

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.

Maintain sanctity of Ramadan

It is a matter of grave concern, shame and disgrace that in the holy month of Ramadan, year after year, no matter which political party, authority or person is in power, the people of our country are being subjected to and thrown into great miseries, hardships and difficulties due to abnormal price hike of essential goods and commodities and food stuff.

Some of our own countrymen, traders, businessmen, shopkeepers, ministers, political leaders and govt. officials are responsible for the sky high price hike and untold sufferings of the people.

Traders, businessmen and shopkeepers earn profit for the whole year in a single month to get rich quick.

Some of our ministers and govt. officials are guilty of inefficiency, lapses, omissions and negligence of duties.

Our political leaders are always involved in accusing and counter-accusing each other without rendering any service to the people.

Do we find any difference or distinction, in conduct and charac-

ter, among a) dishonest traders, businessmen, shopkeepers who sell essential goods and commodities at exorbitant prices b) Corrupt govt. officials and policemen who take bribe c) Terrorists, miscreants, hijackers, dacoits, thieves murderers and illegal toll collectors?

Are they all not sailing on the same boat?

We are afraid if observance of fasting, offer of prayers and also performance of hajj of such persons, rich or poor, who commit crimes and sins, are at all accepted by the Almighty, the most beneficent and most merciful. Would our respected Ulemas, Moulanas and Islamic scholars kindly enlighten us on the matter and show the right path to the wrong doers and miscreants?

We all must observe the holy month of Ramadan, the month of sacrifice, reflection and prayer, clean our heart and soul both in theory and in practice for the service, prosperity, peace and welfare of mankind.

O H Kabir, Dhaka-1203



For orderly traffic

During this Traffic Month our drivers should be taught how to use the lanes. This is in fact the very first step towards an orderly/disciplined flow of traffic.

Our drivers quickly learnt to use electronic signals, as such learning to use the lanes i.e. being in a lane maintaining a safe distance from the other vehicles, changing lanes by giving proper indication etc. would not be difficult either!

The practice would cut down the number of accidents and noise pollution in the city.

Lutfur Rahman
Dilu Road, Dhaka 1000

Ramadan

Allah has given us the Holy Ramadan for one month only. It is not too much. The Ramadan teaches us so many things. It teaches us to control our instincts.

It helps to rectify our character. It is the pillar of self-control and restraint.

Md. Majibur Rahman
Village Sondabari
PO. Gabtali, Bogra

Corruption

I really appreciate your editorial with the title 'Burying our heads in the sand, living in the world of blaming others'. Very unfortunately, this will neither open their eyes, nor put them to shame. They have built a monarchy of corruption along with the family and party members in the name of so called democracy. Now, they have included one more criminal member (jamaat) to their mafia business.

People should wake up and take necessary action through their strongest weapon 'The Right to Vote'.

Delwar Hossain
Gulshan, Dhaka

Minorities in Bangladesh

The article written by Mr. Subir Kumar Bhattacharya (DS 11-10-05) on minorities in Bangladesh deserves a historical analysis, at the least. A section of the very people who are the members of minority community today, namely the zamindars, subjected the Muslim peasants of this part of the geographical entity to humiliations during the colonial period. During partition in 1947 except for Calcutta (now Kolkata)

riots, rest of the Bengal was reasonably calm except Noakhali, compared to the volatile situation prevailing during that period in some parts of India. The Hindus started migrating from East Bengal not under any duress but perhaps in anticipation of repercussions of the past. It is not correct to make a sweeping statement, as there are exceptions also.

Nineteen-seventy-one gave a chance to erase that image. Rightly, the majority of people forgot the pre-1947 era. New generation Bangladeshi youths have little knowledge of humiliations that their forefathers were subjected to at the hands of Hindu zamindars.

Now coming to post-1971 period, it is perhaps the scarcity of resources that has caused the social instability of today. If the country could prosper economically, most of today's unrest would be over.

It hurts everybody in Bangladesh if someone thinks that he or she is a second class citizen. We have many

rest will be automatically taken care of.

