

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.

Well done Bangladesh!

As an ardent fan of cricket, I was simply delighted by the superb performance of the Bangladeshi cricket team! After a long time we tasted success and it was really sweet. Though Bangladesh lost two out of three matches, their overall performance was praiseworthy. It seems our cricketers have overcome their 'losing with dignity' attitude.

I hope soon we will earn more victories like this in cricket. Hats off to all the players of the Bangladeshi cricket team and their coach Dev Whatmore. Surely we want more!

Mohammed Sohel
Olympia Palace Restaurant, Sat Masjid Road, Dhanmondi

New police uniform

I have no idea as to who were the inventors of the new uniform for the police, but I want to ask what was the reason behind the invention? Was it just for a change, or for any other purpose? And I want to say the change was made for the worse, not for the better.

The other day I was in the middle of a melee near a busy cross-roads and the policemen nearby, who rushed forward to clear the crowd, came under public wrath as people could not differentiate them from the security guards usually at work here and there. If you kindly observe the new make-up, or better say the new dress-up of the police force around your street corner, you will find that the police personnel (in the new uniform) do not look smart.

An observer
Dhaka

City planners

I have noticed with increasing concern the arbitrary and dangerous changes in the road dividers and unnecessary broadening of the islands and the resultant narrowing of the main lanes.

I would like to bring to your attention the chaotic traffic situation that exists at the ZIA roundabout during rush hours. The mayor was saying the other day on television that the DCC now has a new engineering division to look into ways of easing traffic congestion in the capital. But, unfortunately, new island construction and erratic bizarre roundabout construction are creating much bigger traffic problems.

The roundabout at the entrance of ZIA is obstructing the traffic

attack and counter-attack continue and Bangladesh suffers.

To get things right, as usual, our newspapers will write long editorials and people like you and me will write long letters here and there. But who cares about our reaction?

To solve our problems, we need to communicate effectively and make sure the public and the politicians understand each other. For our communication to be successful, we need to speak a language that is understood by both the parties. So now we need to speak "their" language. And what language do they speak? They speak only two languages: vote and violence. Contrary to popular belief, politicians in Bangladesh don't actually need our votes to win their elections. Therefore, our "vote language" is a non-starter. We tried it in the last three/four elections, it didn't work. That leaves us with only one option: language of violence.

If we could get around a 1-2 million people (we are all aware of our country's population, million is nothing) in a rally where the top leaders will be present and demand the following, the situation may improve.

1) Independent judiciary system.
2) Complete press freedom with an independent, non-political regulatory body to protect public privacy and maintain standards.

3) Total ban on forceful "imposing" of political parties.

4) End of student politics and total elimination of student-wing terrorist organisations.

I think it is time for such drastic action.

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

14th Amendment

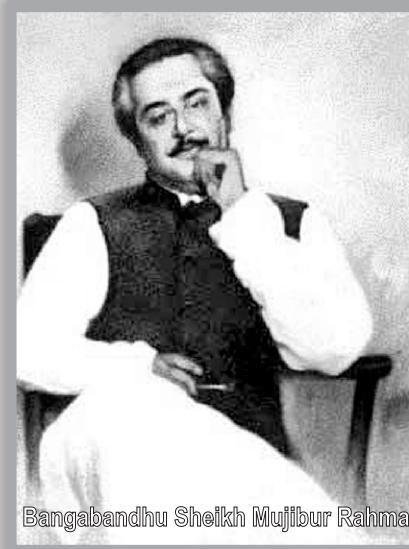
The constitution, the supreme law of the land, can be amended in accordance with public demand upholding supremacy of the same. The BNP led four party alliance intends to amend the constitution through the 14th Amendment. Unfortunately, some provisions of the proposed Amendment have created confusion among conscientious citizens.

It prescribes 45 reserved seats for women in the JS through proportionate distribution of the seats to the parties. Such a gender biased provision completely overlooks the long cherished demand of women to get elected through a direct vote. Article 10 of the constitution unambiguously says, "Steps shall

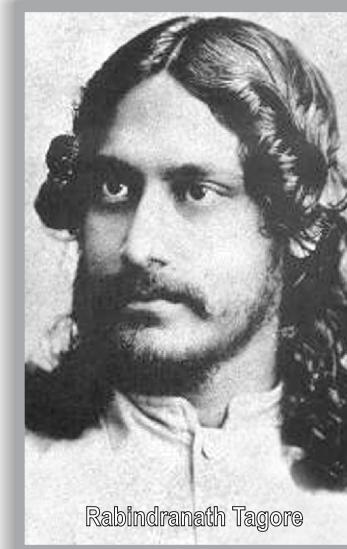
The greatest Bengalee?



Subhas Chandra Bose



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



Rabindranath Tagore

For some time now, the BBC in its Bangla programme is making a special announcement almost every day asking its listeners to let the BBC know their opinion as to who is the greatest Bengalee of all times, all ages?

