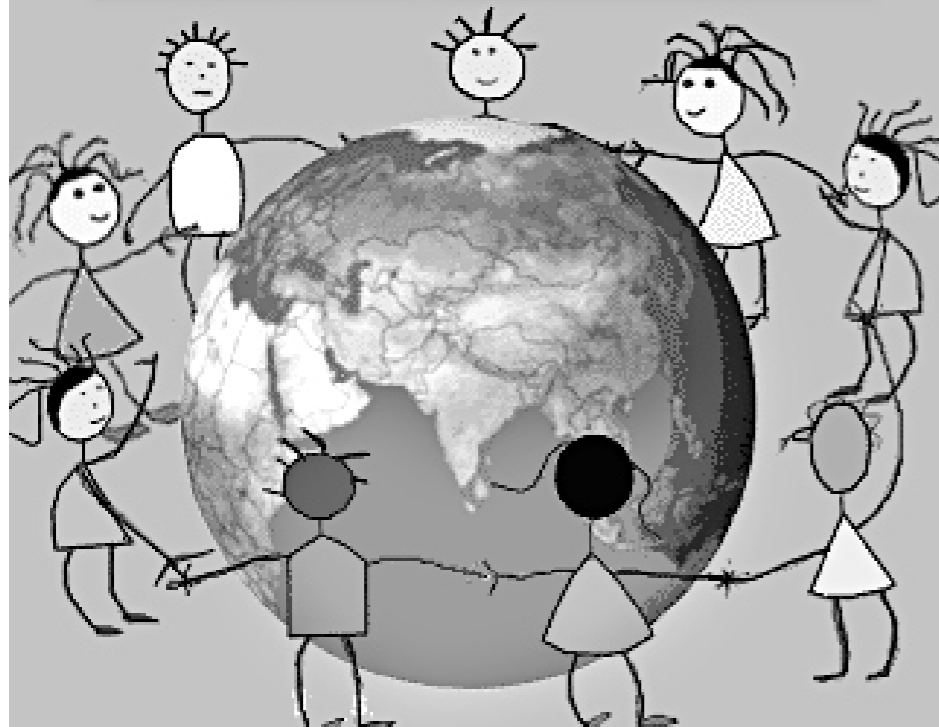


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Let's join hands to make a peaceful world



WORLD PEACE

The world has seen two bloody wars since the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre. The United States invaded Iraq saying that it has chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, but still now couldn't prove it. The Iraqi democracy is now fighting its biggest enemy -- law and order, which left people dead, children hurt and mothers crying. The US Army is making more enemies and fewer friends in Iraq, and troops of twelve countries have already gone home. Recently, we are hearing very strong comments on Iran's nuclear programmes, as President George Bush may have found a possible target, Iran. A report in Sunday Times (published in March 13, 2005) says that Israel is planning air strikes and ground attacks against Iran's nuclear facilities, which they believe can be used for making chemical weapons. But what will be the result after any kind of strike? A civil war or negotiations? If they attack Iran or Syria, it will be a big mistake, which will affect world peace.

The most dangerous weapon that the people of Iran have is patriotism. An attack anywhere in the Middle East will open doors for terrorists. These type of actions will be a threat to the peace loving nations around the world.

In future, countries like the United States may become weaker and weaker by running out of resources, and one of the world's fastest growing economic powers, China, will become stronger. The Bush Administration must hold talks with Iranian officials and solve this problem, instead of supporting Israel.

Israel has nuclear weapons and it is trying to prevent Iran from acquiring the same!

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



F-16 fighters

The US decision of selling F-16 jets to Pakistan will put the on going peace initiative in jeopardy. Though the US officials said that the sale would not change the overall balance of military power, the position of the US will stir every sensible mind in this region. The US is very much concerned

about the nuclear programmes of some countries, but the rules appear to be different when it comes to Pakistan.