Commodore AMA Alam (Retd). BN
New DOHS, Dhaka

An appeal

Hazi Nuruddin Ahammad High School in Rupgonj, Narayanganj, was founded in 1994. Now it is a well managed High School. The institution was given recognition in 2003 by the BISE Dhaka authority. Its academic performance is praiseworthy. The pass rate in the SSC exams every year has been above 50%. In the current year the rate is 76%.

It is regrettable and inhuman that the teachers and other employees are deprived of the MPO. They do not get the government part of the teachers' salary. The education authorities should look into the matter.

Md. Shahid Ullah
Head Master, Hazi Nuruddin Ahammad High School

presented this award on 6 May 2005 in Geneva at the headquarters of the organisation. Alongside, a group award was provided to IOM staff in Indonesia's Aceh province for their work in recognition of their assistance activities to internally displaced persons and communities prior to the 26 December tsunami.

And these two Bangladeshis are: Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque, the Regional Representative for South Asia and Mr. Zia Uddin Ahmed, Finance Officer. Congratulations! Both are based in Dhaka with the IOM South Asia Representation.

This is a great achievement indeed for two Bangladeshis working for an international organisation.

Dr. Udatta Bikash
Legal Researcher and Practitioner
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Prize bond draw

A large number of people of our country are the clients of the prize

Championship in corruption

Corruption is a major obstacle to our national development. Every sector in the country is more or less beset with corruption. When the newspapers of our country write about corruption then the corrupt people always try to refute the allegations. Who does not know that an inveterate sinner is always the louder in denunciation?

According to our Constitution, ombudsman is a constitutional post but since framing of the Constitution in 1972 the post is yet to be filled. Similarly, 'The Official Secrecy Act' passed by the British Government in 1923 to conceal their misdeeds in the sub-continent is still in force in Bangladesh. The Act was the model of The Official Secrecy Act of 1911 of Britain but the much-talked about act was replaced in that country by the act of 1989, while we are still following the same.

Emdadul Haque
Dept. of Law & Justice, RU



PHOTO: AFP

more successive results. After frantic search, in case the old newspaper being unavailable, they tend to go to bank straightaway. Sadly enough, most of the public banks (except BB) seem least concerned about prize-bond dealings. They are apparently reluctant to sell it, let alone preserve the past draw results. So people have to turn up either to BB or NSB offices which is not always at hand. Again, the officials don't supply the copy of the results, rather they point to the notice board. The results hung on the notice board or on the walls is hardly convenient to go through.

I'll request the authorities concerned to introduce the system of supplying the copy of the draw result to their valued clients on demand. Now is the era of computer and Internet service. To obviate the grievances, may I suggest publication of the prize-bond results with at least ten years' flash back.

Dr. Md. Zahid Hussain
Dept. of Urology, BSMMU, Dhaka

of caretaker government.

I feel constrained to make some comments in this respect. The government has shown reluctance to accept the demand of the opposition to reform the existing caretaker system. When this system has been criticised and questions of neutrality have been raised, we think it should be changed. Change is the law of nature. Our caretaker government system had been a unique example in the whole world. But it should be flexible. The guideline the opposition has placed, to speak the truth, is not clear to the nation and common people. The salient point that has emerged through their proposal seems to be a little bit absurd. To find out an absolutely neutral person is really difficult. Again, the party which will not be voted to power will raise the question of neutrality whatever system of caretaker government is adopted. But election must be held under a caretaker government in any case. So, change is a must in the form of care-

should be distributed according to the ability and background of the advisors except the home ministry. The home ministry should be under the jurisdiction of the Chief Advisor.

3. The immediate past chief justice or a famous educationist must be the chief of the caretaker government. He/she will enjoy the power and status of the Prime Minister. The president will act as president. The ministry of defence will be under the president as he represents the symbol of sovereignty of the nation.

The political parties will decide who will occupy the positions of advisors under the caretaker government. All the advisors will remain answerable to the president as well as to the chief of caretaker government.

No party chief and general secretary could be included in the caretaker government cabinet.

During the tenure of caretaker government the advisors in no way could attend any party meeting in the central office but he/she can visit his/her own constituency for election campaign. But this visit should be restricted and limited.

