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## Future of AL

According to some newspapers reports, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia declared in a public meeting held in Trishal that the Awami League would never be allowed to return to power. I think this is a very important declaration especially because of the term 'never'. Eight or nine years ago BNP leaders used to tell that the AL would not come to power in 25 years. Everybody knows that before the 2001 elections, Khaleda Zia declared that the BNP-led alliance would get two thirds majority and they got it. When the prime minister is telling something, one must pay close attention to her comments. After the August 21 attack on an AL meeting, the Awami League claimed that the government was behind the attack.

The PM's speech will do little to allay the fears of AL leaders. This is not good for our political climate.

**Nazmul Hasan**  
Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

### Good article

Thanks to Mr Rashid for his very good article "Bottom Line: The rise of Islamic extremism in Bangladesh".

I wrote to you with the same message on an earlier occasion. However, it is not important whether my letter has been published or not. The important thing is that a fellow citizen has been able to disseminate the same message across the board.

**Mahmud UK**

### BCS exams

BCS is very important to the candidates aspiring for government service. So everybody expects that the 25th BCS exams would be held in a fair and transparent manner. But it's really surprising that the PSC is not willing to cancel the exam held on February 24, despite clear evidence of question paper leakage.

We, the people, demand immediate cancellation of it.  
**Sarwar Kamal**  
Suhrawardy Hall, CU

### Gujarat, 2002, forgotten?

In 2002, this month arrived in Gujarat in the garb of an evil as it sparked, one of the deadliest communal terrors against the Muslims of that very region. The stunned world witnessed the blood-bath of Muslims of Gujarat in the hands of fanatic Hindu extremists. It all started with the torching of a train carriage in Godhra. Although at that time Muslims were thought to be responsible for this but the recent report by the investigation committee declared that the fire that killed 57 Hindu pilgrims in that train was the result of a simple accident. However, neither considering any aspects of truth nor showing any respect for humanity, thousands of fanatics armed with deadly weapons unleashed their beast of hatred on the Muslim communities of Gujarat. The onslaught on Muslims resulted in 2,000 deaths; thousands of others were wounded and 100,000 rendered homeless.

There are thousands of other examples of brutalities and each is more horrific than the others. But the worst of all is participation and approval of the then Gujarat government in this deadly riot against the Muslims. Numerous groups of fanatics, criminals and slaughterers in the guise of religious organisations were involved in this bloodbath with the blessings and support of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the then Indian government and Gujarat state government.

More than two years have passed by, yet the culprits are yet to be brought to justice. Besides, even after days have passed by since the violence, many of the survivors are now faced with routine harassment and threats from the same group of people who conducted this planned massacre.

India considers itself a democratic country, but the question remains to its politicians and its people how "democratic" is it to wage riots against minorities, main justice and deny responsibilities of the bloodiest riots that cost the lives of thousands of innocents and left the survivors' future battered.

**Obaidur Rahman**  
Gopibag, Dhaka

### Islamic militants

Recently, there has been an alarming rise in militant activities in the name of Islam in Bangladesh. The so-called Islamic groups that are carrying out violent activities are doing these to bring about an Islamic revolution and to convert the country into an Islamic state. I would like to remind these militants as well as other readers that what they are doing is completely against Islam. Allah has mentioned in the glorious Koran, in sura 'Nahl' verse no.125, that "Invite all to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them in a way that is the best."

Islam is a complete code of life. It is compulsory for every Muslim to work hard to establish Islam in every



PHOTO: STAR

## Rab

Extra judicial killings by Rab has ignited much debate. Killing should always be condemned and law enforcement should be enough to prevent the government from forming such a wing to protect its citizens.

Many of us are aware of children dressed as Rab during an informal rally in Dhaka on the eve of Bijoy Dibosh. And interestingly they were greeted well by the spectators watching the rally. This well acceptance of Rab among our citizens cannot be just spontaneous and insignificant. Well acceptance of Rab is not publicised in the newspapers because of the unlawful nature of Rab activities. People, who cheer after death of an extortionist (gunda), know the nature of Rab killing very well. Why is the cheer then?

The immoral side of the whole Rab concept is true in a state of mind that does not exist in us. Killing people in current Bangladesh doesn't really matter as we see in newspapers.

Why should one protest this immoral act of Rab, when lack of morality and justice is so widespread in everyday living? Politics has become a dogfight for some rich people, and politicians try to earn their fortune out of it.

Bad people have their right of justice too, but who cares for the good people's right? Everybody has rights, when people see their right are not valued, can we expect them to think about the rights of an extortionist? So citizens don't mind lawless killing if it can assure them good sleep at the end of the day when lawlessness prevails everywhere with its full might!