Is not the announcement confusing and flawed?

Does 'Bengalee' stand for both the people of Bangladesh as well as for the people of West Bengal? Is it meant either for the people of Bangladesh or for the people of West Bengal, India?

However if 'Bengalee' stands for both the peoples of Bangladesh and West Bengal, in my opinion the greatest Bengalee of all times and all ages

is Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, next to him is Poet Rabindranath Tagore, then Poet Nazrul Islam, then Subhas Chandra Bose and then Titu Mir.

The BBC should be clear and definite about using the term 'Bengalee' for the people of Bangladesh who are the citizens of an independent and sovereign country and whose citizenship and nationality is Bangladeshi like Nepalese for the people of Nepal, Chinese for the people of China, Vietnamese for the people of Vietnam, Zambians for the people of Zambia, Indians for the people of India and so on and so forth.

West Bengal is not an independent and sovereign country. It is simply

one of the many provinces of India. The people of West Bengal are known as Bengalee like the people of the province of Gujarat are known as Gujarati, the people of the province of Bihar are known as Bihari, the people of Rajputana are known as Rajput, and so on. Moreover, the nationality of the people of West Bengal is Indian and not 'Bengalee'.

In order to distinguish and correctly identify the people of Bangladesh from the people of West Bengal, it is better that the people of Bangladesh may be known as Bangladeshi, instead of Bengalee.

OH Kabir
Dhaka

sector enterprises. It is true that the revenue earning of Bangladesh can be increased many-fold by reducing losses in the public sector enterprises to zero.

The government can increase revenue earnings significantly by arresting corruption and improving the management efficiency of the public sector enterprises. The increased revenue will open scope for expansion of the existing enterprises and mobilise local resources for new investments. In this way it is possible to revamp the economy so that it can sustain the existing

players in the field. They hold key position in the system, where the systems losses are very high. What is practised is known as passing of the buck. WMD has become a whip, and the smaller states have no right to control their natural energy resources. The malaise is deeper than mere bad politics.

There are no operating tools or mechanisms to clean the system. Those that exist are good enough, but the will not be there, as other unofficial attractions distort the vision of good, clean, public service. The culprits are the policy makers themselves. The body is rotten, but the head cannot handle the body. Polarised tops are dangerous, because the sufferers are the majority even those millions outside the perimeters of good governance.

The way politics has been misused is no surprise in the LDCs. The Western systems of the developed countries just do not work in environments where the structures and infrastructures cannot be grounded to reality. In that respect even the UN system is suspect now ignored by the superpower also, employing immoral pre-emptive tactics, for subjugation and control of the resources in the developing countries. The foreign prescriptions and remedial actions are trade and business oriented for economic control, although these tactics are employed in indirect ways, through sanctions, denials and deprivations. The international arbitration bodies enjoy no freedom. Freedom has become an arbitrary and subjective term. When the self is enveloped in stark materialism.

Civilian administration is not against adversaries, but for ordinary citizens, to enhance the quality of daily lives. When the politicians misuse this sacred privilege, normal life is disrupted, and hope loses its bearing.

The novel concept of neutral caretaker government was tried in Bangladesh. But soon the politicians themselves became critical of its role, as the political leaders were sidelined, though for a short duration.

The ambitious political leaders do not believe in taking rest even for a short while. The noise pollution thus created is terrible. Dhaka has set the unique example where the opposition did not attend the parliament for three terms. In addition to that, its corruption rating is one of the highest in the world. And this country is world's most dangerous place for journalists according to the latest international survey.

The HR record is not worth mentioning. And the women's rights are left of the centre (or to the right of the centre)?

A Mawaz

Dhaka

Whither political service?

As a veteran voter, I ask whether we should serve the political public servants, or they serve the public? In is a topsy-turvy world in Dhaka, where the political autocratic pop-up leaders order the *jana* to carry out their selfish plans for self and party interests.

When fossilised politicians look for survival kits, it means the end of healthy political culture. They have looted the resources right and left, raped moral principles, and go on haranguing the masses with their childish grievances, presenting one side of the coin.

We deserve this sort of self-

correct; then the details (inside the forest) would be easier to sort out. The use of force by the Young Turks in the party is a grave mistake. Politics cannot be sustained by use of force and mind-bending. The basic support has to be spontaneous. The groups under dispute cannot sit over judgement, and call one another traitors.

Politics is for the people, but the party workers do not take the voters into confidence. That is why democracy is running here on square wheels (not round). Both sides are now desperate for mass support, but the menu shown is not suitable for the local diners--a menu without choice. The politicians are not living in 2004--they take shelter in the past sense and names in the graves. The voters are not for the politicians--it is the other way round. There is no point in getting scared of dissension in society.