The question can be raised very legitimately-- why the preachers of freedom, liberty and democracy are going to be coffin makers in this part of the region by selling

weapons of mass destruction?

It is all about the feeble US economy, which is in bad shape. President Bush has apparently adjusted his strategy. Yes, selling arms fetches in a lot of money!

**Md. Harisur Rahman**  
Dept of Anthropology  
Jahangirnagar University

Punish the culprits

The deaths of the 11 young men in the Mediterranean were very pathetic, which made the whole nation plunge into sadness. Such deaths are not at all acceptable to the bereaved families. I believe this time the home ministry should be tough on these travel agencies so that they won't commit such crimes in future. I will request the authorities to set an example by punishing those who are behind such inhumane activities.

Please do not let such incidents happen once again.

**Badal Hasib, Dhamondi, Dhaka**

We are in trouble

We, the inhabitants of Gulshan, especially the inhabitants of Road-90, Gulshan-2 are now facing different types of problems. In this road the Embassy of Egypt, the Embassy of Netherlands and some NGOs are situated. From early morning, this road becomes very noisy. Some vehicles use this road for transportation, and they drive

impressed me.

It was something much more personal. I grew up in Khilgaon as a child and used to hang out on the very spot that now boast this modern flyover. In fact my grandfather used to take me on mandatory long daily morning walks straight after Fajr prayers. We walked several miles from Khilgaon Government High School all the way up to the thriving market where this flyover now sits. Needless to say he was very fit - God bless his departed soul! Images of scattered colorful saaris blowing in the wind and khaki and blue police uniforms being left hung to dry in the scorching heat of late afternoons by the local laundries in the yesteryears flashed through my mind. A few friends and I formed a "sports-club" and bought bamboo sticks and nets to mark our territory so we could play badminton there; many a time I even tested theories of turning coins into magnets by putting them on the nearby railway tracks as speeding trains approached in the hope that some day it might work. The only thing we

take over from the lush green grass where my fond childhood memories lay! I never thought this was possible.

Like the prime minister said, features like this will indeed go a long way to create a positive impression of Bangladesh in the eyes of foreign visitors and investors instead of the hurtful words "shanty town" used by an old Philippine friend from my Maltese boarding school to describe the city of my birth as after making a whistle stop back in early eighties.

"Shabash Bangladeshi!"  
**Shabbir A. Bashar, PhD**  
San Francisco Bay Area,  
California, US

Are they blind?

It is really disappointing that our opposition parties have announced hartal again on March 31. Now my question is, are they blind? Why are they creating barrier on the way to our progress? They call hartal so often which is totally unacceptable. I still believe it is not impossible to build our country like Singapore or Malaysia. Probably our political leaders don't believe in that. I think it is not clear to them what they should do for this country, or they don't have a sense of responsibility towards us.

Hartal is a thing of the past that they are keeping alive in the 21st century. They should search for an alternative way to express their demands. I strongly believe calling hartal is not the solution.

**G. M. Rezwan Rasul**  
City College, Dhaka

Russia

Russia is changing. Or may be it's being changed. It's just not a meeting of an irresistible force and an immovable object; indeed Russia is no more an immovable object since the dismantling of Berlin Wall and Russia's Communism. And the US is getting stronger from its everlasting stature as the irresistible force.

The cunning diplomacy followed by the US has enabled them to trouble Russia and burden it with the Chechen issue. To be honest, and of course straight, we needed Russia to stay as a superpower to balance the strength of the world order, or at least any other big nation. Since Great Britain is at the US corner, Germany and France altogether pose no opposition or resistance to the wishes of the US. Even by mistake some people feel that the Cold War era was better than this present world state! Is it so? Maybe. We have got thousands of questions but none could answer them. Recently, the US found a new friend in India, of course to our utter dismay.

Since our birth we have experienced India as being unfriendly to us. We do not remember India giving us an inch of favour. And the just concluded visit of Dr. Rice and her words against Bangladesh, what she said on being asked a question by an Indian journalist, are a matter of concern.

