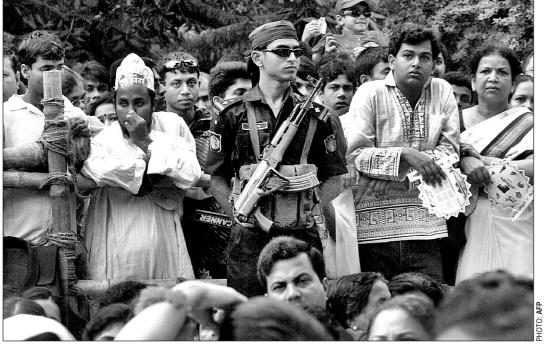
Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



The elite force

The whole country was seething with frustration over the failure of law enforcers. In such a situation, the government has organised an elite force which arrested a good number of criminals, extremists, terrorists and almost all of them have been killed in crossfire. This way, by killing them in the name of crossfire, they have deprived the accused of access to justice, rendering the judiciary useless in the process. Innumerable associates of the gangsters are on the run and are now beyond the reach of the law. Thus, this stunt of temporary relief by killing the criminals

and simultaneously protecting the godfathers will not help us in the long run. It amounts to violation of human rights.

Political leaders, regardless of party affiliations, must remember the proverb "No cross no crown". In our strifetorn country when democracy is tottering on the brink of destruction all political parties have got to continue to struggle for justice with fortitude and unabated patience for establishing the rule of law to acquire the crown of democ-

Farhad Rahman Eastern Housing Apartment Circuit House Road, Dhaka

Grey market: mobile telephones

The mobile (cellular) telephone business is booming with increased competition, and at the same time the grey and black market of smuggling of thousands of mobile telephones is on the rise as per regular news items in the press (not in the government controlled media). At the same time, the government avoids positives, direct actions, on regulating the market. There is a lot of nontransparency in the market for a buyer; and subsequent client.

The shops are flooded with mobile sets, but the after sales-services are poor. There is hardly any written literature available during and before purchase, for making comparative studies, and the post-sale literature is scanty in most cases. The names and addresses of the authorised local agents and distributors are not publicised, and clear instructions are not forthcoming on where to go for authorised service. The sales staff are nontechnical, and the shop managers do not like questions seeking more information on the products dis-

played. It is said that the "cheap" mobile telephones are for one-time-use; then throw it away and buy another. This is not possible in developing countries with lower standard of living and income. The capital expenditure has to last longer, and the O&M costs have to be low. This is different from "cheap popularity"!

The import duties and levies are said to be classified under "luxury" and nonessential categories, while the reality is just the opposite: now the middle class and students carry mobile telephones, and even some hawkers carry it (photo in newspaper). In the rural areas and villagers, women are hawking mobile tele-

News on local assembly is scant in the media (brings the cost don). Why the market is not regulated by BTRC in public interest? Lately the BTRC appears to have gone into purdah. It should be more in the news regularly, as the local market is chang-

The regulatory codes and the field teams have to be visible, and the new forthcoming budget has to announce measures to make mobile telephony more popular, with more penetration down the economic vertical scales. Those who fall into DCC manholes without covers, can use the cellphone inside the black holes, for first aid!

It is not a luxury item or service any more (like expensive cars). The new enhanced salary scales would make more demands on buying new mobile telephone sets, but the grey and black-market have to be controlled. IT communication services save a lot of time and indirectly enriches GDP.

The regime is poor in daily operation and maintenance O&N), and waste energy in premature election campaigns. The proof of the pudding lies in the eating-not in talking about it! The politicians talk too much, and act microscopically. There is a difference between microcredit schemes, and macrotalking and offering micropolitical services. Big mouths nave small footprints on the

gatherings! What is the reason

Act first, then talk. A Mahasen Dhaka

Sectarian violence

Is the regime aware that it is virtually sitting over a volcano, with hateengine as the prime mover? Anti-Ahmadiyya movement is not a new issue (for centuries). Why it is now allowed to be whipped up in Bangladesh?. How the regime (and the people) gains?

The government's position should be made clear (by the Prime Minister, if not anyone else). The Hindu-Muslim enmity was a big issue, resulting in the partition of British India half a century ago, Now inside the Muslim communities there are trouble mongers. Politics and religion have distinct roles to play in governance. Mixing up the head (politics) and heart (religion based on faith) is dangerous. The safe-channelling modes are not being publicised. There should not be lack of transparency in official policies (look what happened to the future of Tony Blair--winning is not enough!).