**Mohammad Saiful Islam**  
Connecticut, US

### Bio-diesel in Bangladesh

This important Star Business Report (DS: 28 Feb) is a significant and extremely interesting news item. It speaks of the ingenuity and pioneering role of this Japan-Bangladesh joint venture. Being interested in the subject, I would be obliged if you could throw more light on it.

Naturally, the environment will be the first beneficiary in Bangladesh; where noxious diesel exhaust fumes is one of the foremost environmental culprits. The problem will be the estimated retail price of this fuel compared to normal diesel fuel. If the government can help in rationalising the market price of this healthy fuel, then the country will be immensely benefited. It will also relieve the pressure on natural gas need for transportation, mainly for large buses and trucks.

Possibly use of this fuel will not need the costly conversion kit needed for CNG. May be in the future it could usher in the era of diesel powered automobiles replacing the existing noxious petrol driven vehicles, and save fuel costs and improve the environment.

I would request the JB Group to come forward with more information to create interest and awareness for their potential customers and create positive support for bio diesel fuel.

**SA Mansoor**  
Gulshan, Dhaka

### Tribute to Abdul Latif

With the death of Abdul Latif, the country has lost its leading music composer, folk singer, and lyricist. Abdul Latif was linked with the Language Movement of 1952 through his popular songs "Amar bhayer rakete rangano" of which he was the first composer, "Ora amar mukher kotha kaira nitey chaay", and "Daam diye kinechhi Bangla" etc. He got the recognition of a "Bhasa Sainik".

Abdul Latif participated in the Liberation War in 1971, when his songs inspired the freedom loving people of Bangladesh. He got many awards and recognition for his contribution in the fields of music and culture.

The Bangladeshis at home and abroad deserve to know more about this great personality. The Daily Star may please consider bringing out a special supplement or a special issue of the weekend magazine on Friday dedicated to the life, struggle and achievements of Abdul Latif.

**Adib Reza**  
Paribagh, Dhaka

### Burning issue

If you have a good leader, you are a lucky person. But our political leaders... oh, no and politics is a dirty game. You see it on TV. You listen to it in the news. We have to co-ordinate all the skills, resources and the personality and qualities of

leaders to encourage them to take over the control of the country. What are they doing for the future of Bangladesh democracy? What is their political agenda? Politics is indeed a sleazy thing. But one has to participate in it to make it clean.

The coming leaders have to clear the nation of the muck left behind and thrown around by the politics of violence. The cleaning of our dirty laundry has to begin right away.

**Thuihla Mong**  
Rajshahi University

### Driver at 14!

I have just learnt that a pupil of mine who is 14 has a driving licence. As one who has been an UK driver for 45 years but would not dream of attempting it in this fair city, I do not consider this a contribution to our road safety. I have a scar on my chin from the lime a young teenager drove his parents' car into the side of my baby taxi. The new driver, a fine fellow who has his little circle of admirers, could, I am told, also get himself a licence for a gun.

the later young people start experimenting with - whatever they associate with being 'grown-up', the better because they and their friends are older and, hopefully, understand the dangers better. If they are smoking cigarettes and taking alcohol as young teenagers then, according to the evidence from other countries, it will soon be drugs. In the teenage culture, part of the fun is to be ahead of the game.

We have to protest about this, if for nothing more than to avoid the future wall, "Where did we go wrong?" Some of us could tell them.

**Angela MV Robinson (Rev Mrs)**

Principal, The British School in Dhaka, 5/7 Block D, Lalmatia.

### Fish sellers or murderers?

Fish has always been a favourite food to us, all the Bengalees. But these days we, meaning some of my friends and relatives, have started to experience some digestive disorders and gastric problems after eating fish, specially the bigger

it was made compulsory that the consumer of this chemical must have the licence to import Formalin; like we have seen the government doing in the case of acids.

And on top of that, some laws must be enacted to punish the culprits who are slow poisoning the mass people to earn a few extra bucks.

I think these crooked fish sellers should be punished like any other murderer because what they are doing is an act of murder; it's not far when people will die from the complications created by regular intake of foods containing the poisonous thing.

**Acitizen, Dhaka**

### Coaching centre or trap?

Coaching business has become the easiest way of making money in a very short time for some people.

Like private university owners, the coaching centre moderators have gift of the gab. They make the students convinced in such a way

interviews. And reading the magazines the next candidates think that to get chance coaching is a must. This is too deceitful! The coaching centres take Tk 5,000 from each of the students.

And in this way they can earn 5000x10000= Tk 50,000,000 from 10,000 students. This is my assumption, actually at least 21,000 students take preparation for the C Unit admission test each year! Now the figure is up to you. In an admission season, they earn such an amount, that they don't need to earn anything for the rest of the year! The government must pay heed to this case. These coaching centres don't pay tax at all, they should!

