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## An appeal

The academic atmosphere of the "Matlab Degree College" is far from satisfactory. The college was established in 1964 by an eminent educationist, the late Md Waliullah Pathway. Once it was known for the standard of education and academic results in the whole greater Comilla region.

But the students and all others concerned are now worried about the fall of the standard of education in the college. It is also alleged that there are many irregularities and anomalies in the management of the college.

I would appeal to the education authorities to look into the matter. They should intervene immediately and take necessary steps so that the college can regain its lost glory.

Ruhul Kuddus  
Matlabganj, Chandpur

## To LGED authorities...

In the Baligram Union of Kalkini upazila under Madaripur district, the 800 feet kutchra road from the southern side of Pathuriarpar bazar and bus-stand to Biswasbari is used by several thousand people of this area. In fact, it is a link road between the bazar and villages of Dhussar, Karnapara, Majjapara etc.

In the dry season, rickshaw-vans, light vehicles run on the road. In the rainy season, villagers bring boat around Biswasbari and then use this road to reach Pathuriarpar bazar and bus-stand. But due to rain, the road frequently becomes muddy and useless. So people find themselves in a very difficult situation.

To enable the people to get out of this misery, it is necessary to make the 800 feet road pucca immediately. It may be noted that the road will also enlarge the area of Pathuriarpar bazar.

Local people hope that the LGED authorities will look into the matter.

Tapash Kumar Chakrabarty  
Advocate  
Judge Court, Madaripur.

## Hardwork vs. patriotism

If a question is raised whether hardwork or patriotism is more essential for a successful player, I would opt for the latter. The brilliant performance of Ashraf, against India has compelled me to come to this conclusion. Ashraf's love for cricket as well as for his country is revealed through his speech on the severe criticism against Bangladesh cricket team. Ashraf remains calm and quiet in the midst of all sorts of oddities and claims with confidence. It is our cricket that has glorified our country. Many nations did not know even the name of our country in the

# A citizen's musings



"Dhaka politics" is very real, heavily mixed with unreality, although the vernacular meaning of the term Dhaka is "covered". It is unfortunate (lack of variety) for the young nation that national politics is still confined within the two major political parties, which are extracting every ounce of

advantage from the names of the two martyred leaders of the two parties. One was the initiator, and the other the follower of the field campaign for liberation. One was under detention during the liberation war, while the other was in the guerrilla warfare.

There is a third name, lower

down the scale: that of late General Osmany, now practically blacked out, for reasons not quite clear to the contemporary citizens. This General also was not allowed to be present during the surrender ceremony in December 1971, for reasons which are not mysterious.

Today, more than 30 years later, both politics and leadership are stagnant and stalled, due to monopolistic hold of these two parties, which seem to claim proprietary rights in certain areas of public struggle. The new generation (after usually 25 years) faces the uncertainty of weak

past. But cricket has done the trick! Slowly and gradually, our team is marching towards the final goal of excellence.

In these circumstances, people must stop criticising our cricket team because that will definitely create unbearable pressure upon the players.

It should be pointed out that the cricketers are also human beings who deserve love as well as sympathy. If spring comes, can daylight be far behind?

Akash Chowdhury, Dhaka

## 'Crossfire'

The present government formed a new anti-crime elite force named Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to root out terrorism. So far many most

wanted criminals like 'Pichhi Hannan' have been killed in crossfire. We have to accept the truth that crime has declined. Because a panic of 'crossfire' grasped the criminals following killings of the topmost terrorists of the country.

But the question is whether the activities of Rab are tenable in the eye of law. The government should formulate a long term strategy for combating crime.

Rab is indeed a short term solution.

AFM Masrur Atiqul, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Dhaka

## Mobile phone providers

At long last the T&T is appearing in

the mobile market, but with no relief to the public. The view of the large number of people is that the rates & charges as announced by the government will only help keep up the high charges of the private companies, against public interest.

All these private mobile phone companies have minted money during all these years and whatever comparative low charges that we see nowadays is because of the competition with one another. They are not providing the service that we need.

Lastly, how efficiently and accurately the Vat is realised on the pre-paid cards of mobile phones is an important question. A huge number of pre-paid cards are sold all over the country every day and how the revenue department is keeping track of these sale proceeds should be known to the public.

Will the concerned authorities including the ACC seriously look into the business activities of the mobile phone companies?

AZS Ahmed  
Sugandha R/A  
Dhaka

## Reform Rajuk and DCC

The numerous problems of metropolis Dhaka cannot be reduced or controlled unless the government (the political regime) gets serious about effecting drastic internal reforms in management and administration within the DCC and Rajuk; both in running the office, and in fieldwork.

