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## Regulating campus politics

How do the official regulators control campus politics (maintaining the bandwidth of do's and don'ts)? There is no transparency in this sector, as the opposition activities are suppressed, and the regime's camp is allowed freedom even in the government controlled electronic media. This is not neutral governance.

There are adverse implica-

tions of such indulgence: the *bakshish* or commission has to be paid indirectly, thereby undermining discipline, and introducing double standards. Even major cases of violence and unruly behaviour are tolerated. One instance is the way the opposition was castigated by the youth on India's reluctance to join the recently postponed Saarc conference in

Dhaka.

Political freedom is not licence, but it is practised by all incoming regimes. Where is the respect for political leadership? This issue needs public debate at different vertical levels.

**Abdali**  
Dhaka

look. I found in it that a mobile company was offering a mobile set at a very low price. Though the price of the handset, connection is quite cheap and affordable but the call rate is as high as other mobile phone companies.

The users will not be benefited until the call rate is reduced substantially.

**Shoaib M. Siddiqui**  
Dhaka City College, Dhaka

### Dumped jewellery

Thanks to the organisers of the jewellery shopping mela. At least they have shown the courage not to hide the real fact. I like to refer to the advertisement published in the DS on Feb.6. It's clear from the advertisement that production of such gold plated jewellery has been banned in India by the court on the ground of pollution and that these products are now dumped in Bangladesh market. The reason behind selling the jewellery at 90% discount is not hard to imagine -- it's the only alternative to destroying them getting no value.

But I wonder how the Ministry of Commerce has given permission to such an act.

**Rashidul Hassan**  
BSMMU, Shahbagh, Dhaka

### "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel"

Samuel Johnson (18<sup>th</sup> century English writer) made this famous pronouncement on the evening of April 7, 1775. It is assumed that Johnson was not indicting patriotism in general, only false patriotism. Johnson's words are just brilliant and tells us that patriotism is a widely used weapon that had been used for centuries to blunt both right and wrong critics of the state.

To my horror, I see that a number of readers have failed to differentiate between the state and its government. A critical view about governmental failure to curb extremist activities is not an unpatriotic act! Questioning why opposition party members are being bombed again and again, while patronised criminals are having greater latitude to harass law abiding citizens should be a great concern to any citizen. It matters very little for me whether it were Ms. Griswold or local journalists who took the first scoop of the Bangla Bhai activities. Bringing peoples' motives and patriotism into question is plainly pathetic. Needless to say that a person can be a great patriot but may not agree with all the governmental policies. We need those people! We need dissent, not a *carte blanche* for the government. So, please do not bring the patriot card to dismiss the other peoples' views! A government is elected to serve the country and its people! It is a job that needs to be performed well without prejudice!

If foreign investors shy away from investing, that is the total responsibility of the present government. Pretending to "see no evil/ hear no evil" is not going to cut! Let's make Bangladesh a safer place to invest.

Is it that so difficult? Let's think long term prospects for Bangladesh with inclusive policies!

Let's make our peoples' lives better! That is patriotism!

**Dev**  
Boston University

### Tribute and economy

Bangladesh is burning again....procession, hartal, picketing...in its full escalation...violence...vehicles are burning in high flames...day labourers are starving to death...as their only source of income is at stake due to the activities of the opposition parties. It is unacceptable in a democratic society. It seems the general people of Bangladesh are captivated by the political party activists who pose a threat to democracy.

The nation should mourn in a peaceful manner for the former finance minister and a successful diplomat the late SAMS Kibria, who had been killed in a grenade attack in his own constituency last month. The opposition party should ask for a quick investigation in a way that wouldn't create any inconvenience to the life of 140 million people and its economy; they should help investigators to arrest the perpetrators and punish them as soon as possible to stop this kind of attack on the individuals...to democracy in the country.

No nation would allow any hartal for the sake of democratic rights when people are starving to death. The people of Bangladesh will be surprised by the figure of the economic cost of hartals in a poor country. Who is paying for it? Neither the Awami League nor the BNP...it is the poor people of Bangladesh who are paying the price every moment....every day. It is very unfortunate that the whole country should suffer day after day for a person's death whoever he was, whether a political leader or a famous artist. No democratic society would allow doing so for the sake of any democratic rights. Now is the time to wake up, Bangladesh...and its people. The people of Bangladesh should ask the government to initiate a referendum to ban hartal. The hartal shouldn't be a democratic right for a fraction of the people to disrupt the majority's everyday life.