Change is not an enemy, but a cleansing process and updating system. This flushing is not allowed in Dhaka, hence the fossilised syndrome of three decades is clinging to the timeless leaders who are not willing to make way and retire. The generation and time gaps have to be identified and recognised. It is the have-not attitude, plain and simple. The leaders should have no personal desires, wants, and agenda. It is the human factor in poor leadership. This virus is not going even after it is pointed out. How long do we have to live with it?

Md Abad

Dhaka

Universities in peril

Thanks are due to Mr. A Bayes for the above article published in your paper. We should not blame politics. We invite politics to embrace us. We like and consume sweets, but forbid others not to take sweets. We were students and there were teachers never wearing white, red, and blue badges. As a result, politics could not touch them. Now our teachers want to get other benefits beyond their means. So they indulge in clapping their hands until none of those creatures was left alive. Recently, on BBC overseas radio programme I heard a news item on the compulsory regular programme introduced by the authorities to clean-up Lagos, the largest city of Nigeria in West Africa, which might have also included the fight against similar menaces. Can we also not consider adopting anything like the above mentioned ways? Our socio-political organisations like CPD / Bikalpadhara / Third force etc with great thinkers in their fold may like to give some time to think about finding a solution to this never-ending menace.

We earnestly request our teachers to raise their heads above petty politics and rescue the nation by teaching the students.

MAli

Dhaka

Diplomats meet BNP leader

I thank the diplomats of the 15 countries who called on the senior joint secretary general of the ruling BNP to express their deep concern about the rapidly deteriorating democratic norms in the country.

But I was also quite puzzled when I heard that the ministers were surprised by this visit and termed it as "a protocol-breaking meeting". Here the diplomats have done something which should have been done by the seniors of the ruling party long before. So, without being concerned about the breaking of protocol, they should have encouraged the diplomats to persuade the BNP to stop undemocratic practices.

Md. Myul Mamun

Dhaka

Democracy or anarchy?

If the ruling alliance desires to stop the opposition from doing their normal activities by repression and plans to silence all dissenters forcibly, it must know that it is not the way how democracy works. In a democracy, we all must have our freedom to speak, work, assemble and have the right to dissent; if one does not like some policies of his party or the government, whether liked by the hierarchy or not, he must have the freedom to express his feelings.

The warnings or threats, whatever you call them, pouring in from the mainstream opposition or some party-combines must be handled by the party in power very cautiously and diplomatically. But the way the situation is being handled, or mishandled, is open to reproach and can only be condemned. According to press reports, the two dissenters do not perturb the party secretary general, but the subsequent attacks on Dr. B. Chowdhury's rally tell a different story. The political parties have already denounced the government's highly reactive approach.

The BNP is now on a self-destructive course.

ABNP supporter, On e-mail

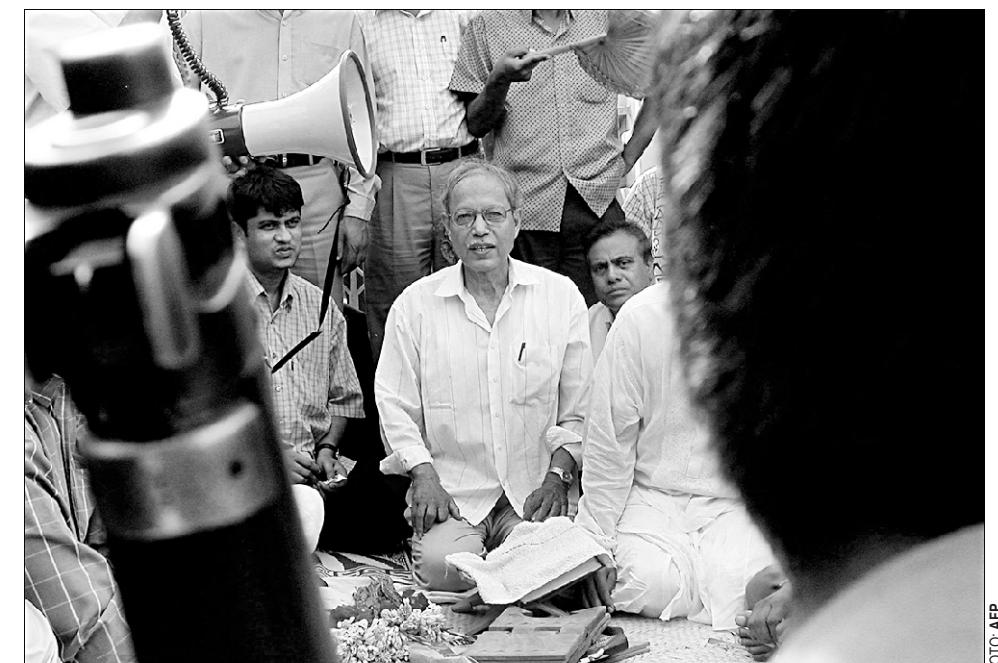


PHOTO: AFP