

## Crossroads, the Pakistan experience

The growth of fundamentalism may prove very detrimental to the future of this country and needs to be nipped in the bud. This is a critical time for Bangladesh, situated between what are two soon-to-be "super-powers" -- India and China. We have to ensure that we take advantage of this position. Our neighbours are being courted by the West, we also need to have something to offer in order to help our citizens climb out of the poverty cycle through the creation of employment and wealth. Pakistan had always been entertaining the notion of being very "Islamic" by supporting the Taliban, but after 9/11 when asked to pick a side, Musharraf didn't hesitate in shunning the fundamentalists (much to the astonishment of the Islamic right wing in his country). Now, Pakistan is happily growing along with India and China and has been avoiding becoming a pile of rubble like Afghanistan. Musharraf has taken a hard line against religious zealots in order to distance his country from Islamic fundamentalism. Our government also needs to take this hard line and needs to provide adequate schooling for the children who are turning into zealots out of economic desperation. The future of this country lies in co-operation with our neighbours and encouraging business, not fanaticism.

*Jewel Matin  
Gulshan, Dhaka*

**Bangladesh Television (BTV), the national television channel of the country, is a government-controlled medium. It is a great admirer of the ruling party. BTV is supposedly the voice of the country, the soil and its people but it seems to be only that of the party in power.**

## "The Price of Passion"

The article "The Price of Passion" by Kajalie Shehreen Islam and Srabonti Narmeen Ali was mind-blowing. This article caught my eye for two reasons. The first reason was that, women writers are finally coming forward to write on such controversial issues and the second reason was that the article related premarital sex with the spread of AIDS. I was extremely impressed as the article gave us young readers a lot of knowledge on safe sex. As I lived abroad, I agree with the fact that youths of our country lack proper sex education. But the saddest part is that the story is sure to face much criticism. I hope it does not discourage the SWM writers. I hope to be reading such articles in the future! Keep up the awesome work, SWM!

*Anika Bhuiyan  
Southpoint School and College, Chittagong*

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I am really concerned about the increase in premarital sex among today's youth and SWM's cover story of September 9, "The Price of Passion" drew my attention. From the article I learnt about Keya who killed herself when her boyfriend refused to marry her after she became pregnant. I also learnt that 90 percent of abortions in our country take place because of pregnancy before marriage. Islam does not permit sex before marriage. I thus appeal to the young women of today not to trust their boyfriends because they will spoil their lives. Even children are adversely affected by sex today. I think some necessary steps should be taken to protect our young generation from the negative effects of movies with sexual content shown on tv channels, along with pornographic video CDs and DVDs. These should also be banned. Cyber cafes should prevent access to sex sites on the internet. I thank the writers of the article for focusing on such an important topic.

*Arif Khan  
Mirpur, Dhaka*

## BTV -- Boring Television

Bangladesh Television (BTV), the national television channel of the country, is a government-controlled medium. It is a great admirer of the ruling party. BTV is supposedly the voice of the country, the soil and its people but it seems to be only that of the party in power. The voice of BTV changes with the ruling parties. I think BTV should be given full autonomy, which would result in broadcasting neutral programmes. I urge the government to allow all media to function freely.

*MMA*

## Student politics and its impact on students

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world. Education is the only way out of the darkness the country is in. But student politics destroys the academic career of many students. In our country, students are usually introduced to student politics at the HSC level. Many colleges, and even some universities, have a "political quota". Students who cannot get admitted into general seats take the help of political leaders already in the institution to get into this quota and later become their weapons of political power. This is very harmful for the students. I think student politics should be discouraged and believe that SWM can play a major role in pressing for this.

*NS Shamim  
Khulna University*