions. In this axis of non-charitable act the academics in general and the university administration in particular also seemed to have gotten themselves entangled in and aligned themselves to one political party or the other. The result has been a complete polarisation of students and teachers on party lines leading to diabolic engagements on matters and issues that are hardly scholastic.

Therefore, the de-politicisation of student politics is a must, but has to start with not by banning student

did not have the capacity, duly trained in required fields to run an airline; but even then they managed and started with a DC-3 aircraft out of their overwhelming zeal, dedication and enthusiasm. This aircraft crashed in February, 1972 and a few very brilliant pilots were lost with it. That was the sad beginning of this airline. If I am not mistaken, the government gave them taka 5 Crores only as working capital! And now it has got assets of few thousand crores.

Biman's professionalism has been on the wane (which is considered to be the prime requisite for any success) since long with the introduction of wrong policies. For example, its Flight Catering Centre and Cargo Divisions are headed by non-professionals, etc.

There was a proposal for

Our whole family is migrated to the United States and is used to arranging air travels over the Internet or by phone when we travel places outside Bangladesh. Most of the international airlines are using Internet and phone for customer convenience. The way they provide customer service is praiseworthy. But when it comes to Biman things are not the same.

My sister's family has travelled to Bangladesh by Biman from New York City with round trip tickets. Before they left NY last July, Biman could not confirm their late August return flight, not because the return flight was full out of Dhaka.

New York City's Biman office could not tell the reason. When she enquired in NY before her departure, the office told her that they did not get reply from the Dhaka Biman HQ.

She is in Dhaka and now trying her flight confirmation. She has paid bribes to Biman people and still waiting for confirmation. Paying bribe to get a flight confirmation! I have asked my family not to give their dollars to Bangladesh Biman anymore though flying to Bangladesh is costlier in other airlines.

But simply Biman is not worth earning our dollars.

Future Biman passengers in the US should take a note of this.

AG Santa Clara California

Arms race

According to a report in the Times Literary Supplement of 7th January, 2000, India has 750 million lower middle class of whom 320 million live in abject poverty, while 500 million are illiterate. The picture, I presume, would be the same in the other countries of the sub-continent.

Then why are we spending so much money on arms build-up? Cannot we spend all those money for a better and worthy purpose?

SMS Zaman Dhaka

About bus service

I am a student of Computer Science and travel by bus regularly. I live in Shewrapara, Mirpur and five days a week I go to Banani to attend my classes. I use the sitting service buses of the airport route (number 3).

These particular buses are suppose to provide you a better service and that is nobody travels standing. But for months it has been a regular practice for the buses to take passengers without providing them with seats.

Though people have been complaining, nothing has changed. I want to know whether the government has rules or not on the bus service. This is a kind of fraud but I see no writings about such stuff in the newspapers.

So my request to you is that please make some comment about this fraud and attract the attention of the government. I am a daily reader of The Daily Star. I hope you will write some articles on such kind of Bus Service in the paper. Thank you.

Mohammad Rasheduzzaman Shewrapara, Kafrul, Dhaka

The police attack on Professor

Anwar Hossain: Shame for a Nation

According to the daily newspapers of 30th August, police attacked on the Dhaka University campus irrespective of the students, teachers, and journalists. The students or more precisely to say, the general students of Dhaka University were protesting against the Police raid and atrocity in Shamsunnahar Hall. A large number of students and teachers who had never attended to any procession in the campus came to the street for the first time.

Dr Humayun Azad is one of them who expressed his rage in an exceptional way. Allegedly Professor Anwar Hossain of the Biochemistry Department was requesting the Police to release an arrested DU student who stood 1st in SSC and 2nd in HSC examination. What an admirable job Anwar Sir was doing! But police didn't listen to him and kicked him down to the street, hit him with the gun even after knowing that he was a teacher of DU.

Being a former student of the Applied Chemistry and Chemical Technology Department, DU, I was really ashamed to see such a picture in the following day's newspapers (DS Front). This cannot be the way of treating a teacher. He did not commit any crime. But the police treated him as if he were a criminal. This is shame for the nation.

I want the persons responsible for the incident to be punished.

Md. Akhtaruzzaman Okazaki Japan

nary people.

I know ordinary people do not get loan from any private bank. The bankers only entertain the "Big Fish". I also know the result of probing by BB will be submitted to the Finance Minister. And the corrupt bankers ganged up with greedy and hungry politicians will stop the process and media will be silent. After sometimes people will forget about the whole thing only to give birth to another similar incident.

If government wants to show its sincerity in establishing good governance, they should do following things:

1. Keep the MDs, DMDs and other concerned officials of the involved banks under strict surveillance i.e., seize their passports, start thorough investigation so that no body can escape their responsibility.
2. Take the full account of the properties of all bankers both in private and public sectors, find out the source of their unaccounted wealth.
3. It has been learnt that the wives of some MDs of some newly floated banks are actively involved in "Hundi" business under the guise of currency exchange business. Find them, hunt them and bring them to justice.

Mohammed Ayub Khan Canada

"Marwari Scam"



Eating banks

I object to the title of your lead editorial "Marawari Scam" (August 12). No where in the editorial did you give specific information on who perpetrated the scam, instead you cast dispersion on an entire community that they are all criminals and thieves.