**Bashar Mahmud Alim Hossain**  
Dhaka

Pronunciation is presentation!

We are writing in response to the letter of Mr. Babar Anwar who has in fact responded in opposition to another letter of Ms Cantara Wali. Mr. Anwar has come up with a new idea--"Pronunciation is not a measure-scale to project one's language proficiency" There goes the dictionary down the drain!

We fully agree with the opinion of Ms. Wali. Although it may sound bad, we feel that our folks really lack enough interest in learning and hence this bad grammar, bad pronunciation. When you are working as a newscaster/reader, then you have to watch out and avoid callousness. We have had many visitors in our school including Mr. Mahfuz Anam who has a hypnotizing way of reaching out with his way of talking. But not all were like him, there had been a few who had good selection

of words but could not get our full attention due to bad pronunciation; and there had been a few who captured us by the way they presented themselves. That is the whole point.....PRONUNCIATION IS PRESENTATION!! no one goes deeper to explore your depth of knowledge if you talk in faulty and wrong pronunciation.

We believe that first impression is the most important and a balance of good language spoken through correct pronunciation is certainly necessary, no matter what part of the world you live in. Yes, even in America.

The food that our mothers serve us is double the taste because of the way they present it to us. So stop debating just for the sake of it and get your facts right. Thank you Ms. Wali for raising the issue.

**Tooba Arbab and Hossain Saad Alive**  
International School, Dhaka

Hijab issue

It would have been better if we had not voiced our personal opinions and comments on the subjects that we don't have any idea about. Because our ignorance might hurt those who know about it. I'm saying this because there was a time when I made fun of women and girls who wore burka. I was totally uninformed on the matter. Moreover, burka-clad women seemed ridiculous to me.

However, after having studied the subject, I myself have started wearing scarf. It does not matter whether a woman looks natural with or without hijab, it does not matter whether hijab makes a woman look weird or pretty. The important thing is that it is clearly documented in the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

So if a Muslim woman uses hijab then it's fine! If she does not, then that is her own concern.

**Cantara Wali Ruhi**  
BBA, Dept of Mgmt, DU

Referendum on caretaker government?

Mr. O H Kabir suddenly came up with his kind of argument (DS March23) about burning differences that are eating out the core of our nation's integrity! If we really could take a common vow and agree to one theory or one faith and discipline there would have been no fight, no controversy, no mud slinging but only peace and harmony that would have placed the whole

nation in heavenly peace. But is there any ray of hope? Could there be any solution other than an angelic one? Yes, only Allah could perhaps save us from further ruining of the health of the state and save this unfortunate nation.

It's beyond my comprehension how could he propose a referendum on the issue of caretaker govt. (CG) (which is not controversial but) a settled issue and duly incorporated in our Constitution, under which elections were held and governments functioned. People don't change Constitution every now and then (only for someone's wishes) and also not just after a govt. changes hands. It's sad and really sad and unfortunate that whenever a party goes out of power it opposes and decries anything done or proposed by the ruling party and at times it doesn't mind to go to any lengths even if that goes against the interest of the nation. The CG system remained valued and praise-worthy when the present opposition could go to power but now it's even distasteful, as they

the dreamer, who actually gave the call for the liberation war etc.

If the feud that's taking us nowhere continues for decades we cannot go ahead and raise our heads and stand in the comity of nations as a proud member. We must get rid of all mean and vile politics for the sake of Bangladesh.

**AF Rahman**  
One-mail

From Rab to ROB

Rab is one year old! Proverbially it started with lots of fire that seems to be ending now in ashes! Rab's robbery and extortion is the first and foremost image today. While they were robbing the helpless trader; who came to his rescue? Not Rab, not police but ordinary caring and concerned unarmed citizens! Rab and police came much later to save their colleague from the well-deserved public wrath.