Whatever the national issues, these should be solved peacefully. What is the hurry on an old issue? Who are the leaders behind the scenes, and why they are not being officially exposed? This cat-andmouse game should stop. If the government supports the movement, it should say so clearly, and be prepared for the reactions.

There is too much sermonising in our politics. Deliver through positive actions. There should be no beating about the bush (President Bush is

The vast majority of the citizens are waiting for the right announce-

Perturbed citizen Dhaka

A leader versus a politician

What happened in Chittagong in a way makes sense if you think about it. Hindsight is always 20/20 but what the people voted for was the leader in ABM Mohiuddin. He takes care of the people he is responsible for. He fights for them and stands up for them. The people are the source of his strength. Mir Nasir is a politician. He derives his power from the state not the people. That to me is the biggest difference between a true leader and a politician. A true leader does not need state power to

win elections. Leaders have always inspired people. They make people feel good about themselves, have a way of making an average person feel important. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had that skill. That is why he was able to unite the people and make them fight for a common cause. It does not take much to please a person who barely has two good meals a day- a hug and a little bit of care and he will most probably be happy to pour his heart out to you. Yet, our politicians who get elected by the people seem to forget all that once they set foot in Dhaka. Then it becomes a game of how many apartments they can buy, how many foreign trips they can get and so on. They become state -

Dipping into Samuel Johnson

past the middle age is palat-

able, though not entirely digest-

focused instead of focusing on the people that can bring them back to Dhaka again. I am not saying they are all like that, but many are. Some might even argue that most are.

So for all those political pundits who cannot figure out why what happened in Chittagong happened ust ask the people. This was a fight tween a leader and a politician and the leader won! Rubel Ahsan, Chittagong

Changing times

Chittagong University has train as its student transport. Some students are used to travelling on the rooftop of these trains. It is considered as a man's job. I have been travelling on the rooftop for the last 3 years. But today for the first time I have seen two female students on the rooftop. Amazing, I was on the same rooftop I heard them singing, I saw them laughing and they got down comfortably. But many of us didn't love to see that they had made it without any accident. I heard some students saying, "These are hot girls." That boy and his friends burst into laughter as if he had said something funny. Sad. But "the glass is half I think it is not an isolated

event. It is a part of the process. Maybe it is not a news making event and we will forget it soon. Yet they made some difference. At least they struck our stereotyped

Saiful Azam Donald Department of Law

Election Commission

Things at rest like to remain at rest and things at motion like to remain in motion until and unless an external force acts on it. This is nothing but inertia. But we very often oppose changes although time and circumstances warrant those changes. Every change is a development. But frequent changes may make development slower. Time changes. To cope with the changing time some changes are required to be brought to the rules regulations and structures of different organisations Demands are on the rise to bring some changes in the framework of the rules and regulations of the Election Commission. But reaction that usually follows to a demand for change is in the offing. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This action-reaction outside the House of Nations has caused so much harm to us. Now the CEC himself has stressed the need for reforms in the Election Commission. No country in the world has this "caretaker government" system. We have it. Necessity is the mother of invention. Our need and necessity led us to invent the system. The political leaders should look at themselves and their failures through the CTG system. Non-political persons who never took to the streets to press their demands have been successful for more than once to ensure free and fair elections which the most experienced political leaders have failed to accomplish for reasons best known

to them. Therefore change should be brought to the EC to ensure its smooth, fair, neutral, bold and

transparent functioning Tapader Md. Khalilur Rahman Kazipara, Rokeya Sarani,

Savar tragedy

Bangladesh is a small, underdeveloped or developing country (although confusion prevails on whether our country is developing or lagging behind in comparison to the other countries in this globalisation millennium) in the South Asian region. Almost all the cities and towns it has are congested, overcrowded. Most of the city dwellers experience unplanned housing. But why? There is no logical reply to the question. There are organisations in all the cities and towns which are in charge of planning. It is a matter of great regret that organisations like Rajuk don't perform their duties.

Take, for example, the Savar tragedy. It was no doubt the result of negligence on the part of the organisations that should have looked into the construction of the nine storied

Md. Khairul Alam Sher-e-Bangla Agril. University

CCC mayoral election Congratulations to the unorthodox

Mayor of Chittagong. He is not new,

but has been re-elected for the third

time running, defeating the regime's

reports), and works, rather quietly, n the background. He is not known as a noise maker and drum beater, and does not need the support of an assortment of flags, icons, and symbols. His services are his testi-

Does this signal a new approach to our nasty political culture? Be noticed and recognised by your dedicated public services, and not through noise pollution, depending excessively on the public-address (PA) system. Recognition could be silently acknowledged and appreciated, a situation shocking and unbelievable to the sycophants (flies) licking the spill-overs.

