

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.



## Hijab

This is in response to SN Mamoon's letter of Sept 17, in which he made outrageous comments on Hijab.

Muslim women are not so dumb that they would wear Hijab or head-scarf under duress to please the patriarchs of their family. Most of these women are donning Hijab just because they know very well that Allah commanded them in the Holy Quran to wear modest clothes, including the head covering (Quran, 24:31; 33:59). Not only that, these young ladies are confident enough to make their own decision. They know what they are doing, and it doesn't matter to them how hard the people of their previous generation (i.e. "religious" people of "pre 1971 days" according to Mr. Mamoon) wanted to distort the message of the Holy Quran and Sunnah out of ignorance.

No one has any right to prevent a woman from wearing Hijab or making harsh comments on her head-scarf, that would be tantamount to encroaching on her liberty.

**Shukla Mirza, Doha, Qatar**

PHOTO: AFP

## Casting aspersions

My attention has been drawn to a news item published in your esteemed Daily of 22 September "HR body during government tenure".

I have gone through the remarks made by the UNDP Representative apparently in response to an earlier remark by Mr. Saifur Rahman. I would like to refer to a particular comment "People of Bangladesh get into Airbus while travelling abroad but Airbus is not made in Bangladesh. Then why people put their trust in Airbus". How much does Mr. Lissner know about the people of Bangladesh? A very fine comment indeed!! It is aggressive casting aspersions on the very intelligence and honour of the people of Bangladesh as a whole. Of late, it has become a fashion for many diplomats of foreign missions and privileged expatriates to make comments on our "affairs" which do tantamount to interfering into our internal matters. These comments are reflective of a kind of prevailing arrogance of the western society as a whole and most certainly aimed at poor nations. As for Mr. Lissner, let me remind readers that he has a track record of making remarks of the same kind in not too distant a past. The comment is highly suggestive in nature.

**Shamsher Chowdhury, Dhaka**

## We love English

We want to live, love, write, and communicate in English. Like Adrian Rich, we dream of a common language. "I want to make a planet called English; English communication, understanding, and peace for everyone. Even if I have to communicate with some wonderful alien beings from another planet." (Estelle) Communication is vital between nations, lovers, and friends. Sometimes we say that a certain region has a certain language. But if we travel through places such as India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, or China, we can see that one language may have many dialects. For example, we can say that people speak Hindi, but there are many dialects. In a small countries like Bangladesh, the language is Bengali, but all the people speak different dialects, hundreds of dialects. This happens in most countries. In Bangladesh, most of the time, we cannot hear standard Bengali. Sometimes, it is difficult to understand what most people in Bangladesh are saying because the words and dialects are so different. In the US, the people use many different kinds of English and the same happens in England. There is standard English, street English, slang, Creole English (Louisiana), cowboy English and so on. Well, the history of the Tower of Babel made everyone speak in different tongues and no one would understand each other. There are too many languages and we can't learn all of them or get to know people.

There is only one language that is common. English is very important and necessary for international communication, science and peace. **Estelle Mahnuma, Suchitra, FM Chaudhury, M Shahi Gulshan 2, Dhaka**

## Pitfalls of looking East

I read Dr. Fakhrudin Ahmed's article and a few letters in favour and against it in this page.

A lot of what Dr. Ahmed has written against India is correct. How-

ever, the recommendations he has made based on his perceptions of the Indian attitude came more from his heart and perhaps cannot and would not stand critical analysis.

We may be frustrated by the Indian attitude like Dr. Ahmed. But his recommendation to leave SAARC and join ASEAN does not suggest his understanding of the dynamics of international politics.

He wrote of many ASEAN countries valuing their relations with us and ready "to court our friendship." This is an over-simplified statement and in no way should lead to his next

danger. Sri Lanka, in the early 1980s, emboldened by its growing economic stature, tried to leave South Asia for ASEAN and incurred Indian wrath. Rest is history. For better or for worse, our location is South Asia where India happens to be the dominant power. We have just got to learn to live with India. How well we adjust is the test of our diplomatic skills, something that the foreign minister singularly failed to demonstrate with his most recent outbursts. Even if ASEAN would like to let us join it, which is not the case, we would not be able to do so, should the Indians

different angle."

How felicitous, indeed, are the words against the backdrop of your front-paged commentary titled, "Hon Speaker, you could have taken the JS to a greater height!"