One principle is being ignored: regular transfers and postings. Both the DCC and Rajuk are closed systems, without means for change of internal atmosphere. Also, which independent (authorised bodies) are supposed to monitor these two huge agencies, and suggest recommendations on improving the situation? How the feedback system works in reducing systems losses?

The politicians and the JS standing committees can hardly make any contribution. Both Rajuk and the DCC have to open one-stop services in several areas of activities, but the paper chase is still very common amongst the tables inside the offices.

How much these organisations have been computerised, for instant review, maintaining check and balance, and to reduce corrupt practices? The relevant ministries hardly talk about the DCC and Rajuk. The regulatory bodies connected with the metro problems are also not very communicative. Routine action cannot deliver, nor sudden and hock drive. Remedies are available, but action plans do not work.

The civil service and the secretariat have become lame ducks, thanks to political nepotism. Now the political parties in power have started election campaigns prematurely; hence stern action cannot be expected from the political masters. The two sons are in the race to keep alive respective dynasty ruins. Who can save Bangladesh when the metropolis is submerged in snafu (situation normal all fumbled up), and tsunami of the political kind?

AMawaz  
Dhaka

## A mysterious discipline

Each and everyone knows that

Khulna University is completely free from all kinds of political violence and session jams. The first thing is all right, but the second one is a matter of rethinking. Although all students under the life science school began their academic life on the same day but now there is a gap in academic years between the students of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering discipline, BGE (except first year) and other students. Now, all students of all other disciplines have passed their term final examinations and will start the new term within a few days. Unfortunately, the students of BGE cannot sit for the examinations yet. Even the date of PL (preparation leave for exam) is unknown. Senior teachers cannot say anything about PL. But why?

Now this is a burning question for all affected students. Is there anybody to answer this question? My heartiest request to the higher authorities of the university is that they solve this problem as early as possible. It has a lot to do with the future of a number of students. One discipline should not fall behind others. Because that creates a kind of session jam.

Forhad Ahmed  
Boyra R/A, Khulna

## Politics of Joy

Sajib Wajed Joy, Sheikh Hasina's only son, has been unofficially inducted to politics. People from all walks of life have highly appreciated this introduction to politics of a well-educated young man. Joy's induction to politics has undoubtedly geared up the activities of the Awami League. People have already started thinking about the change of leadership in the party. He is also a rival of Tareq Rahman, another future steering force of the BNP. It is not our headache as to who will grace the chair of the head of the state in future. Rather, our main hope and expectation is to have a good government based on the reciprocal rapport between the government and the opposition. Though Joy has not said anything about the precise time of his full-time involvement in politics, the determination to work with his mother indicates that the desire will be fulfilled soon.

We do not want to see the display of old enmity between these two future leaders of our country. Some self-seeking quarters are wholeheartedly trying to keep this age-long confrontation alive. The felicitation letter offered by Tareq Rahman should have been accepted on Joy's part, though it was done without informing him. If the letter was accepted, it would have been an epoch-making example of consolidating the political bond among the people.

We can expect a lot from Joy when he serves the country. He is expected to play an important role in the development of our people and land. Time will tell whether he can live up to our expectations.

ABM Shafiqul Islam  
Dept. of English  
Jahangirnagar University

## RAB and crossfire

Rab (Rapid Action Battalion), the country's anti-crime elite force which consists of selected talented, experienced and professional personnel of army, navy, airforce and police, launched their

campaign against terrorists a few months ago. They have got tremendous success in their operations, killing topmost perpetrators of crimes in crossfire. It gives food for thought and a number of questions have arisen in people's mind. Human rights organisations as well as envoys from other countries have already shown their deep concern over this matter.

However, Rab claimed that all the anchoring due to fissiparous dissipation in the senior national leadership. It is deadly virus, which may divide the society for yet another generation. Now religion, violence and terrorism have entered politics, within the overall umbrella of corruption. It is a powerful combination, nipping in the bud any cleansing campaign. Where is the way out, with so many permutations and combinations? The major operation may bring many to grief. The price has to be paid, for negative virtues.

Since 1991, these two major parties have been running the country through general elections. There are fissures in the election process, leading to the artificial creation of the so called neutral, non-political caretaker interim government, to conduct the general elections (only), in this unfortunate nation, where no one trusts the others (you are with us or against us, as we hear in the West). The society, the personalities, and the philosophies are divided and splintered. At the same time, the notes fondly remind us that they were rendering exclusive service to the new emerging nation.

In fact, the nation today is carrying the blind-folded donkey's load, with no highway

or destination clear enough to the citizens, for channelling voluntary support.