Why this kind of system? It is an established fact that one party will be the winner, getting more votes than the other in the election. The defeated party will blame the caretaker government whatever way the election is held. But when every party has representation in the caretaker government, questions of neutrality cannot be raised.

Md. Masum Billah
Columnist and Researcher,
BRAC Head Office
Dhaka

All pervasive corruption

I was gathering all the documents required by the US embassy. One of it was police clearance. It is a regulation inquiry. I left this till the end, why? Well I was just too afraid to go and meet the people who are supposed to be there to make me feel safe. Well, my father and me went to the police station and asked for a police clearance certificate, and we learned that the government demands a service charge. I don't remember the exact amount but we went to the bank and paid the money. When we came back to the station with the receipt, the woman who was in charge of the record section gave me a heavenly

BEGGING NUISANCE

In the LDCs poor persons have to beg and survive. Socially it becomes a nuisance, specially in the big cities, and before special festivals.

No NGO is willing to train the beggars how to beg without being a nuisance. In our family flat in Dhaka, we have to face daily the door knocks or the pressing of the bell constantly throughout the day.

Now that I have retired and spend most of the day at home, I have to face this bhikari nuisance, responding to these solicitation daily. Sometimes I feel like becoming a consultant and train the beggars on how to ask for alms pleasantly.

Each beggar has his/her own technique, developed through common sense and intuition, without any formal or informal tutorial. There is the bell-pressing type who won't speak out until the door is opened. The other is the vocal type who won't take No for an answer, and continue to linger, until the door is opened and the No is repeated face to face. The impression is perhaps that that there was a greater chance of getting some alms if the door were opened.

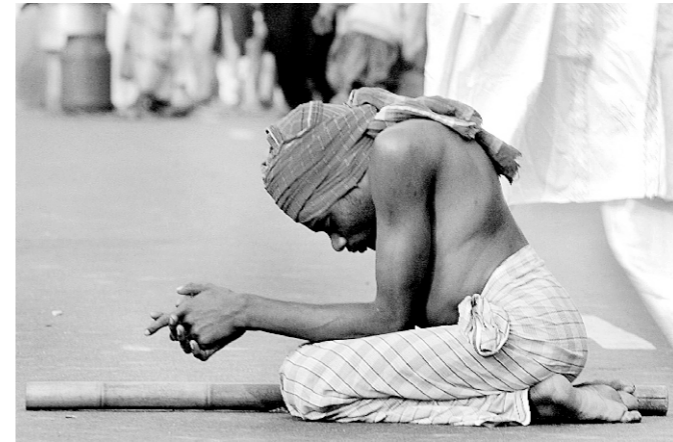
Acitizen,
Dhaka

IOM Awards two Bangladeshis

There are some misconceptions about the capacities and potentialities of the Bangladeshis at home and abroad. However, it is proved that they could scale the Himalayas if there is a scope and opportunity.

This has been proved once again. There are two Bangladeshis out of the 10 who have been honoured with the IOM Director General's Award for 2004. Mr. Brunson McKinley, the Director General of IOM (International Organisation for Migration)

bond (Tk 100/ denomination saving policy), conducted by the state-owned National Savings Branch (NSB). People are surely contributing a lot to our national vault through this draw of the prize-bond held every three months by Bangladesh Bank (BB). Since inception, the result of the draw is made public the next day through the dailies and the notice boards of all B. Bank and NSB offices across the country. As the draw is held after quite some time amid whirl of our daily life, the result often goes unnoticed by some people. Sometimes they miss even two or



Suggestions on caretaker government

The caretaker government emerged as a unique system of government to conduct the national election neutrally. It shouldered this solemn national responsibility very successfully three times, though the last one received some criticisms. This criticism has generated the idea of changing the form of caretaker government. The main opposition as well as other political parties have already presented the notion of a different form

taker government.