Official news is that the Rab men were not in uniform and not on duty! The analogy that follows is: Rab in uniform in the name of suspicion

ened simple law abiding citizens who pray that they never encounter Rab; in or out of uniform! The Rapid Action Battalion is metamorphosing into Rapidly Organized Brutality (ROB) From protectors of the innocent public, they are transforming into persecutors of the hapless citizen. They should remember and realise that one bad deed washes away all the good deeds that preceded it. Do they care about their darkening image? One wonders.

**S. A. Mansoor**  
Gulshan 1, Dhaka

Foreign interference

In recent days a hot issue in Bangladesh politics is 'foreign interference'. In the past our only enemy was the big neighbouring country and politicians never missed any opportunity to criticise its policy. Now many other countries are added into the list of enemy countries that want to interfere in our domestic politics.

Well, donor countries support our development effort with the tax

forget to blame the opposition, especially the leader of opposition for the image crisis of Bangladesh.

However, the real picture is completely different from what the ministers are saying. One does not need to read papers or listen to opposition to analyse what is going on. At the beginning of the last year opposition MP Ahsan Ullah Master was killed. In the middle of the year an AL rally was attacked and more than 20 people were killed. Very recently, SAMS Kibria was killed. In both Ahsan Ullah Master and Kibria killing, BNP activists were suspected as killers. However, the BNP is trying to portray these incidents as regional events. On the other hand, there is no progress in August 21 grenade attack case. I do not know whether this attack is a national event or metropolitan event!! Such continuous attacks on the main opposition party is simply unimaginable in any democratic country. Similarly, for more than one year, allegedly under the patronage of ruling party MPs, Bangla Bhai has created terror in the northern part of Bangladesh. At the beginning, the government dismissed any report on Bangla Bhai as opposition propaganda to tarnish our image. But later the government admitted existence of Bangla Bhai and his group. And it even made an attempt to crack down on the activities of Bangla Bhai. However, all sorts of campaign against Bangla Bhai have now been stopped because of the protest from a component of the ruling coalition. Now it is obvious that the problem lies within the coalition. If someone blames the coalition government for the rise of Bangla Bhai, then he will be blamed for tarnishing the image of the country.

The government of any developed country has to justify to the people of that country why it is giving aid to Bangladesh. The people of any developed country want best utilisation of the aid money. When the envoys of these countries see what is happening in Bangladesh, of course they will protest. They have the right to protest. However, unfortunately our government is considering such protest as interference in the country's politics

**Rashed Choudhury**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Tree climbers!

We have enlisted 22,000 block supervisors across the country under the Agricultural Extension Department (AED) of the Ministry of Agriculture who do not climb the trees for pruning, grafting and plucking of fruits and pods.

Remember those days after independence! Every government, NGO and British American Tobacco (BAT) was very keen about tree plantation across the country for ecological balance and for reaping more fruits, seeds and wood.

The ministry, departments, NGOs and British American Tobacco Company should employ thousands of well-trained youths across the country as 'tree climbers' for retrieving more fruits, pods, herbs, saplings and wood all year round and help the Green Revolution.

**Golam Ashraf, DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka 1206**

carelessly. Wastes come out from two manholes continuously. This road looks very bad due to the presence of some slums and shops. During the night some people from the slums sell drugs to the young men. Sometimes they ask little boys to buy alcohol.

Some employees of the Gulshan municipality are also involved in the unethical businesses. I would like to request you to publish a special report in your daily about these problems.

**Shahinul Islam, Gulshan**

My memories and today's Khilgaon Flyover

It was a delight to see aerial photographs of the newly commissioned Khilgaon Flyover. Sitting here in the San Francisco Bay Area where we are surrounded by many architectural marvels, it wasn't just the spaghetti junction--like on and off-ramps of this civil construction that

worried about back then was getting caught playing in the heat and being so fearless!

