

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

"Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow"

I can't help responding to your front paged 7 column photo and news coverage of a ceremony entitled 'Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow' organised by *The Daily Star* as in the past to honour 319 students of English medium schools for their outstanding achievements in the O'level and A'Level examinations last session ending June 2002.

While any effort to appreciate performance of students for their academic distinction must be lauded, like everybody, *The Daily Star* and its Editor with multi-dimensional interests must know for sure more than any body else that these students, if anything cannot be the nation builders of tomorrow as the only ambition of these students, also passionately wished and nurtured by their parents, is to go to America for higher studies, build up a bright academic career to get in to a lucrative job in America with an attractive salary, settle down permanently with American citizenship and contribute to building America as a prosperous nation.

Far from serving in Bangladesh these expatriate Bangladeshis, totally alienated from the mainstream Bangladesh society, more often than not sneer at Bangladesh with mosquitoes and mastans, dreaded diseases and environmental pollution, and trapped by disabling poverty, traffic gridlock and squabbling politics.

If *The Daily Star* initiative is not a gimmick, it should better organise similar ceremonies in future to honour meritorious students of SSC and HSC examinations who are the real and potential nation builders of tomorrow as most of them will stay home to serve as teachers, journalists, doctors, engineers, businessmen and government servants.

Abdul Hannan
Dharmodi, Dhaka

George Harrison Day

This is in reference to the letter by Saeed Khan (November 8) on George Harrison.

When I read this letter, I became really emotional. For the first time, some one has finally said what was

Advani's remark

Mr. Advani has recently made some ill remarks about Bangladesh which is highly objectionable.

Remarkably, India could not maintain a good tie with any of its neighbouring countries. And it is the Indian leaders who are responsible for this. People of the neighbouring countries do not like undue interference in internal matters and their big brother attitude.

The Indian Government should realise that though we are a small country, we are very conscious about our sovereignty.

OLI Md. Abdullah Chowdhury
Sylhet

L. K. Advani's allegations about the presence of Al-Qaida and Pakistani Intelligence Service's presence in Bangladesh must be taken seriously.

There are people in Bangladesh who tend to live in a utopian world and loves to minimise the importance of India as a big and powerful neighbour. In the new global atmosphere after the 11 Sept. 2001 tragedy in New York, Bangladesh must take a pragmatic view of the situation and steer very carefully. The most disturbing aspect of the national politics is that it is not guided by any real political brain in the country. The nasty trend of personal animosity has become a chronic feature disregarding the most pressing needs of the nation.

Bangladesh does not want to become a puppet state of India and it also does not want

overdue since 1971. We must honour George Harrison, Ravi Shankar and all the others who extended their helping hands during our Liberation War. We must do it as a nation. Naming a street or centre or some other important place after their names is a very good idea.

We can also mark the day of the concert as a national day. That day we could organise free open air concerts with classical, traditional and pop musicians. This may be a way to remember and express our love for our freedom fighters and friends like George Harrison. These types of concerts can also act as a platform for creating awareness and fighting the erosion of the spirit of our Liberation War. We could also invite other living performers of "Concert for Bangladesh" to perform in these events.

We should also make the "Bangladesh" song available en masse. It should also be aired on TV, Radio etc. This concert was an unprecedented and historical event for not only Bangladesh but for the entire world.

We should also have the song translated and along with the original one have it published in high school text books.

The political parties of Bangladesh exploit the memory of the Liberation War twisting it as they choose or see fit. There are those who are even confused about the reasons behind the War. Why and how did it become an international affair? What motivated George Harrison and the others to come forward? We should highlight these

very reasons for the information of the younger generation.

Let us start with naming something nationally important after George Harrison and then follow with Ravi Shankar and the rest. We need this more now than ever before as the memories of the Liberation War are being distorted beyond confusion.

Raqta
Pennsylvania, USA

Bank robbery and some thoughts

If masked men have the temerity to rob a bank in broad daylight ("Masked men rob bank in daylight", November 12) while the army is conducting an anti-terror drive one is compelled to say that perhaps the tip of the iceberg is still to come into sight.

The government and the army seem to be up against something more ominous than an ordinary imagination can perceive. This does not seem to be a mere drive against "mastsans". The situation points towards a thick plot against the journey of democracy in the country. A couple of more challenges of daring of this nature in the face of the army-drive can send shivers across the whole infrastructure of governance paving the way for Allah knows what kind of catastrophe. This surely is a delicate moment for politicians' rule on the country. There is need for complete unity amongst the people's civilian representatives irrespective of their political affiliation. Also in the same breath one needs to say that the ruling coalition also needs to widen its consultative organ with a large heart to take into confidence the otherwise opposing political force.

