

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.

Congratulations, Mr. Thaksin

The Prime Minister of Thailand, Mr. Thaksin Shinawatra, a multi millionaire telecom tycoon, and the head of "Thai Loves Thai Party" had a landslide victory in 2005 elections. Mr. Thaksin began his career as a police officer, and later went to the United States on a government scholarship for obtaining a masters degree in "Criminal Justice". After returning to his homeland, he joined business and in the late 1980s he started to build

a telecommunication empire. In 1998, he founded Thai Rak Thai (Thai Loves Thai Party), which rapidly became well-known to Thai people.

In his four years in office, he has contributed greatly towards the economic development of his country.

Tahsin Hyder

Maple Leaf International School, Dhanmondi, Dhaka



Police 'excesses'

I was appalled to read Sabrina's letter. Being stopped and told that two persons of the opposite gender cannot be together after 10:00pm is one of the most ridiculous things I have ever heard. The cops in this country have crossed all the limits of indecent behaviour. I sometimes even do not see the point of criticising them. They simply do not pay any heed. Harassing people and inventing new laws for such a small amount of money, is simply despicable.

I feel ashamed that the police force in this country is so intolerant. The government must set up a committee to look into such incidents.

Arbab Quadri

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Bangla Bhai, where are you?

Starting from the TIME magazine to the local newspapers, Bangla Bhai is a name found regularly now-a-days. Be it the media, or the home minister or the prime minister, everybody is concerned about the horrendous criminal activities committed by Bangla Bhai's group. The country is witnessing some barbarous acts done by this man, specially in the northwestern region. He has built up a strong network called the Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMJJB) to carry out frequent attacks on their perceived enemies.

A long time back, the media brought his evil acts before us. But the government's handling of the issue has always been dubious.

Now, is the time when we need to think about it seriously. We, the common people, cannot and will not let a small group of fanatics destroy our style of living. The people of Bagmara village are living dangerously amid constant fear. People should respond to this menace. We should not forget the fact that it is only the people who can force the government to arrest a criminal like Bangla Bhai.

The majority cannot pay the price for the wrong doings of a small group of extremists. WE WANT JUSTICE!

A citizen

Lalmatia, Dhaka

Stadiums misused

It is a common phenomenon to hold public meetings in playing grounds. Now the politicians have moved a step ahead to hold those meetings in stadiums.

This is not really acceptable, since sports and politics are very dissimilar things.

back any more!

Rafiqul Islam Rime

Agrabad, Chittagong

An appeal to UGC

Recently, the University Grants Commission has blacklisted some private universities on account of not maintaining the rules and regulations imposed by the commission that put the future of thousands of students studying in those blacklisted universities in great uncertainty. The commission did it without considering the interests of the students. The authorities have taken no measures, so far, to keep the future of the students on right track. When the students try to transfer their credits to other private universities, to their dismay, they find that they are on the face of losing many credits that they have already completed. These sufferings are being forced upon the students by the UGC and the students are becoming scapegoats. I fervently appeal, as a victim, to the UGC and the Ministry of Education to save the future of students by a declaration that students who want to transfer their credits from those blacklisted universities to any private university would not lose any of their credits.

This would ensure continuation of studies of these wretched students suffering in terms of money and mental agony for no fault of theirs.

Tanzina Zinnat Ovey

Department of English, Queens University

Postponement of Saarc summit

Dhaka city dwellers were astonished to hear the news of postponement of Saarc summit due to the unwillingness of the India prime minister to attend it. We don't know whether it is the communication gap between the two governments, or the political instability in Nepal and Bangladesh, that led to the postponement.

We cannot downplay the importance of this type of organisations for accelerating development through mutual cooperation among the countries. We have seen the outcome of ASEAN, EEC, EU etc, where the member countries were benefited a lot.

Postponement of the summit is indeed a setback to regional cooperation in this part of the world.

Zahir U Hyder

Dhaka

Tale of Bangladesh

I find it amazing to see letters from people expressing concerns about how the recent events will portray Bangladesh globally. Some folks have expressed indignation over the recent article in the New York Times and are uncomfortable about the outrage following the "assassination" of Mr. Kibria. The current fixation on these events, they argue, will only add to the negative portrayal of our country and hurt possible "investments" from abroad. I am actually amazed at the position they take. The truth is that only the investors who have limited choices or those who like to roll the dice in a casino would invest in Bangladesh today. Just take a step back and consider the events just over the last year.

Just as a preface, I am not a fan of any of the two parties that have assumed power over the last decade and do not have any preference for any particular political party. I really think the country would be better off without the two that have assumed power recently, and certainly deserves better.

When Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury, a former founder/ leader of the BNP and an ex-president of the country was attacked by goons in March 2004, not a single voice of regret was heard from anyone in the party that he had spent the last thirty years of his life building. His 'crime' was that he had attempted to start a new political party. In fact, one of the ministers had the gall to say that the event was after all playing out in the "Muktamancha" and the goons had as much right to express their dissent as did Dr. Badruddoza. Talk about being "unclear on the concept!"

With the grenade attacks on the British High Commissioner, assassination of Ms. Ivy Rahman and recently Mr. Kibria, promises of finding out the perpetrators were made. At the same time, "conspiracy theories" have been floating to the effect that the Awami League itself has been behind these events. Mr. Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan could not have been more direct in this "allegation." Only from very fertile minds would such a theory evolve- that the Awami League is planning for a "rebirth" by eliminating the very talented and influential core of its party. The fact that a foreign diplomat was attacked and two elected parliamentarians were eliminated by assassins remain unsolved is not the big issue. One of these days, the government assures us, the criminals will be caught!

People wonder why India backed out of the Saaarc summit at the last moment. If I may ask- "If you were in an Indian diplomat's shoes- would you like to be very conspicuous in Bangladesh today?" I wouldn't.

The sad state in Bangladesh is that the leadership is bankrupt. The present government has been absolutely impotent in solving these real and attempted "murder" cases. Notwithstanding the Rab, which has apparently been successful in "eliminating" miscreants in continual episodes of "crossfires", the country today is worse than "Moghher mulluk"- since the Moghs would conceivably give at least a minimal code of ethics. In Bangladesh today, dissent is not just dis-



PHOTO: AFP

The killer general

A few days ago some US Lt. general named James Mattis commented in a conference that "It is fun to shoot some people". And by that "some people" he meant the people of Afghanistan. Now here is this general who has taken part in two of the most illegitimate military operations (Iraq & Afghanistan) in history and not only actively participated in war crimes but also directed his group of "mercenaries" to commit genocide. In Mattis' word, "You got guys who slap women around for five years. And you know, guys like that ain't got no manhood left anyway. So it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them." Perhaps it is possible only for a war criminal to boast about his ill deeds.

It is true indeed that the women in Afghanistan were very harshly treated by the Taliban. But the question is who gave the US permission to shoot them and "solve" the problem? And when it comes to the question of man-

hood, would the US general kindly answer how "Manly" it is to fight against a group of poorly equipped people who are outnumbered and has almost no means of resistance? And how "Manly" it is to drop bombs from a very safe distance on schools and houses and kill thousands of innocent women and children? Would the general kindly explain how heroic it is to make children orphan overnight? And speaking of manhood, everybody is aware of US commitment to manhood in the Iraqi prisons. Not only the US soldiers' sickly attitude towards the prisoners proved them to be the worst kind of sexual perverts but also reflected their generals' courageous (?) leadership and truly represented their idea of "fun".

Killing and abusing innocents may be fun to Mattis, but it is crime to us. And criminals will get punished today or tomorrow.

Obaidur Rahman

Gopibag, Dhaka

liked- but the dissenter has to be 'squashed like a bug'. The police with the backing of the party in power do not hesitate to raise batons on women- an uncivilised practice that possibly exists only in our country. The opposition party is no better. Because it did not like the outcome of the elections, it elects to stay away from the parliament and calls "hartal" every chance it gets.

May God help the country and its people!

Wazi Chowdhury

California, US

SAMS Kibria

First, I would like to unequivocally condemn the heinous killings of SAMS Kibria and others in

Habiganj on January 27. Given the string of recent grenade attacks on opposition politicians and a similar attack directed at the British High Commissioner, the current BNP administration ought to have taken security matters much more seriously. That they did not seems to indicate a wilful negligence of the grave issue.

While the ostensible reason for Mr. Kibria's death is clear enough, the events immediately following the attack leave cause for concern. Mr. Kibria's demise was not immediate but the result of blood loss and occurred several hours after he sustained injuries; hours during which he did not receive any effective treatment. Given the circum-

stances, some questions naturally arise.

Why was Mr. Kibria not immediately taken to a nearby hospital? Why did he have to be taken to Dhaka, that too in a dysfunctional ambulance? Is there any truth in the claim made by the BNP Secretary General (DS Feb.08) that the AL did not respond to the offer of a helicopter to fly the injured to Dhaka?

I hope the investigation into the Habiganj carnage will answer these questions.

MWR Khan

Indiana University, Bloomington, US

Government or 'gobornment' ?

Please write in Bangla the word government, instead of gobornment. Please look into the previous secondary school certificates and mark-sheets and various class mark-sheets issued by the Dhaka Board and schools.