My story would be incomplete if I didn't mention the poor homeless dwellers who lived in the large roadside concrete pipes destined to become part of sewers that lie beneath today's "Biswa Road"; their morning chatters and the smoke billowing from their make-shift cookers burning leaves and papers were a quintessential part of the organic social cocktail of that transient community. The generation before me was uprooted from where the Kamalapur Railway Station now sits and rehabilitated in today's Khilgaon; whenever they told me stories about what Kamalapur used to be like before the terminal was built, my young mind never quite managed to grapple with the image of where my grandparents raised their family. "How can you have a house on train tracks?" I recall asking myself. "Were their houses on wheels?" I guess now I know what it feels like to see modernity

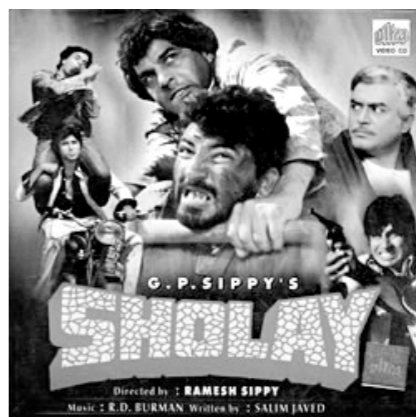
"Sholay"

"Sholay" after all these years is still very popular among the viewers. Zee cinema, one of the popular channels, started to show the movies of Amitabh Bacchan in a row and on 26 March we saw "Sholay" which is still breathtaking and inspiring. The wonderful relation between two friends in this movie is remarkable.

The film is known for Amzad Khan as "Gabbar Singh" and his sensational dialogue "Kitna admi taa". He also claimed that mothers threatened their kids to sleep at night by the name of "Gabbar Singh". At the end of the movie Amitabh's tragic death made him a superstar in the history of Indian movies.

Sholay is one of the most successful movies produced in Bollywood.

**Muhammad Bin Abdullah, Cox's Bazar**



could not return to power.

So there is in fact no genuine controversy or disapproval on the CG system; present agitation is aloft just as a ploy to create uneasiness and chaos. As such, there cannot be an irrelevant proposition for a referendum just for the preferred changes in the CG system, but if he really and sincerely wants a referendum for a harmless coexistence in a peaceful sovereign country, let us hold it to get rid of the main malignant boil of the society i.e. hartal and for solving some so-called controversies viz. who was

and search, which they claim as legal access; will see all your cash and other visible wealth like jewels. They could later return in plain clothes, may be off duty, to rob you! What a frightening scenario indeed! Unfortunately you are helpless; for even out of uniform they can pounce upon you, and should you refuse access; they will beat and maul you and relieve you of whatever you may have; all in the name of resistance in their line of duty! What a birthday scenario indeed!

Unhappy first birthday to Rab from the helpless, uncertain, fright-

money of their own people. Most of these donor countries are democratic countries. The people of those countries are very much concerned about good governance and human rights. They want to ensure good governance in their own countries as well as in the countries which they help.

Now what is happening in Bangladesh? The ministers will say that everything is going well and only some opposition parties are trying to create anarchy. They will also say that some newspapers are reporting false things to tarnish the image of the country. Of course they never

Tsunami

Tsunami is a natural phenomenon consisting of a series of waves generated when water in a lake or the sea is rapidly displaced on a massive scale. Nowadays it is a common disaster like earthquake or floods in South-east Asia. It is of course not possible to prevent a tsunami but some particularly tsunami-prone countries have taken a few measures to reduce the damage caused on shore. Japan has implemented an extensive programme of building tsunami walls upto 4.5m high in front of populated coastal areas. But our government has not taken any steps to minimise loss in case of a tsunami strike.

The tsunami that hit our subcontinent on December 26 left a trail of devastation.

So we should remain alert.  
**Mostofa Saikh Chowdhury**  
Cantt. Public College  
Rangpur



PHOTO: AFP