Who will take up this new cue? The new environment needs leaders with moral courage, who are not seeking posts, but willing to serve. 'When the time comes, the leader will appear,' we read in the books of wisdom. Hidden personal agendas inside public platforms act as poison or virus, which have self-destroying properties.

Vajpayee, a veteran politician and former PM of India, lost the general elections as he laid stress on urban "Shining India," ignoring the rural masses. Similarly, our national leaders have to learn a few lessons from current public moods. A genuine leader cannot depend wholly on the followers, while the followers need a real leader for guidance. The strength of a political party depends on the sum total effect of the combined internal leadership. These leaders have to work in the background? A baby is unaware of the background role of the mother: it takes it for granted, the way we breathe and do not bother about it. Can we breathe our lead-

Watch out for the new trend. It will take time, but a few pioneers have to show the way, in a spirit of selfsacrifice. Bangladesh is starving from the absence of the latter. A Mawaz, Dhaka

Whither professional-

The Daily Star editorial (May 10) on professional public conduct (and image) is timely. The political leaders have also to take note, and not sit on the fence. Tribal politics has already ruined many social sectors. It is time that the politicians are not allowed (through public consensus) to meddle in all sectors; and to respect their boundary conditions.

Today politics has become ar open system, with no holds barred. Are we practising imperialistic politics? this is the politics of the have-nots. How long will it last? Otherwise the various social services would be polarized, denying equal rights to those outside politics. This is open discrimination.

It is an abnormal situation, to find high-level professionals in nonpolitical areas depending so helplessly on political patronage. The politicians are already spoiled, and the big national problem is how to clip off their wings, before they do market for business. All other leaders have become dui nombor (#2). This is autocracy in the name of democracy. What is ironical is that there is no opposition party to this grey culture. Unless you have political links, nothing substantial could be achieved.

This nefarious mindset has to be changed. The majority group (masses) are helpless against the

their masters? Is it the symbol of independence or sovereignty? Why can't our politicians settle the problems of the country by

discussing among themselves? So we humbly request our politicians not to allow or invite foreigners to interfere in our affairs as we, common people of this country, have at least a sense of self-respect and dignity, no matter how poor we are. Peter

suggest that those foreigners are

Chittagong

Values and morality

I was taking lunch with some friends and discussing, what not? From caretaker government, Chittagong City Corporation polls to Indian Idol Amit Sana and Abhijeet. Someone remarked, "we have become very insensitive nowadays." We don't care about people any more which we used to do before." As for example, he said, "Look at the incident at Savar. How many of us went to the sight while the rescue operation was going on?" Even the Political Leaders (except the Prime Minister) did not, which they generally do, at least for publicity's sake. How many human rights activists, NGO activists visited the place, stood by the side of the helpless relatives? How somebody even after detection of the cracks 16 hours before the building caved in could not or did not evacuate the workers? Was it only for money or it was complete insensitivity towards people's sufferings and lives.

Yes. I also agreed, he is correct. We even observed first day of Bengali Year, "Pahela Baishakh" in the same volume and jubilant manner which we always do at the time when some people of our own country, who are responsible for wage earning for the nation and also enhancing the image of the country, were in a death trap and fighting for their lives in vain. We did not observe any mourning day for them, did not even offer one minute's silence in any of our meetings and

behind this insensitivity? Is this because we see, death in so many numbers in launch disasters, bus accidents so often, watch television every day with the news of death in suicide bombings etc. As if people have come to the world only to die? Human lives have no value any more. Any criminal may die in a 'crossfire' without trial, anybody can get acid thrown on his/her body for somebody's selfish reason. Any child or woman can be trafficked to another country in the interest of some criminal gang or of their own family members! Young boys are taking risks of their lives to earn a little more even being financed by their parents, dying in cold fish chambers of some ships far away from the country. Is this the way we want our children to earn, to die? We were not like that before! I have seen a big line for giving blood for somebody after an announcement in the television. We have seen students on the road collecting funds and clothes for the flood affected people or for any disaster. Nowadays nobody would bother to collect, nobody would have faith on them for that matter, that they would distribute the collected items properly. Values have changed a lot. We are all fighting for our own individual existence. Nowadays it is "nothing succeeds like success." Nobody bothers about morality, about honesty, about fairness.