Marawaris are proud to call Bangladesh their home, and have showed their loyalty tenfold remaining here not only after Partition, but after the violent birth of Bangladesh. Yes, we have some undesirable elements, but

which community doesn't? Niraj Agarwala Norfolk, VA

Any offence conveyed by the editorial is regretted. This was unintentional.
Editor

I am deeply shocked to learn that two Indian nationals/business men swindled out hundreds of crores of taka out of my poor country apparently with the help and support from the banker who were thought to be the custodian of the trust and wealth of ordi-

the students must not participate in politics! However, I wish to argue that while presenting this very well intentioned message, these people might have missed one major point! To me, student politics per se is not the problem. What indeed is a problem, is the politicisation of the students and even the academics by the political parties.

I argue that students ought to participate in political or the policy issues of the state as indeed in matters that directly relate to their own - their academic and social well being. Participation of students in political and policy matters of state is particularly crucial for a country where nearly 70 per cent of the population are illiterate and therefore, are unable to contribute to the debates on national political issues.

The student community constitutes an important part of those who belong to the privileged few, the educated. Their views and where needed, their activism is indeed, vital for nation building. In the past, student activism on matters of national interest such as the Language Movement of 1952, 11 Point Movement of 1969 etc. made significant progress towards achievement of serious national

politics per se (what the current government is suggesting), but by banning the act of patronisation of student groups (also the groups of academics), by the political parties. In this regard a serious consideration must be given to enact an act of parliament that will bar all political parties from enlisting the students and academics could be branded as illegal, a criminal act and attempt by any party - students, academics and indeed the political parties, especially the latter - to deviate from this should be made a subject of criminal prosecution.

M. Adil Khan Brisbane, Australia

Biman

For the last few days comments on Biman have been appearing in the DS regarding its management, regularity, services, losses etc. It obviously shows that the general people are concerned about the performance of their national carrier.

Due to my close relation with a few dedicated souls of the airline who helped found the airline along with a few thousands of co-workers in 1972 and onwards, I know certain facts about Biman. To start with they

Death of innocence



No tomorrow?

Another child has been murdered. Eight years old Bappi who was a student of class iii of Armanitola Government High School, was killed. Bappi's cousin Shipon along with his four associates committed the murder. His body was thrown into the river afterwards.

"These criminals should be given exemplary punishment. Once such a criminal is given a death sentence he can be hanged or shot in public. Some people might object and call it barbaric but I believe it will work as a deterrent to such heinous crime. If I got power even for a day I would shoot them in Sorowardi Uddyan in front of thousands of audience."

arif, Dhaka

We claim ourselves as citizens of an independent country, a democracy. But are we really free? Can we call our country -- an "independent" country? Three murders, one after another, of school children compel us to question whether we are free to live happily. NO we are not. Our children are not safe. Can you trust anyone when the enemy is your neighbour, your friend or your family. Not only the children but also persons of any age is under the claws of murderers. Despite having law and order, the killings and killers are still at large.

God knows when peace and harmony will come back.
Sumair Ghani, Dhaka

A citizen USA

Sound of music!

It has become a fashion in Chittagong to hire band-party with high-pitch musical instruments to bombard all night with full-throated songs and music in residential areas mostly on rooftop to celebrate any occasion.

People residing around at least one square mile are subjected to such nightlong tumult and torture. But the students, patients and the older people are the worst sufferers. Organising such noisy party is also a violation of law. But the authorities concerned do not seem to bother

how to control the Palestinian population.

Tashbih Sayeed, editor-in-chief of weekly *Pakistan Today* has elaborated this in a thoughtful article "They Are At Peace When At War,". "The destruction of the state of Israel is the faith of the leadership of HAMAS, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad. Their lethal faith is the product of the way they have been taught their history as well as theology."

The shooting of Jewish passengers at Los Angeles airport by an Egyptian extremist, the killing of a Jewish man at a pizza parlour in Toronto by a white neo-Nazi extremist and suicide bombings of Jewish children and women by the Palestin-

"Great army!"

I was student at a Medical College. It was an educational tour. We were on the road in Chittagong Hill Tracts. We were riding on a reserved bus. The bus stopped at a small Bazar. We got down. It was nature's time. As we were getting started, a small heated discussion was on air. Two soldiers (of Bangladesh Army) wanted to get a ride in our packed bus. Naturally they were not welcome.

But the khaki soldiers did ride with us by sheer force. About an hour or two later, these two soldiers got down at an Army Post. And they forcefully stopped the bus. The students and the accompanying teacher (an Associate Professor) had to beg the commander of the post for the release of the bus.

This is the culture of hubris that has shrouded the psyche of our military. So when Mr. Ali or Mr. Rahman vents his displeasure, he is not alone.

And talking about army cantonment! Is not it unwise to have an army garrison or a cantonment in such close proximity of a city centre?

A Concerned Citizen, Dhaka



May I refer to the various letters regarding our "Great Army", especially those from M/S Sobhan Chowdhury and Nafis.

I didn't get the point on which they are defending the Army. It's the general people who are suffering because of them. Where does Mr. Sobhan finds the civilians at fault? Has anybody ever heard that an army man was roughed by a civilian! The army people should be checked while getting in and out of the cantonment in civilian areas.

Mr. Nafis mentioned that entry into a military installation is prohibited worldwide. Yes it is true but has anybody heard of a Cantonment in the heart of the city? Can anybody name a country where Army runs banks, owns hotels, golf courses, cinema halls, men in uniform becoming CEO's of WASA, DESA, PDB, BIMAN and what not.

I can bet most of our people would like the men in uniform to remain in the barracks far away from the civilians and stay there until they are called for...

Sohana Khan Mirpur Dhaka