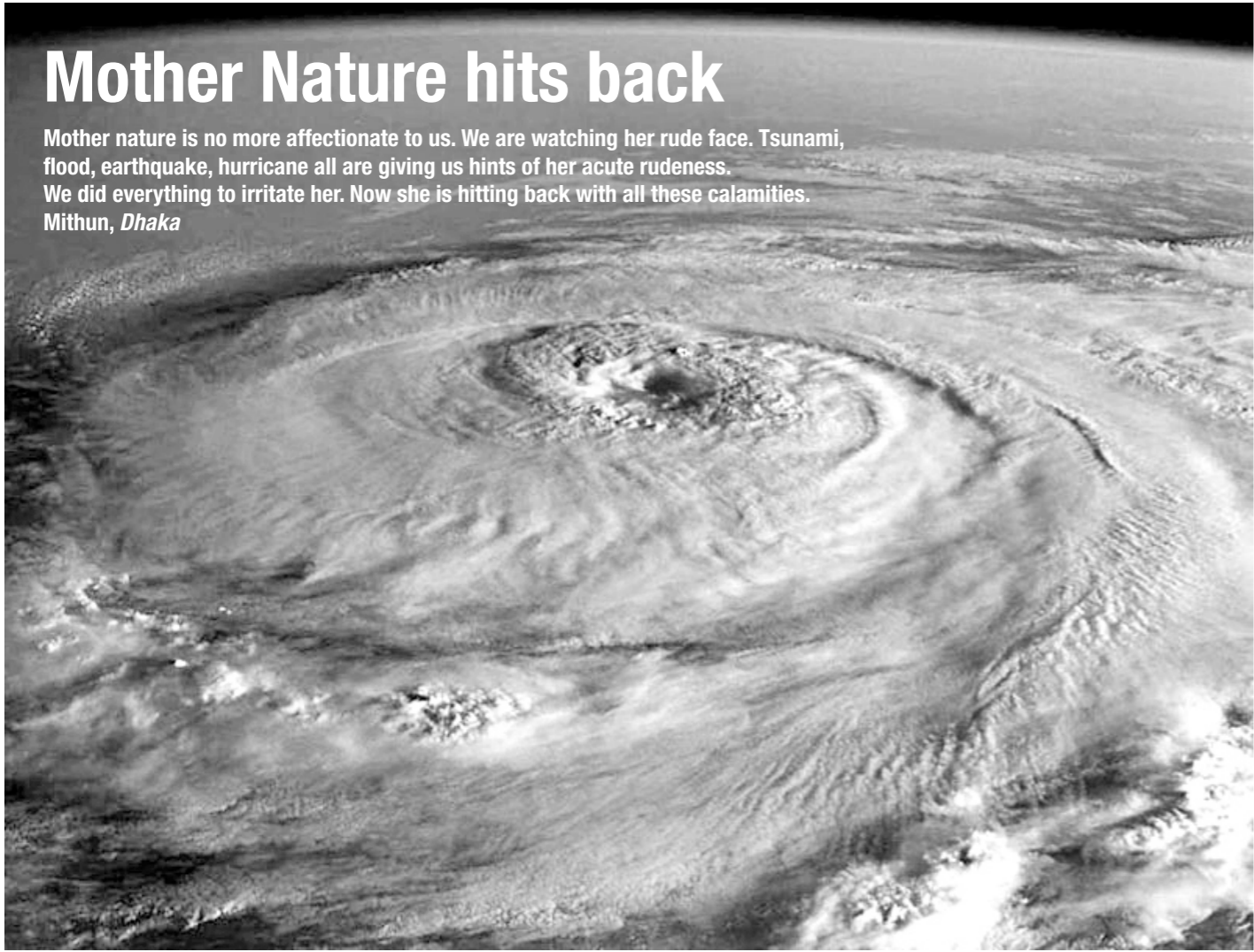
The politicians belonging to both the government and the opposition may think over the following suggestions.

1. A new cabinet could be formed comprising of thirty-five advisors. Ten advisors from the ruling party, ten from main opposition, five from small political parties according to their representation in the national assembly and contribution to the nation and ten from retired judges, businessmen, bureaucrats and other professionals.
2. The portfolio of the ministries

Mother Nature hits back

Mother nature is no more affectionate to us. We are watching her rude face. Tsunami, flood, earthquake, hurricane all are giving us hints of her acute rudeness. We did everything to irritate her. Now she is hitting back with all these calamities.