When the world economy is changing so fast, multinational companies and corporations are looking to invest in a place like Bangladesh, we are ruining the opportunity by showing the world how undemocratic we are and turning them away. Bangladesh's economy is strengthening by the unprecedented flow of foreign direct investment commitments...billions of dollars are promised already by Tata (\$2 Bn) in gas and power sector, Taiwan (\$3 Bn) in telecom..., Saudi Arabia (\$2 Bn) in oil refinery, the US in telecom, power sector, IT, health etc, Eu....Malaysia in infrastructures development, health, China in many sectors, and so on.

If we can facilitate these proposals and commitments in the near future, it would be the real tribute to his soul and the democratic movement in the country. It will be the highest tribute to his soul if we poor Bangladeshis work together to fulfil some of his dreams. But what are we doing? Is hartal anyway going to bring him back to life, or will help investigation into the crime? The answer is "NO".

This kind of activities will only promote the agenda of a political party.

**Monirul Islam Monir**  
Sydney, Australia

### Gas pipeline

The governments in the past failed to safeguard the country's interests.

The first mistake was made (during Pakistan time) when a neighbouring country was allowed to go for the construction of Farakka barrage. It has become a death trap for the country.

The second mistake was the signing of the 25 year treaty of friendship with India. We surrendered all our interests by signing something unique in history.

Now the gas pipeline issue has arisen. Our negotiators should be on guard to make sure that the interests of the country are not hurt in any way. It needs a high degree of skill and honesty on the part of the officials to hold their in any bargain.

**Md. Yousof Hassan**  
Gopibagh, Dhaka

### Pictures of Saarc leaders

A few days ago I had been impressed to see the pictures of the Saarc countries' leaders. But yesterday on my way to college, I noticed that while the other pictures remain, all the pictures of the leader of a particular country have been removed -- and I am appalled at what can only be called the government's immaturity. It was an unbelievably childish thing to do. Knowing that the people in the



PHOTO:AFP

## Help the poor

When a child is born in a very poor family his/her life becomes different from ours. He faces troubles like lack of food, healthcare and shelter. He needs to work in his early life. When he grows up, he has to think about running his family with great responsibilities, and his life becomes harder than expected. That's why we must help a poor person to live a peaceful life, which he deserves. We must create jobs in towns and villages.

The rich and affluent should play a role in this respect.

**Tahsin Hyder**  
Maple Leaf International School  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

government are so immature disappoints me.

I have trouble believing that the whole country is in the hands of people like them..

**Yeshim Iqbal**  
Old DOHS, Dhaka

### BTTB internet service

Bangladesh Telephone & Telegraph Board (BTTB) has been providing internet service to the subscribers since a long time. Unfortunately, the BTTB internet usage rate is much higher than the private internet providers. Any support if needed from BTTB is not prompt as well. If any subscribers forget their log in or web mail password there is no way to retrieve the password using the security question & answer. In such cases a subscriber has to call the BTTB support personnel for help. Everybody in this country knows very well what would be the response from that concerned support personnel in such a case. It is very much awkward not to have the provisions of retrieving the password by the subscribers themselves. There is also anomaly even while paying internet bills. It has been mentioned in the internet bills that "payable to City Bank only, if not available, payable to any bank where telephone bills are collected".

I am a user from Chitagong area. I reside at College Road, Chawk Bazar. There is no branch of City Bank in this locality. So I went to the Sonali Bank at Chawk Bazar to pay the internet bills recently where telephone bills are collected. They not only refused to accept the bills at their branch, but rather passed some filthy comments. Then I went to the City Bank, Anderkilla branch, where I got a more or less similar response. They asked me to go to City Bank, Agrabad branch, to deposit the bills. A trip to Agrabad, far away from Chawk Bazar, costs a considerable amount of taxi fair. I would like to request the BTTB authorities to look into the matter so that we can pay internet bills in a nearby bank without trouble.