One party is a firm believer in hartal (strike), whereas its overuse has sapped its vitality. Why agitative politics should still be necessary in the political areas is not quite clear to the majority of the citizens, who wish that politics were kept in the background, like the air we breathe, to enable millions to follow one's own pursuits in life peacefully in a routine way. The political epidemic is not being allowed to die out.

The political regime cannot deliver, and opposition in the parliament believes in indulging in *adda* and unnecessary agitational activities outside the JS for five years, regardless of the name of the party. This is vile culture not condemned enough by the electorate, when both sides of the coin cannot deliver.

In the LDCs, imported democracy is a bogey, as demonstrated in the majority of the emerging nations. Freedom is shackled to the whims of the local leadership. The masses are patiently waiting for a new breed of leadership. A square wheel has no mobility.

A Mahsen, Dhaka

authorities concerned should try to maintain as much transparency as possible in the activities of Rab. That will make it easier to justify the good work that Rab has done so far.

Md Zonayed Emran  
Dept. of political science  
University of Dhaka

## Kuwait and Tsunami relief operations

Our editorial on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2005, titled 'Tsunami and US', has drawn the attention of this Embassy.

The government and people of the State of Kuwait too have been deeply anguished at the havoc and trail of devastation left by the Tsunami in the affected countries. Kuwait is one of the first countries which have immediately offered assistance to the affected countries. Its initial offer of US\$2 million was increased to US\$10 million.

In addition to this government commitment, a committee has been formed to organise collection of funds, relief materials like food, medicine and clothing and pure drinking water and Kuwaiti organisations and individuals are making generous contributions to this committee, which is also entrusted with the procurement, shipment and distribution of the much needed relief goods through Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

Besides all these, Kuwait Red Crescent Society has already dispatched a number of teams to the affected places with essential food, medicine and clothing. Kuwait Red Crescent Society has initiated a Relief and Rehabilitation programme in the affected areas entailing several million dollars. The plan includes initial construction of two hospitals.

Kuwait Red Crescent Society is also assessing the extent of damage caused in the wake of Tsunami. The Assistance programme is expected to be enhanced further to tackle the post-Tsunami effect.

The Embassy shares and appreciates the sincere concern of your newspaper on this grave matter and is pleased to seize this opportunity to inform you and your valued readers of the role of Kuwait and its people in the aftermath of the natural calamity.

Looking forward to your continued effort in mobilising public opinion on important issues.

Embassy of Kuwait in Dhaka

## Other side of the coin...

The Creator is merciful and beneficent. There might be lessons to learn from the recent seaquake which took away thousands of lives and made millions destitute and homeless. There are signs for those who ponder on the human weaknesses.

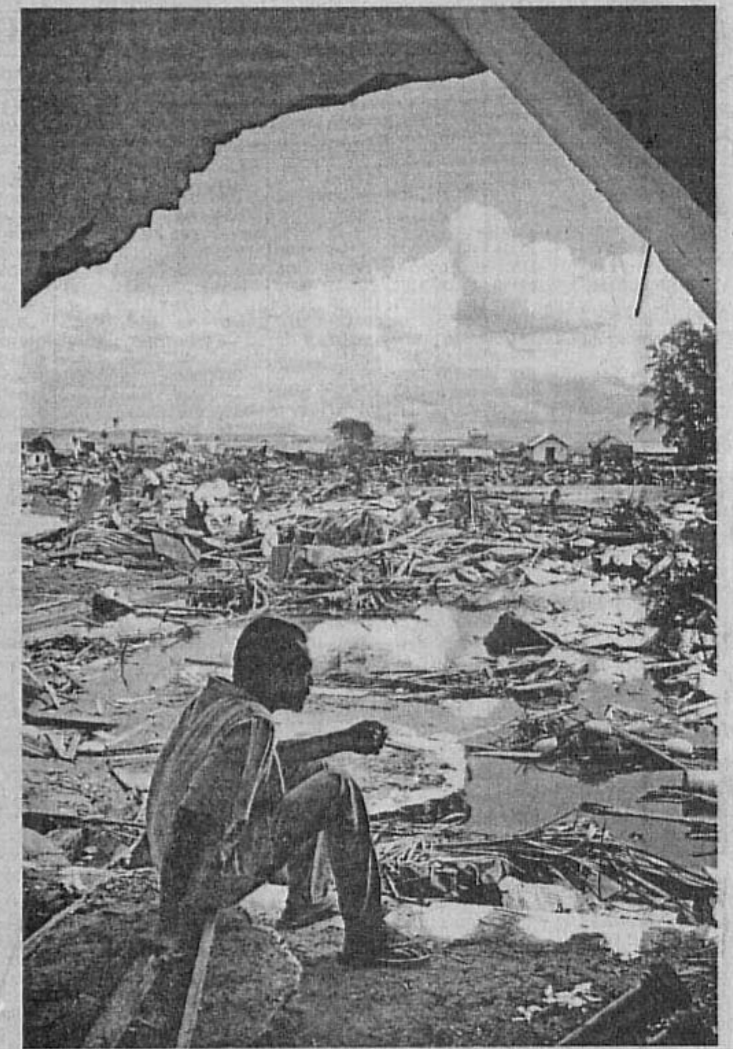
The Saarc and Asean regions have to work closer to lessen human suffering and handicaps resulting from weak political and regional policies.