You've seen it from your own angle of the chandelier. I do respect your right to do so. But there are other angles too that call for your appreciation and respect. Therefore, please forgive me if I do not accept your views as the alpha and omega because they represent only one angle of the light fixture.

You've upbraided the JS Speaker,

## Woe of rains

Typically, rain is pleasant to all. But we, the dwellers of Dhaka city have gathered a bitter experience lately. We were marooned for long four days due to incessant rains. Most parts of Dhaka city were deluged. The main thoroughfares were waterlogged. But if we analyse the reasons behind this mishap, we find some faults of utility service providers.

DCC, RAJUK and WASA are responsible for this. We cannot stymie any calamity, but we can minimise the sufferings of the people. If DCC, RAJUK and WASA were dynamic and service-oriented, natural disaster could not be so calamitous. These institutes are very lethargic and corrupt.

**Molla Mohammad Shaheen**  
Dept of English, DU



PHOTO: STAR

## August 21: An alternate view

A tragic and unfortunate incident took place on August 21, 2004. All sections of the society including all the political parties were stunned, shocked and they condemned the ghastly attack on a peaceful political rally.

Reportedly, more than 20 people died and hundreds were injured. The government was terribly embarrassed because it was a rally of the main opposition party and the leader of the opposition was present there in person.

The motive of the attack seems to have been to destabilise the government. Apparently, there could be only two forces that could be responsible for this attack i.e. either external forces or internal forces. The external forces can perhaps be ruled out on the argument that primary interest of any external forces in Bangladesh is only business interest. As long as they have control over Bangladeshi market, irrespective of which party is in power, they would never like to destabilise a government. Additionally, Bangladesh with all her chronic problems of

law and order, corruption, natural calamities, etc is not a very attractive nation for intervention by any external powers unless, of course, Bangladesh poses a major threat to them which is most unlikely.

But there are ample reasons for some internal forces to give a jolt to the government once in a while by resorting to incidents like this one. The present government, for example, has taken up quite a few initiatives which might have hurt some internal forces i.e. some vested interest groups. Some of these initiatives are speedy trial courts, reorganisation of police force (RAB, Cobra, Panther, etc), independent anti-corruption commission, recovery programme for encroached land, recovery programme for defaulted loans etc. These initiatives have definitely hurt some quarters or are likely to hurt them in future. So, what are we to surmise?

**Syed Farhat Ahmad Roomy, On e-mail**



PHOTO: STAR

conclusion that we could leave SAARC and join ASEAN at our beckoning. Perhaps Dr. Ahmed is not aware, ASEAN is just not looking for a South Asian country into its folds and that should they seek a new member in our sub-region, they would look beyond us towards India.

A poor, impoverished South Asian country like Bangladesh is hardly a desirable candidate for membership in one of the most successful regional groups in the world. The suggestion speaks of heart but belies reality.

Coming to India, accepting Dr. Ahmed's views and following his recommendations is also laden with

object to it. That is a reality that Dr. Ahmed's piece has totally failed to address in his article, for our base as a nation is our lack of economic and political strength.

**Shahjahan Ahmed**  
Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka

### Chandelier and the truth

As I went through the pages of your newspaper on 18 September, 2004, a famous quote from Peter Ustinov, a British author, crossed my mind. It runs like this: "Truth is like a chandelier. Everyone in the room can see it, but they all see it from a

Jamiruddin Sircar, for his so-called callow, and to some extent unseemly, handling of the proceedings and suggested how a good parliament should be run. Perhaps you are right, but surely only up to a point.

I have no reasons to defend Sircar because, like you, I also think that he is an ordinary political species who lacks splendour, skill and wisdom that are expected of a man holding such a high office. But which Speaker, tell me, had been able to stand up to these qualities in the 33 years of our so-called democracy? What about Mohammadullah, Abdul Malek Uki, Mirza Golam Hafiz, Abdur Rahman Biswas and

KM Zubair Sadeque  
Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Limping investigation

One month after the deadly grenade attack on AL rally, the Leader of the Opposition spends her days virtually confined to her residence for fear of her life. If that is the situation of the Leader of the major opposition party (a party with a rich history of leading popular movements including our very own war of independence), it is hard for me to convince myself that the common people in the country are feeling any safer.

When no progress could be made in the probe even after a month of the mayhem, it is hard for me to convince myself that the government is truly committed to bringing the real culprits to justice.