I would further like to request them to make provisions so that subscribers themselves could retrieve their password if it is forgotten like other private internet service providers. I also appeal to them to lessen the internet usage rate in accordance with the rates of other private internet providers.

**Dr. Rezaul Kareem, MD**  
Associate Professor, *Paediatrics*  
College Road, Chittagong

### A suggestion

Recently, AKTEL increased facilities for their prepaid service users by giving them the Night Bird Talk Plan and of course 30 days' validity period for refill cards.

But as customers we want more. It can easily introduce FRIENDS AND FAMILY (F&F) facility for its prepaid customers.

**A prepaid user**  
Dhanmondi

### Poor response to criminal activities

The attack on SAMS Kibria has revealed that although our enthusiasm to exterminate the evil forces vanished shortly after August 21, the terrorists are still determined to exact a toll out of us. After the attack on August 21, the investigators should have started their hunt from Sylhet -- exactly where they had attacked the British High Commissioner. Sylhet is a definite danger zone as the subsequent attack on Mr. Kibria in Habiganj makes it clear.

Two major attacks occurred within Sylhet division in a short period of time.

Another question is worthy of discussion, that is, why these people, if they are the same group responsible for the August 21, are particularly targeting the AL leaders. Let's discuss some possible motives. If they are the Islamic fundamentalists it may be that they are considering the BNP as an ally since Jamaat is on the BNP's side. Lately, AL leaders had been extremely critical of the fundamentalist forces. Besides, the AL governmental policies were much more liberal, especially concerning the NGOs. It appears as if the attackers are aiming to eliminate either the AL or at least a significant part of the party by killing top leaders so that it loses its most competent elements. It's certain that whoever these fanatics are, they don't want the AL to come to power in the future.

and some objected to the dealings of the cellular companies. The companies are telling us not to give missed call. But why cannot they provide the service that the huge number of subscribers need?

**Bashar Mahmud Alim Hossain**

Dhaka

### Weekly holiday

I am delighted to read the recent news in your daily "DCCI meets PM", making Sunday the weekly holiday. Hats off to the DCCI for taking this bold step. I am sure that success is very near. In order to catch up with the world economy, the only way for Bangladesh is to declare Sunday as a weekly holiday and Friday a working day. We are not an Arab state which can afford Friday as the weekly holiday.

## A flawed slogan?



PHOTO:AFP

I read with much interest a news item published recently in one of our English language dailies which stated that Britain's ruling Labour Party stood accused of improper English usage after it rolled out a new slogan aimed at wooing voters ahead of the general election. The slogan reads: "Britain forward not back"

The Plain English Campaign, a lobby group that wages war on linguistic errors through detecting the grammatical mistake said that the slogan misses a verb and ought to read, "Britain forwards not backwards".

Well, the Plain English Campaign is correct but as a thumb rule of construction of a slogan easy, catchy and tricky words should be used to attract common peoples' attention towards a certain matter over which the slogan makers want to raise their awareness and to motivate them to move for appropriate action.

So, the words/sentences used in a slogan may not always satisfy the rules of grammar, not only in English but in other languages too. As such, Blair's party slogan-"Britain forward not back" is acceptable as it sounds more rhythmic than its correct version!

**Professor M. Zahidul Haque**  
Chairman  
Department of Language  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka-1207

However, despite all these facts it's also possible that when we are all raising our fingers to the religious fundamentalists, some other groups are taking advantage and perpetrating the dirty deeds. Whoever they are, they want to create chaos throughout the country.

That's what all the politicians should be careful about. It's particularly disturbing that AL leaders are blaming the government and not cooperating with the investigators.

We should not let the culprits take advantage of internal conflicts.

**Kh. Asef Safa Kabir (Upal),**  
Lalmatia, Dhaka

### Better service needed

I had long been waiting to cry out for this; some blamed the consumers

## Season of colours

It is right at your doorsteps, begging to flaunt its colours. The rustle of leaves drying out could be heard everywhere even in this concrete jungle. Are you ready to welcome the season believed to be the symbol of youth and exuberance? Well, the birds are singing to let you know that the winter is gone!