The opposition should also demonstrate maturity and support the civilian rule. If at this moment in history the opposition decides to cash in on these ugly events for a demand of fresh election, history may not judge them as friends of Bangladesh. There will be ample time and opportunity to disagree if democracy survives.

No doubt that the short sighted motives of the politicians over a period of time have nurtured and institutionalised the culture of crime and to a great extent provided the criminals immunity to pursue their

being whipped across the globe each day, so are simultaneously conspiracies hatched to easily malign the next target. And one big hurdle in the way is the government of the people. Beware Bangladesh.

Mohammad Anis
Karachi, Pakistan

Army deployment

The Government has deployed army to curb crimes and terrorism in our country. But, do not think it is a sound approach in a country like ours, which has achieved democracy through much bloodshed. And we are not sure what will happen when the army returns to the barracks. What hurts me most is that we still find at the front page the death news of a person or two. The difference is that previously people used to die at the hands of some terrorists and now people die in army custody.

Is there really any value of our lives in this country?
Rifat Mahbub
Department of English, DU

I agree with some of the writers here in their characterisation of the use of army forces to deal with domestic crimes as a diversion from the ideals of pure democracy. Nonetheless, it is apparent that our government and many of our citizens have the strong feeling that some of those democratic ideals are worth sacrificing if in so doing, we bring some control to the country's worsening crime situation.

We cannot blame the army for their involvement. Nor can we blame the government that felt deploying the army to deal with the criminals was the only option in hand, other than leaving things as they have been for so many years. As a society, for decades, we have been accepting towards all the corruption and immorality around us.

In time our own social ignorance and apathy reveals itself in the governments we elect, the police we have and the communities we create. In the end, it is the fault of an uncaring society if military force is needed to bring structural stability within the country. Perhaps this is a time for us to realise the importance of being politically and socially conscious; a time for us to remind

the government would come forward and do whatever is necessary to improve the sorry state of our education system.
M.H. Baru
Khulna

Parking space and RAJUK

If I am not mistaken, there is a law that you must have 23 square feet of space earmarked for parking for every 197 sq. feet of building space in Dhaka city. Whenever someone submits a building plan for approval of RAJUK, it must abide by the law and RAJUK is supposed to look after it.

But what we see in Dhaka today, a very few abide by the building code and RAJUK seems to be constantly turning its eyes away from the grave consequences it has already posed to city environment and traffic. Just go through Mirpur Road from Nilkhett towards Gabtoli, you would find all those plazas and malls constructed violating the building code of parking space. As a result, cars are parked on the roadsides narrowing the road space. The building owners have even turned the footpaths into parking lot.

Many shopping centres have also transformed the underground parking lots into shops. There is a pathology centre which has turned their underground parking space into x-ray rooms and another one do not allow visitors' cars into its already below-the-code parking space. It is reserved for its MD and professors. Dhaka City Corporation constructed a number of shopping centres in Gulistan and near New Market (Chandrima Super Market) without having parking space even for a single car.

If things go like these what is the point of having RAJUK? The government should better lease out the task of approving building plans to private architectural firms in exchange of a fixed rate and get rid of this ever-corrupt and inefficient RAJUK that did never care for a healthy city in its history.

Nihon Amin
Lalbagh Road, Dhaka

Police and teachers

I wish the army were there forever tuning up the messy, corrupt section of people among us (atitudinally, at least, the proportion of corrupt minded people seems quite high).

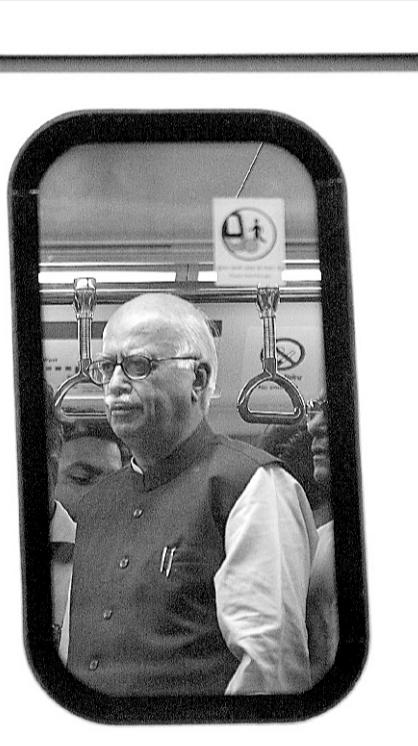
After army returns to their barracks, I propose that the police be empowered and their salaries and benefits be made substantially high to match good corporate employment salaries. This, I believe, is a basic step towards changing the corrupt attitude of our police force.

Only then will our poorly paid police not need to depend on 'side' money to live their life.