Now I'm telling you about another type of coaching centre. They entice the commerce and arts students to take preparation for IBA exam, SAT, IELTS etc. The commerce and arts students are usually weak in mathematical aptitude, so it becomes difficult for them to get prepared in a few months and to get chance in IBA, even if some of them leave no stone unturned. And at last they do

## US and human rights

With the US invasion of Iraq being responsible for the deaths of over one hundred thousand Iraqi civilian men, women and children and maiming of several hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people, it is amusing to see US Under Secretary for Global Affairs lecturing Bangladesh about human rights (DS, March 1).

If ever there was a case of the pot calling the kettle black, this is it!  
**Rashed Firoz**  
New York, US

not get chance in IBA. Moreover they lose their chance in their own units for a few points. Only the ill fated students know how it feels to lose an important educational year, they know how it feels to be embarrassed in front of their parents, relatives, and friends.

And who wants to get admitted into private university? So the students should be careful!  
**An adviser, On e-mail**



PHOTO: AFP

I urge the authorities to protect our children from official corruption and parental slackness which, combined with the pressures they are under as adolescents, could produce a horrifying cocktail of personal and social chaos.

I tremble for such children and their future. If they are experimenting with driving at 14, then, once the excitement wears off, what is the next thing? Evidence indicates that

ones. Which we suspect have been injected with the harmful chemical, Formalin.

It still puzzles me how our illiterate fish sellers came to know of the usefulness (?) of Formalin. I think it's time that the ministry of health did something to stop this noxious practice.

I think it would help if the import of Formalin is stopped except for the use by the medical institutions. Or if

that the students who pass the HSC think that there is no other way to get admitted into a university except coaching and the help of the guide and materials given by the moderators. They publish the photos and interviews of the students in their magazines who were not there students at all. In their annual programmes, they invite those students who get chance and entice them to publish their photos and

are we sick in the head?  
**Rohena Alam Khan**  
SC, US

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We humbly beg to differ with the getup and photographs or makeup of the letters (25.2.05) of Mr. Zeeshan K. Huq (Vietnam) and Mr. MS Uddin (Japan) referring to the letter of Mr. Saif.

There should have been a luminous photograph of our esteemed minister as shown in

the local TV channels while speaking about the launch "sinking down".

You have carried so many pictures of over-loaded launches for years together in your daily after any mishap with futile results. Because we have so many queer things in Bangladesh including the minister saying "Allahar baanda Allah niye jaan" when a child is killed by a bullet of miscreants on the lap of her innocent father. His peer is no different saying, as reported in some vernacular dailies, "Launch accidents happen due to the will of Allah" and "Jatirira kotha shonena" (passengers do not listen to restrictions).

Well, shrugging off responsibilities do not improve things.  
**Fazal Mohd Dani**

**Jahangirnagar University**  
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After all these launch disasters, police abuses and rise in militant activities, our "honourable" ministers and their cronies are still steadfastly holding their positions.

It is amazing to see that even after the PM's direct orders, Bangla Bhai is still having a "Jolly Good Time" killing people. Makes you also wonder, who is running the country?

A humble request to the PM: Please make these people in authority resign and show us you care enough to get rid of ineffective "leaders".

Enough!! No more mass killings!!  
**Annan Siddiky**  
Toronto, Canada



PHOTO: AFP

## Launch disasters

This is a reply to Mr. Badal Hasib's "Uncensored photographs." Until reading his article I didn't realise that a big part of everyday life of any Bangladeshi surrounds around the disgusting graphic coverage we have to deal with in the news. It is in fact a very gruesome show we are putting up for viewers of all ages, all around the world. I remember seeing mutilated bodies of men, women and children when a ferry or two had capsized in 2001. Their battered corpses haunt me even today. What was shocking to me at that time was that their arms were all outstretched as they were trying to hold onto something to save dear life. My question is why should newspapers publish such graphic photographs? I'm

sure people who buy newspapers are not buying it for such photos. Wouldn't pictures of the battered launches be good enough?

I remember live coverage of the burial of Ershad Shikdar as I had in fact been glued to the TV for the past few days watching the hourly news of what was going on in that jailhouse. I know there were hundreds and thousands like me who had been engrossed in the whole Ershad Shikdar fantasy. He was a psychopath, a horrific criminal yet we were actually "bothering", wasting our valuable time watching the news of him being hanged? Tell me, where does the problem lie? In the news or in our heads? Are we craving for such news, are we craving to see grotesque corpses in the

news? If we didn't watch such news, would our journalists bother filming such acts? And is this what we are leaving our next generation to? Gross pictures and videos of who killed who and how? Don't we have a problem with the ever growing crime rate in Bangladesh? How can we lure our children towards buying guns because so and so had a gun and a so called news channel featured a story on his lifestyle? How can we let our children see such heinous acts of murdering people and cutting them into pieces? Who guarantees the fact that our children wouldn't have nightmares regarding what they have just seen and who guarantees my child might not want to be an Ershad Shikdar after seeing the detailed coverage? After all the

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