The Government Laboratory High School is one of the top schools in Bangladesh. The school achieved unbelievable success in the SSC examinations in the past years, earned name and fame, and was crowned with glory. But there is a gross (spelling) mistake on the

main signboard of the school at the main gate. The word should be written 'government' in Bangla, and not 'gobornment' on the main signboard, that sounds bad to pronounce and ugly to see. If the word 'gobornment' were correct, we should write 'gobornor', instead of governor in Bangla.

The school authorities should respond to the matter.

Md. Anisuzzaman

Shamoly, Mohammadpur, Dhaka



Cricket and Bangabandhu Stadium

Cricket is the most popular game in Bangladesh. The historic wins in both the ODI and Test series over Zimbabwe once again geared up the cricket loving nation. The whole nation enthusiastically cheered the emphatic wins, but with the end of the series cricket is going to be moved away from Bangabandhu Stadium. It's a huge disappointment for any Bangladeshi who loves cricket because this stadium is the sign of our glory and pride. The whole cricket world knows the stadium and a large number of memorable cricket tournaments were held here in the past. It became the centre of Bangladesh cricket. So, it will be a great loss for our cricket to leave the stadium.

It is the earnest request of all the cricket fans that cricket should not be forced to leave the place where it grew. We hope the government will take the right step in this respect.

Shoaib M Siddiqui

Dhaka City College



PHOTO: AFP

government precisely. But still the point is neglected at the Agrani Bank. We have noticed that in case of the promotion criteria at the bank, agriculturist graduates having 4 years honours degree and plain graduates having 2 years (pass) degree are given the same value and marks.

The authorities concerned should look into the matter, as it amounts to denial of the rights of agriculturist graduates. **Subash Chandra Das** Assistant Professor Department of Poultry Science BAU, Mymensingh.

For a democratic order...

At the beginning of the 21st century we are embracing the omnipotent enlightenment of democratic ideas. The days of monarchical traditions are over. Like every liberal country we also claim to be one of the proud conveyers of liberalism. Nevertheless, our political parties are adhering to some utterly undemocratic practices, which is quite disturbing. For instance, we all know that family influence over political groups and administra-

scenes of Bangla cinema. **KH Asef Safa Kabir Upal** Lalmatia, Dhaka-1207

"To banish rickshaws or not..."

This is a follow-up to my earlier letter titled, "To banish rickshaws or not..." published in these columns on 17 January through which I urged the authorities concerned to give a second thought on keeping separate lanes for the rickshaws in the city's major roads, thereby allowing rickshaws to ply in the metropolis.

But very unfortunately on the Eid day the traffic authorities suddenly imposed a ban on rickshaws from Kathalbagan to Maghbazar Road, creating serious problems for the citizens.

Well, the authorities have their valid point in support of the ban, but I would still request them to give a 'third thought' on banning rickshaws plying through the main roads in separate lanes. There can be some crossings on the main streets enabling rickshaws to move from one area to another with passengers.

Once again I would like to remind

that party.

Former US president Bill Clinton did not concede to the threat from al-Qaeda when he visited Bangladesh, but the prime minister of India decided to interfere in the internal affairs of a country by aligning with a political party.

Tariq M. Abd'allah

Oakley St. Arlington Heights, IL, US

There are many speculations on the last minute cancellation of India PM's tour to Bangladesh and thereby causing the postponement of the Saarc summit. From a purely business perspective, I think Indian businesses have a great deal to lose by signing SAFTA or any free trade agreement with Bangladesh. Once SAFTA is implemented, Bangladesh will be in a better position to overcome export barriers put up by Indian officials--tariff or non-tariff.

As far as trade surplus with Bangladesh is concerned, India will benefit from any delay, if possible abolition, of SAFTA or any free trade agreement in the region.

They may not mind some bumps on the bilateral relation for the sake of their business.

Zakaria Khondker

Indianapolis, US

Istiaque uddin Rifat

Dept. of EEE, RUET

Tigers roared triumphantly!

Our Tigers roared triumphantly adding something new in the record book of ODI cricket!

When they registered their maiden ODI series win against Zimbabwe at the Bangabandhu Stadium on 31st January, they became only the second team in history to win after trailing 0-2! South Africa made it in 2003 against Pakistan.

It's been a great cricketing season for our Tigers, right from the beginning of the New Year 2005! They have registered their maiden Test series as well as the maiden ODI series win against a Test playing team showing a great team spirit!!

When the nation is undergoing some crucial ordeals, these historic victories by the Tigers will undoubtedly instil some faith in our own selves as to the fact that we can do something worthy!

These great moments will give us some solace when we are in the sea of troubles!

Congratulations, the roaring Tigers! You don't have to look