**A citizen**  
Dhaka



PHOTO:AFP

### Airlines management

The other day I was flying Thai Airways from Osaka to Dhaka via Bangkok. During this journey my attention was drawn to an article "Thai reschedules routes" in an English newspaper of Thailand.

For such a big airline they are still trying to reduce costs and minimising loss. The paper said that Thai Airways was overhauling its flight network by reducing their losing flights. They have outlined their new marketing strategy.

Bangladesh Biman should be made to think like them (Thai Airways). Biman should be made more dynamic and efficient. Expansion of network should be done after a thorough market analysis. If Thai Airways can achieve it why can't we?

A poor country like ours can't afford the luxury of covering all the continents.

**Najmul Huq, Gulshan, Dhaka**

### Millennium splits

Our society is being stretched to the limit by extremist forces, one has been created to counteract with the other. One is a negative side, while the other believes itself to be positive, and is seeking to neutralise or lessen the evil trends. The latter comprises many forms of corrupt practices which have become institutionalised. Since these corrupt players do not listen to good advice, violence has entered the scene to contain the spread of the virus.

Moral rearmament programmes have been initiated by religious groups in good faith, but the modern secularists are repelled by the orthodox and traditional approaches, and a silent war in the background is developing, not only in Dhaka, but also at the international levels, such as the al-Qaeda and Taliban groups, which are associated with the Muslims in the Islamic world.

The basic problem or issue is the huge economic disparity between the North and the South or the Third World, comprising two thirds of the six billion humans on this earth. The ethic conflict came to a head with the 11/9 holocaust (WTC building in NY as an icon). This chain reaction cannot be stopped now, it has to run its course. The mighty and isolated United States of America (living in another world) has now to justify its enriched aloofness (as an icon), along with the hidden unethical vices.

Democracy is more than freedom of economics and circulation of money. The colour of the skin is still playing a discriminating role in global affairs, hiding discreetly in the background, in the form of materialistic goodies. A section of the local extremist outfits in BD have openly targeted the foreign controlled NGOs, as per latest press reports (DS Feb 4), recalling the creeping control by the former historic East India Company, which later blossomed into the mighty British Empire.

The wave of the shifting civilisation = (East to West, and now West to East) is not debatable, as it was researched (and propagated?) by the Western historians. The syndrome haunting the Western societies (rich and developed countries) is the anticipated fear of the coming lowering of the standard of living during this millennium. The US dollar, the only global currency, has started to be eccentric (wobbling?), as the value of the Euro is rising, the price of oil (energy) has almost doubled, and the dollar is rising in the DCs and LDCs. Uncle Sam has his hands full with new global

problems, besides terrorism and currency. Gimicks like the past WFA may spawn new generations of control and discrimination in trade practices.

The gap between the US and EU is more than the width of the Atlantic Ocean; the rift over the US action in Iraq is splitting the white civilisation (it is not religion). Paradoxically, in some cases, economics is more than religion, if religiously practised with a view to internal, group or regional gains. Today, modern tribalism is a fact of life (regardless of the neutral way of dressing with suit and tie.)

Self centred leadership is too static to keep pace with the rate of change in different parts of the world. The return to religion is a desperate attempt to seek solutions to modern ailments haunting different societies. Secularism has an upper cap, with non-communicational compartments. It appeals to the educated and the learned, hence difficult to sell to the majority hovering around the poverty line, and controlled by the tribal leaders. Who says there is no secularism in Islam, the last perfected religion?

Back to Dhaka, micro street demonstrations and hartals will not lead to the emancipation of the troubled humanity. The solution lies deeper than the active life-span of a 'native' leader!

**Abu Abd, Dhaka**

### 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 on the verge of ruination.

The commission did it without considering the interests of 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, being students of such universities.

I fervently appeal to the UGC authorities and the Ministry of Education to save the future of the students by a declaration that the students who want to transfer their credits from those blacklisted universities to any private universities would not lose any of their credits.

**Tanzina Zinnat Ovey**  
Department of English  
Queens University

### No change

It was the sweet, shiny weekend morning when I got up from bed a bit late, yawned a lot, stretched and rolled the body and finally stepped lazily towards the door for the newspaper. It was a wonder to me as the newspaper took a different