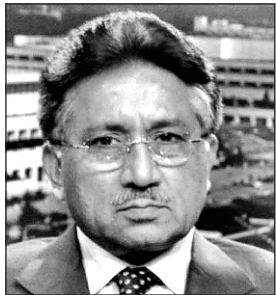


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Saarc and Pakistan

I have read now and then about Saarc, the association of South Asian countries. Why did Pakistan become a member of that association? As a Pakistani living in the United States for the last 30 years, I, and most of the Pakistanis, don't like the idea that Pakistan is a member of that association. I lived in West Pakistan for about one year and before that I lived in East Bengal which later became East Pakistan.

The years 1969 and 1970 were the years that still torment me. My family flew out of that part of Pakistan leaving everything there that my family had brought from India.

Pakistan should look towards West not East.
Masood Khan
Chicago, US

It's indeed good news that the twice postponed Saarc summit will finally be held in Dhaka on November 12 to 13. It was founded with the countries of South Asia which are: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It's believed that the late president Ziaur Rahman felt the necessity of forming Saarc to counter the aggressive policy of the powerful nations. To serve one's country best the first thing that you need is deep and sincere love for the country.

We are looking forward to the Saarc summit with the hope that the regional forum will play its due role in future and thus fulfill the dreams of the peoples.
Md Toufiqur Rahman
Rothkola, Kishoreganj

outsiders doing student politics!

So student politics should be banned immediately. Students doing politics don't have any noble goals like they had in the 60's, 70's and 90's. The scope of student politics could be reduced, so that what they do remain within the confines of the power they have been conferred upon while entering the universities, i.e. they will only come to the streets if any of their rights is infringed upon.

The students should not hold the banner of any political party. Student politics is now a source of violence and all other ills plaguing the academic arena. It is also student politics which has tarnished the image of the highest forum of education.

Moinul Alam
Eskaton Garden Road
Dhaka

Welcome the resignation culture

The hardcore Dhaka residents are witnessing a new political phenomenon in the tarnished nation: the beginning of the culture of resignation (by a cabinet minister). Our politics is autocratic, dictatorial, feudal, charismatic, and corrupt. The call of the day is an urgent change of approach. Today, the myopic vision in politics is not enough.

The wheel has turned, and it should be kept moving, regardless of the names involved. If the momentum is lost, then we are back to square one, which is unhealthy both for the politicians and the clients (voters).

Old style politics has not contributed much in three decades. In Dhaka, boldness is not associated with beauty ("be bold and beautiful"). This is due to narcissism, an undesirable trait in local leadership. Across the Atlantic, the motto seems to be "Be bold and ugly" (for evil giants).

It is a test for the parties in power to demonstrate some more fireworks before the next general election. Clean the stable before the next ride. Change some of the jockeys.

The young and new generations need a modern and healthy roadmap. They are carrying torches, but where are the destinations? There appears to be no single national goal, judging from the stance of the two major political parties, who are pulling in different directions. First, select the approach, then enjoy the privilege of choice of options. The core and the marginal issues have to be separated. Today's politics is confusing and noisy, as the codes are not clear to the players and the spectators.

A Mawaz, Dhaka

Black money is not black literature!

True, allowing black money to convert into white can bring some revenue earnings to the government. But the question is up to what extent it should be allowed?

Black money is not black literature. Both are idioms in English language. Black literature has direct and positive meaning i.e. literature authored by black people or literature about the blacks (eg. Uncle Tom's Cabin) while black money has a negative meaning, i.e. money earned from illegal or illicit sources.

Now the point is, should we allow someone to make black money legitimate that one has earned through smuggling or black marketing or even through drug, children trafficking?