The education system, very fertile for generating frustrated adolescents and youths by very poor paid teachers at school and college levels, is another area to concentrate for reduction of crimes and corruption.

Let us push towards improving these two sectors first. I believe, then we would surely be able to improve our socio-economic condition to a respectable level.

There are thousands of those untold stories that has not been clarified or told after the 'Operation Clean Heart' started. What about those top twenty or so godfathers of terrorists initially identified? These



Advani accusing us?

antagonisms with her either.
Akbar Hussain
Toronto, Canada

ourselves that democracy requires responsibility on the part of the people who live under it. If we refuse to be responsible for the circumstances we create, by being oblivious to our surroundings, we create situations similar to those we witness today, where we are shown that we are incapable of making productive use of our democratic freedoms.

Omar Siddiquee
New York, USA

It is alarming to see that instead of resuming press briefing government had closed the avenue. It must be considered as severe blow to democratic norms.

In the meantime 23 people have died in army custody. In a civilised society this would have triggered more accountability and someone should assume the responsibility.

Regular press briefing allows the citizens to be apprised of what is going on with this crackdown. Of course people wants to know how the list has been prepared and how the operation is being conducted.

People wants to know have all the killers those who unleashed the reign of terror are in the list, all the criminals perverts and rapists on the list, all the criminals were seen on media picture standing on the same platform with ministers and MPs are on the list.

There are thousands of those untold stories that has not been clarified or told after the 'Operation Clean Heart' started. What about those top twenty or so godfathers of terrorists initially identified? These

are all unanswered questions and nobody knows if these will be answered.

NL
Toronto, Canada

Education in shambles

Nearly 70% per cent of the government and non-government educational institutions in the country are either below or sub-standard. It has been revealed by the recent survey of the Education Ministry. About 87% of the educational institutes were under the purview of the survey. The result of the survey is very frustrating and worrisome no doubt.

The government pay about Tk. 1850 crore every year as teachers' salary and benefits. Each educational institutional receives Tk. 14.66 lakh on an average per year. The Education Minister has aptly said, "There should be logic behind the huge government expenditure in teachers' salary and other benefits".

Such futile expenditure from the government exchequer is highly questionable for this poor country. So, necessary steps should be taken for improving the present deplorable condition of education without further delay. The below standard and sub-standard institutions either be upgraded or shut down.

The government has taken initiative for introducing semester system in the educational institutions from the year 2004 and changing syllabus. Changing of education system and syllabus are important but if the standard of teachers are not improved all attempts will go in vain. Most of the teachers are found very much interested in teaching at tutorial centres rather than in their respective institutions. Students are found copying in public examinations for passing rather than acquiring knowledge in the classroom.

We sincerely hope that the government would come forward and do whatever is necessary to improve the sorry state of our education system.
M.H. Baru
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Republican victory belongs to Bush



American democracy has spoken. Before the midterm elections, pundits were predicting that nothing would change after the elections. Republicans would continue their thin lead in the House and Democrats would retain their one-member lead in the Senate and the divided government would continue.

But of course everything has changed. Republicans increased their majorities in the House and regained the control of the Senate and instead of a divided government, we have a highly united government under President George W. Bush. This is in stark contrast with the divided government during the Clinton era when mid-term elections in 1994 produced a highly divided government and the subsequent deadlock leading to the shutdown of the government. Today, the American people are solidly united behind President George W. Bush.

As such, Republican victory belongs to Bush.

It is as much about public endorsement of Mr.

Bush as president as approval for Republican Party. If there were any doubt about Bush's leadership, it is now over. The American people have recognised his leadership. He has stood up to the crisis of September 11, rallied the American people, liberated Afghanistan and now on the threshold of liberating Iraq from the brutal yoke of Saddam Hussein.

The crisis of September 11, has brought out real Bush - a resolute man who has rallied America to the new threat of terrorism. George W. Bush now faces three challenges: restore confidence in the American economy, liberate Iraq from a brutal yoke and defeat global terrorism. With America united behind him, Mr. Bush is well poised to achieve all three.

Mahmood Elahi, Canada

It's a mind-boggling affair-- I quote from *The Daily Star* of 09 November, "the demand for fixed telephones... demand note charge... highest in the world. The exorbitant charge was fixed to discourage prospective subscribers, they said". What do they mean by "discourage"? Is it harmful for the economy or for the public if the demand for fixed phone is fulfilled? Does the government want to cry hoarse about "development" and do almost nothing regarding the basic utilities? Actually, I am afraid, like all other sectors of this country this is just a glaring example of creating an artificial crisis in order to make money by illegal means.

Where else in the world has

anyone heard about a situation

where people are ready to pay a

certain price to the government for a