Mithun, Dhaka



Future of the US

There is no point in discussing the inadequacies of George Bush, they are apparent, and we hear them every time he attempts to construct a sentence in English (if that's what it is). For persons who expect literacy and intellectual rigour from such a powerful person, he is and always will be an embarrassment.

The neoconservatives have always been present in America. Travel the dusty tracks of the redneck parts of the United States and you will find them in thousands. The only thing that has changed is that they have recently found a leader, and thus acquired some power.

Their newfound power and influence is but a temporary setback to the progress of culture, humanity and to the dignity of a great nation. As George Bush will in a few years be consigned to the ranks of the less inspiring of presidents, so too will the neocons be allowed, nay encouraged to retreat into the hills of West Virginia, and the other homelands of reaction and prejudice.

America is not about to dwindle into intellectual sterility. Its institutions and traditions are far too strong for that to happen. What we see is a temporary slowing of its progress and its contribution to world thought.

This is normal in a democracy. We cannot expect progress to be linear, constant or ever increasing. As citizens choose, so they make mistakes from time to time. It is true of the United States, the United Kingdom, and yes, Bangladesh.

However, given a good constitution, a healthy respect for the democratic process, and a will to improve, a nation is soon back on the right track. The United States has all of those qualities, and more.

Don't worry, America will renew itself, with increased intellectual vigour and self respect. Patience, please.

Dr Richard J Murphy
Baridhara, Dhaka

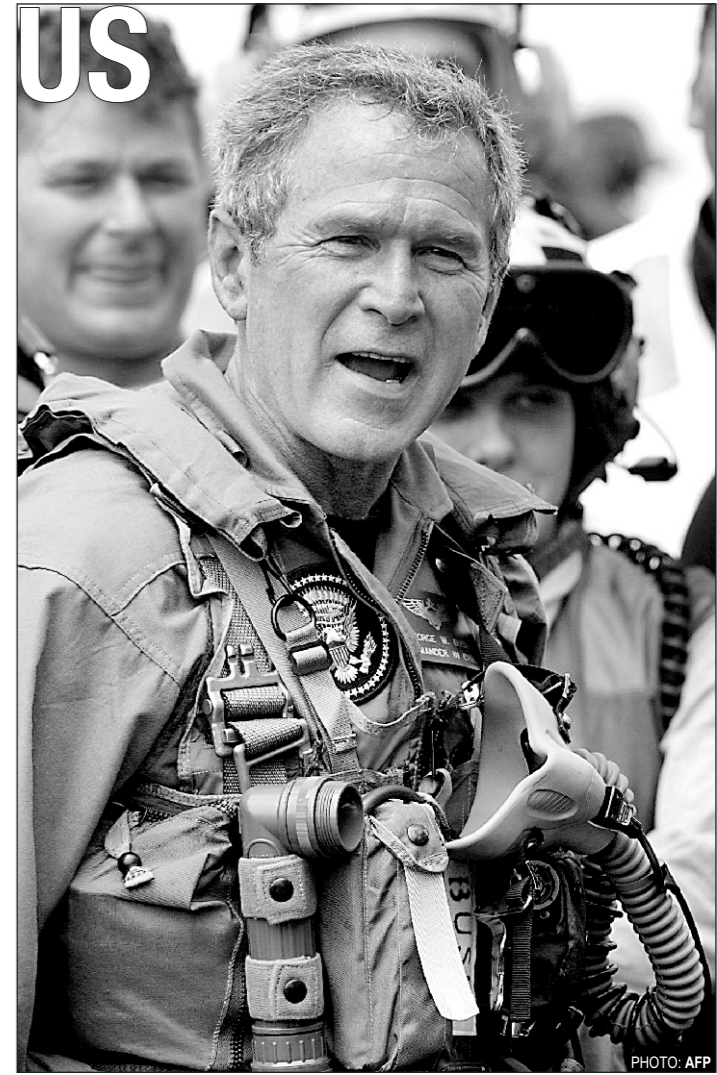


PHOTO: AFP