Zahidul Haque
Shere-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

Violation of traffic rules

Bangladesh is an overpopulated country and here traffic rules are very much essential for orderly road communication. But it is a matter of great regret that most people are

indifferent to the traffic rules. Even the traffic police also do not care much about their duties and rules. As a result, the common people suffer due to jams, road accidents and many other problems. During the traffic jam vehicles never stop their engines, which cause wastage of our valuable wealth and also air pollution. On the other hand, violation of traffic rules causes a huge

(there are no exceptions or options). It is either a credit or debit account. You benefit, or you suffer. You know it, even if others do not. You lose your peace of mind, or are contented and happy.

All readers can cite examples from personal experience, or hearing about the trouble and problems of others, colleagues and near and dear ones. Sometimes the explanation

ment' of the mind or lie. You choice, nobody is forcing you. You get what you pay for (not necessarily in money).

Why corruption in public life has increased by leaps and bounds? The regulators are not different; and compromise. The boundary line between good and evil has to clearly mark all the time. A mother monitors her baby all the time (why?)

The pace of life is fast today; and the rate of change is faster. Regimes have to be one step ahead of contemporary activities. Nip it in the bud, and more than half of the problems are under control.

Who will bridge the galloping horse?
AZ, Dhaka

Future of our politics

We the Bangladeshis have a great past, but at the same time we are not so conscious about our future, about our politics. Politics at present is full of corruption and self-seeking activities. There was a time when people did politics for the common people, for the society but now the situation is very different. So brilliant and honest people are keeping themselves away from politics. And as a result, incompetent and dishonest elements are now occupying high positions in politics.

Obviously, the nation has to pay a price for that.

Syed Asheq Ahmed
Dept. of EEE, RUET

Ministers' sartorial preference

It is a matter of disgrace that our elected leaders, particularly of the ruling party, opt to wear three pieces English suit in these hot, sultry summer days. Don't they suffer from any sense of guilt or uneasiness as they do not find anyone in the audience wearing the same? Is this our identity? They really look like fish out of water. They have also disgraced the safari suit promoted by their leader.

This is the same country where the prime minister and all the cabinet ministers once used to wear pyjama and panjabi both at home and abroad. What a pity!
S. Ahmed
Bangla Motor, Dhaka

What a match!

The Australians again failed to click in the batting department. The

EU and Blair



The British Prime Minister Tony Blair did some plain speaking addressing the EU ensemble, before the UK takes over the EU chairmanship (in turn). As a loyal and passionate European (I), he stressed on finding collations, not spotting problems. Change with the changing times, he exhorted the other Europeans (across the English Channel).

Is Europe an industrialised region, or merely agricultural, when 40 percent of the huge EU budget goes for subsidising the farmers? It cannot last decade after decade. Asia is looming large, and China and India would compete with the Western world. The sine wave crest is shifting now from the West to the East (believe it or not!). The decline and fall of the Roman empire is now past history. A new chapter might be in the offing: the decline and fall of EU, warned the British Prime Minister, if the British ruled one fifth of the world, where the sun never set, so he talks with DNA intuition!

The Muslim nations control the majority of the world's energy natural reserves and/or reserves one reason why the Malaysian PM called for setting up the OIC Common Market (DS June 24). Now the communication gap is economic, not linguistic.

Both China and India, the upcoming giants, are desperately short of energy. This is the time to unite and show results.

Tiny Bangladesh has still some negotiating strength, depending on political consensus. Why we waste energy through non-use? Burn up the negative political attitudes. Unite with energy, not weakness.

Alif Zabr, Dhaka

Law of compensation

The timeless divine Law of Compensation is working very visibly in Dhaka. It is an EWS (Early Warning System) of the shape of things to change. Its reference could be found in all divine, mystical or religious books. We all know about it, but the awareness level might differ. Application is something else, and white difficult. Resisting temptation is one tool. How many times we fail? To err is human! But that is not the end of the game!

The principle is simple: you pay for your actions, directly, or indirectly, in cash or kind; now or later

abroad for medical treatment, one after another.

Money cannot buy happiness. It is a timeless truth, but taken sceptically by the fortune hunters (it is too late when it hits them, for corrective action). Note amongst your friends and companions, how many have closed minds. There are several types. It depends on the open or closed window. A closed window means light neither comes in nor goes out (your light). An open window has at least two situations: one-way or two-way communication.