The trade within the regions has to multiply several times (it can), as we are dealing with two and a half billion people (consumers). Where else do we get such vast market? The raw materials and the human resources are there, and the regional products can replace outside imports to a large extent. Japan and S Korea failed as they put most of the eggs into one basket (US and EU markets). The West is declining, receding into sunset years; so we have to tap alternate markets.

This calamity is an opening for ending the civil war in Sri Lanka. And India and Pakistan should put more energy and vision into solving the man-made Kashmir dispute. What's at stake while living peacefully? A major portion of the defence budgets of these two 'poor' countries would be diverted to people-oriented development projects. We have to compete with the affluent industrialised countries (call it North or West). We can, if we unite, be cooperative.

Start with the quick use of the Asian Highway. Too much politics within Saarc. Saarc is powerful in the RMG sector, and we have enough natural energy, technological resources to reduce imports from outside. We can clothe half the world cheaply. Why bother about trading only in US dollars? When the chips are down, there are alternative ways to rise. We need entrepreneurship more than the others with money. It is time we dictated the terms in some sectors.

A Husnain  
Dhaka



Almost all countries around the world, small or big, came forward to extend their assistance to the people affected by the Tsunami disaster, the largest earthquake in the world during the last four decades. This is an unprecedented response to the cause of humanity as we observe in the affected areas right now. The role of the Secretary General of the United Nations is also highly commendable. He took the initiative to invite all the countries and people to help the distressed population in 11 affected countries.

As it appears, the government of India has declined to accept any external assistance or relief for the affected people. The government has granted Rs. 1,00,000 lakh for the family of each victim. A controversy has been generated among the public at large whether this step of saying 'no' to external relief was a correct one, when the government of Tamilnadu was

not experienced enough in providing relief or managing such a colossal disaster with efficiency.

The majority of Indian people support the government's decision, because accepting external help is a bit humiliating to them. This is what we call national pride. A nation should learn from trial and error but live with dignity and image.

In Bangladesh, we have by this time achieved excellence in managing disasters with adequate infrastructure and technical know-how to overcome any natural calamity. In future, we should take it as a challenge to manage any relief and rescue operations with our own arrangements, resource and capability.

We need to make the country self-reliant in all sectors including management of the disasters and calamities, come what may, with the support of people at large.

Kumar Prithwiraj Nath, Dhaka

## Banning costly dress

I am much delighted to go through the letter titled "Feed back on imposing ban on costly dress" (Dec 15) by Mr. Mamun Chowdhury which he has written in appreciation of my letter on the subject (Dec 8).

I agree as Mr. Chowdhury said in his letter that in a democratic country every citizen has his or her own right or freedom of choice. As such the proposal put forward by me for imposing a ban on costly dress is not appropriate according to the letter writer.

Meanwhile, in the following para he has cited the instance of the rich people who are using costly imported cars and which, according to him, are contributing to the widening of the rich-poor gap. The letter writer asked to consider imposing ban on other imported costly products if I do really have a thought of requesting for a ban on costly dresses.

Well, I think, in a democratic society every citizen has some obligations and responsibilities to discharge while enjoying the rights. One such responsibility is to help poor fellow-citizens in mitigating their poverty and suffering through extending financial as well as other support. In other words, the privileged class of a democratic society

should help the under-privileged for maintaining societal harmony and social justice.

What we actually do during Eid and other religious festivals is a sort of competition for establishing superiority over one another. This competition prevails particularly among the members of the affluent section of our society. In doing so, they not only squander money but also encourage raising of the money-value of a commodity.

As regards to my proposal for fixing prices of sacrificial animals, Mr. Chowdhury found it not possible because of animals' differences in size and weight. True, but the sacrificial animals too can be graded by the livestock farmers. Vets or Animal Husbandry Graduates by considering certain standard factors. What is needed is effective control.

For example, the government from time to time fixes prices of beef, mutton etc. without mentioning the type of the animal, whether the meat is of calf, cow or bull. But often the meat-sellers claim high price per kg by saying "this is the meat of a young bull!"

I must say that things can easily be changed if we really want so by heart and through appreciation of in-depth human values!

M Zahidul Haque  
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