As a nation we must also learn to tolerate, to keep dignity of others whoever they are; rich or poor. Munira Khan Green Road, Dhaka

Congo mission

Bangladesh believes in peace and harmony and extends its support to the international community to curb all sorts of subversive activities. As part of these activities, Bangladesh is playing a praiseworthy role in the peacekeeping missions under the UN. But the Bangladesh mission in Congo is passing through some testing times. The mission has lost a number of soldiers who were performing their duties with great dedication.

The UN should address the issue so that the security of the lives of peacekeepers is ensured.

Md. Rezaul Karim International Relations University of Dhaka



candidate by a huge margin of nearly one lakh votes.

He stood independently, and not under the umbrella of one of the two major political parties in the country. He says he can run the show without frequent trips to the metropolis Dhaka. He lives a simple life (press contribute, and not simply carry lags and names. Stand on your two legs, not more!

Today the nation is suffering from the dependency-syndrome. It has no foundation. Super-structures can be seen, but not the foundation. Our leaders are too visible! How they will

further damage to the society and the nation.

The problem is that black-money and big business have joined the camp. Politics has sort of become a panacea for all personal ambitions of the individuals, and also it is a big

Foreign nose

disaster-prone!

AZ. Dhaka

powerful minority, namely the ruling

class, with no professional barriers.

Where is Titanic, waiting to be

crushed? Our kapal (fate) is to be

This is the tip of the iceberg.

It is being observed that foreign diplomats especially from the US and the UK are very active in extradiplomatic business here in Bangladesh. They are working as if they were appointed here as governors from their countries. They seem more interested to get involved in the matters which are exclusively ours rather than to promote their countries' image here. Moreover, they are pocking their nose into our internal matters including politics, breaking all diplomatic norms which is very insulting to us as an independent nation. We, of course, have our internal problems naturally as every nation in the world has its own internal problems. Even the US and the UK have a lot of problems of their own but they don't allow foreigners to interfere in it. So why should foreign diplomats get involved or interfere in our internal affairs? It is true that we take loans from them but, in return, we give them interests. Actually, it is the character of our politicians, including ruling and opposition, as they always seek foreign blessings to stick to power or go to power with the help of foreigners. Why do our politicians frequently go to the foreigners to brief them on the latest situation of the country? Doesn't it



Inexplicable decision

'Youth Forum for Democracy' is a rapidly growing nationwide organisation. Its purpose is to arrange debate competitions among the university students. It organised a debate competition on the topic 'It is impossible to have free and fair election without reforming the caretaker govt.', at the law gallery in Rajshahi University on May 8. But at the eleventh hour the university authorities stopped it.

This is of course not an example of free thinking at a high seat of learning.

Naquib Nazrul, Mass Communication Rajshahi University



ible. Dr Johnson is out of date

for the nimble-footed informa-

tion age. The leisurely develop-

On reading Johnson

ment of Empire English perhaps could be enjoyed during an elephant ride, sitting on the

howdah; or lounging on the tropical veranda, hugging the long pipe of the hookkah, with the punkha-puller dozing at the rope. It is fast food and instant

hype in the satellite age.

As one of the architects who laid a solid foundation of the English language in the eighteenth century, today's functional English appears to be lean and bony on a slim diet of semi-starvation (meat not served in the health shops). The grandeur of the Roman (or British) Empire no longer echoes from the fast, synthetic, action-packed sentences of the creator of James Bond, the 007 man, who employed a band of ghost writers to strip the words, sentences and paragraphs into new nuances of transparency and permissiveness. There must be action in every sentence (notice that in the American movies, the talkers are

always moving. It is a sin to be still, if the TV commercials are to be taken at face value) We all got the bug inside us.

have made a come-back from the Age of Leisure to the Age of Minutes. Informality has increased, but social mixing has declined.

mass media has cornered reading as a pastime. The audio-visual options provide the reading materials in more entertaining form, and faster than reading line by line, page by page.... We are now offered better packages than reading books; in fact, virtual reality comes in three dimensions in infinite variety of colours.

The pen is no longer mightier. Good bye, Dr Johnson. Rest in peace, you just made it to the other life divine.

AMM Aabad, Dhaka

Notice that the thick novels

Distracting competition in the