Can I read you, or can you read me? What is the result of this interchange? That counts in the 'devil

match looked like an easy one for the Englishmen. But losing five wickets for a measly 32 forced them on to the back foot. But the cliff-hanger had more to unfold! The sixth wicket partnership between Jones and Collingwood nearly won the match for them. But Australians were back to the game when England lost the eighth wicket. The tailenders saved the day. It was a fantastic finish to a match. We do not see many matches being tied like that.

Mansoor Raja
Dhaka

Transparency and accountability

Finally our prime minister intervened in the much hyped and widely discussed car scam of our minister. It was a forced resignation. But what we see in the international political arena should be an object lesson for us. When any politician of any country is caught red handed or held responsible for any financial mismanagement he or she quits. But our culture is totally different. Our politicians would like to be in power forever. It is a heinous and abominable tendency. I find no language to denounce this habit of our political figures. Since the liberation struggle we have found no strong leader who could really advocate the interests of this war-torn and flood-prone nation. I am not saying that there is no good and honest leader in the domain of national politics. Of course, there are some good and honest leaders but they are not able to change the whole structure of bad and vitiated politics. They are few in number.

The political domain is being dominated by black money and muscle power. Genuine political workers and dedicated leaders have lost ground. It is said that nomination is sold for Tk one crore. If this is the situation then what can we expect from our lawmakers?

Bazlur Rahman

Niko issue

On the 24th of June 2005, I saw in the TV that Tengratila gas field had exploded again and the people managing that is none other than the much talked about Canadian energy company-- Niko. A few days ago the same company "gifted" the former energy minister a Lexus. Recently, as per

media reports, the price of oil has reached a high of \$60 a barrel.

Remember we are a gas rich nation but a poor country like ours cannot afford oil to be bought in huge quantity. I would like all to join me in protesting against Niko because we cannot afford to let the precious gas be wasted by

some inefficient foreign company.

I think it is time for Niko to leave the country because they have crossed the limits of our tolerance.

Tarif Rahman
Dhaka Cantonment



Dhaka University

No mangoes without carbide

A few days back, the news that police fined some mango-mongers for adulterating mangoes with carbide attracted my attention. The same vicious trend is being exercised, to a great extent, by the mango-vendors here in the central part of Savar, brushing aside the

curb this crime which amounts to slow poisoning.

Mohammad Minhazur Rahman
Jahangirnagar University

Erosion of moral values

Provision for making black money white has once again been proposed in the 2005-06 national budget of Bangladesh. The current provision expires on the 30th June 2005. The extended provision clearly implies that we have still

ments' further or new amount of huge black money. In other words, if the finance minister would have stopped making black money white forthwith after 30th June 2005, nobody could guarantee that the black money generation and accumulation would wither away. Because, the source of black money exists here now just as it existed before; from when it's anyone's guess.

Prof. M. T. Hussain
Ibrahimpur
Dhaka

Ban student politics

Students are undoubtedly the most potent resource of any country. In our history, students played a glorious role in achieving many national goals. The role of students was important in the pre-liberation war period.

But now student politics is a boiling issue. In the name of politics students are just committing crimes. The organisations doing student politics are all sponsored by our political parties and are acting as breeding grounds of armed cadres. In fact, most of them are outsiders, not students. Recently, two students of Dhaka College, reported to be JCD activists, were held with snatched money. The violence that occurred in Dhaka University following the death of a student was also triggered by those