The government sought help from Interpol and FBI, which was a positive decision no doubt. But unless our own investigating agencies get clear signal from the top brass, there

cannot be any progress in the investigation no matter what assistance is provided by foreign intelligence agencies.

Even if we accepted that the government is really sincere about finding out the real culprits, then the way investigators are left with no major lead or clues makes me wonder if the monster behind the incident has become more powerful than the government machinery itself to go undetected even after launching such an atrocious attack on our democracy.

**KM Zubair Sadeque**  
Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

## Tiger or tail?

Our rain drenched and flood wetted cricketing Tigers have slunk back from the jungle trails of ICC with their tail between the legs, and a woeful countenance. We the unfortunate Tiger fans are meanwhile pitifully meowing in sorrow and anguish. Since luck and chance plays a significant role in cricket, particularly one day cricket; with our pitiable standard of cricketing technique and temperament; may be we should seriously look into transforming our luck!

One way to woo lady luck could be by changing the name and mascot of our team; from the elusive and majestic Tiger to the ever cunning Cat. Cats are said to be lucky and according to some are bestowed with "nine lives"; an appreciation of their luck and cunning ways. They even have tried to solve the problem of the uncanny habit of landing on their four feet, no matter even if they fall deliberately or otherwise! May be this trait is badly needed among our cricketers. What more could an anguished and disappointed fan propose? Even

Whatmore our coach seems to have lost his aplomb at long last! Some wags suggest that we call our team "Tiger Bail", since the way other tigers have mauled us at the ICC tournament.

Puns aside; after the tour of New Zealand; it should be time for us to take a hard look at our cricket and decide if we are fit

to the US batted better than our boys. I think our cricketers are overpaid underachievers. They exactly don't know which ball to play and that is absolutely pathetic. I think we have been in big cricket for too long and the boys should play better cricket by now. Have we tried to solve the problem of our poor performance? I don't think so but we are busy finger-pointing at each other. For a poor country we are blessed with money in cricket and the fans are paying for all the expenses. The board should understand that if fans get over-bored, then cricket will be totally wiped off from the country.

We have the best coach not the best selectors. We need better foundation at the basic level, that is school or college level.

**Belal Atcha, Toronto, Canada**

## Bangladesh

and I fear a defeat mentality may soon enter the minds of the present crop of players. I think gradual change is therefore needed. In a country of such large number, I find it difficult to comprehend why we cannot produce decent players, whilst Sri Lanka can do so on their part.

My overall message is - we've watched a young side persevere with dedication and application on occasion (demonstrating abject weakness at other times) - but this team is not good enough. Keep a core of the players, but select a new set of lads - and don't go back to the tried/tested/failed unless there is a clear indication that they have made improvement.

**Ruhel**  
London, UK

them) who didn't apply at least once for DV Lottery. What does that tell us? In this 21st century, people will seek better opportunities and better life this century.

Bottom line, I just don't want to be a pawn of those corrupt politicians and give my life for their utter selfish betterment. Give me an opportunity to truly contribute, probably I will be the first one.

**Nayeem Mano**  
USA

## Migrant issue

I again refer to the letter "Why I am not a migrant" from Dr. OM Oihadul Alam (DS 06/09/04).

So far, I have seen two responses to the above letter. Just like the two previous writers appreciate what Mr. Alam has done for Bangladesh and disagree with his mistaken painting of migrants as opportunists who are not doing anything for Bangladesh, I also share their view. I think Mr. Alam was too narrow in his vision. Probably he

forgot there are thousands of Bangladeshis living in posh areas of Dhaka and Chittagong and not doing

anything whatsoever for the country. Then who are to blame more? Those who live in Bangladesh and do nothing or those who live outside Bangladesh and do nothing? Anyway, there are a lot of migrants who are contributing to the social uplift of Bangladesh. So, the point is not where someone lives. It's about the mentality of the

individual person. Improve the present situation of Bangladesh.

Did Mr. Alam ever think

who is to blame for the present social and economic condition of Bangladesh. It's not because of those who left Bangladesh or those middle class families living in Bangladesh and have difficulty meeting ends. It's the corrupt politicians and the extremely greedy rich people of our country. If anyone is to blame, lets talk about these people. Unnecessarily pointing fingers to migrants will not help



PHOTO: AFP