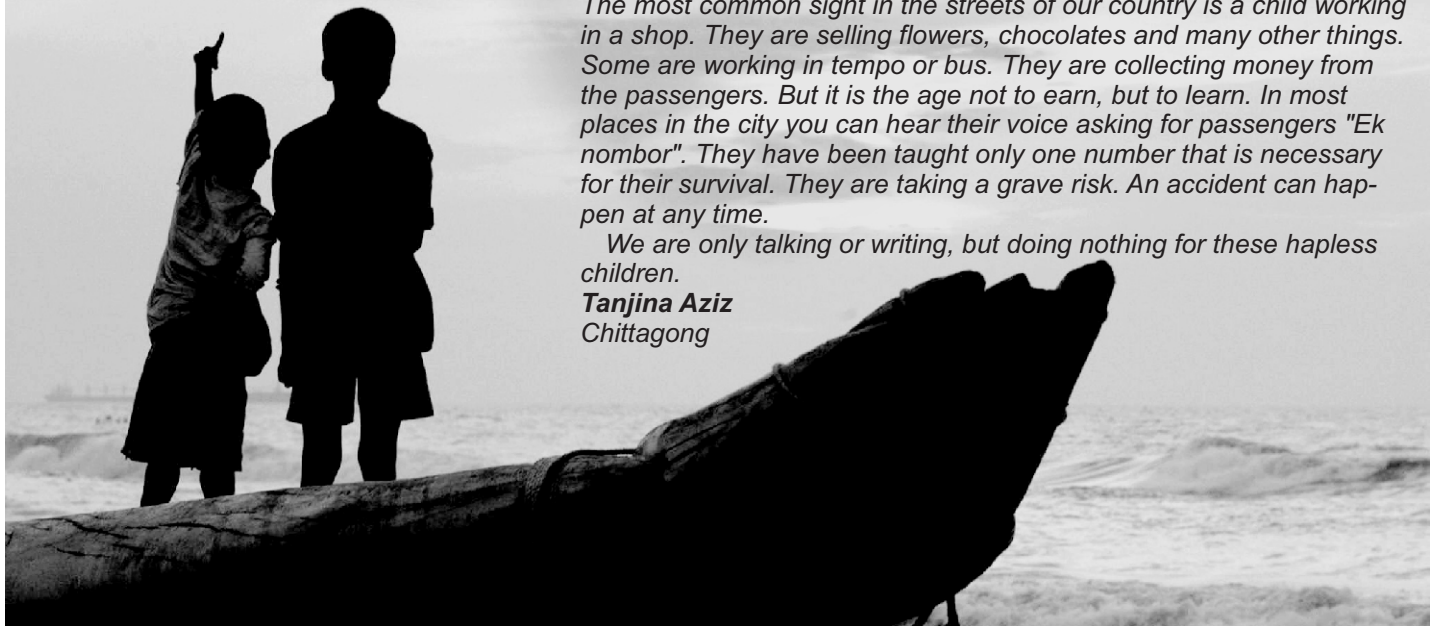
Punish them

Thanks a lot to Pinaki Roy for his health & hygiene related report on delicious sweetmeats. A few years back I watched a BTV documentary on this matter where they showed these filthy and adulterated materials in sweetmeats production. I think the authorities should be punished first. It should be started from the top level.

We are tired of seeing such activities. My request to you: Please work on it and publish more reports.

Dr. Md. Sajjad Hussain
Buckinghamshire, UK

Working children



The most common sight in the streets of our country is a child working in a shop. They are selling flowers, chocolates and many other things. Some are working in tempo or bus. They are collecting money from the passengers. But it is the age not to earn, but to learn. In most places in the city you can hear their voice asking for passengers "Ek nombor". They have been taught only one number that is necessary for their survival. They are taking a grave risk. An accident can happen at any time.

We are only talking or writing, but doing nothing for these hapless children.
Tanjina Aziz
Chittagong



and poverty.

The environment of Bangladesh is polluted due to the vast population. The forests are destroyed for accommodating the growing population. So nature loses its element.

The number of transports has increased. It creates traffic jam and the air is polluted. The number of factories has also increased. The living places

have become dirty. When we walk through the streets, we get the bad smell of dustbin. It creates odour pollution. Dirty and unhygienic food is sold in the open shops and teashops. So the poor often suffer from diseases.

But who will look into all these problems?

Moury Barua
IUC, Chawk Bazar, Chittagong