

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.

Unite the nation

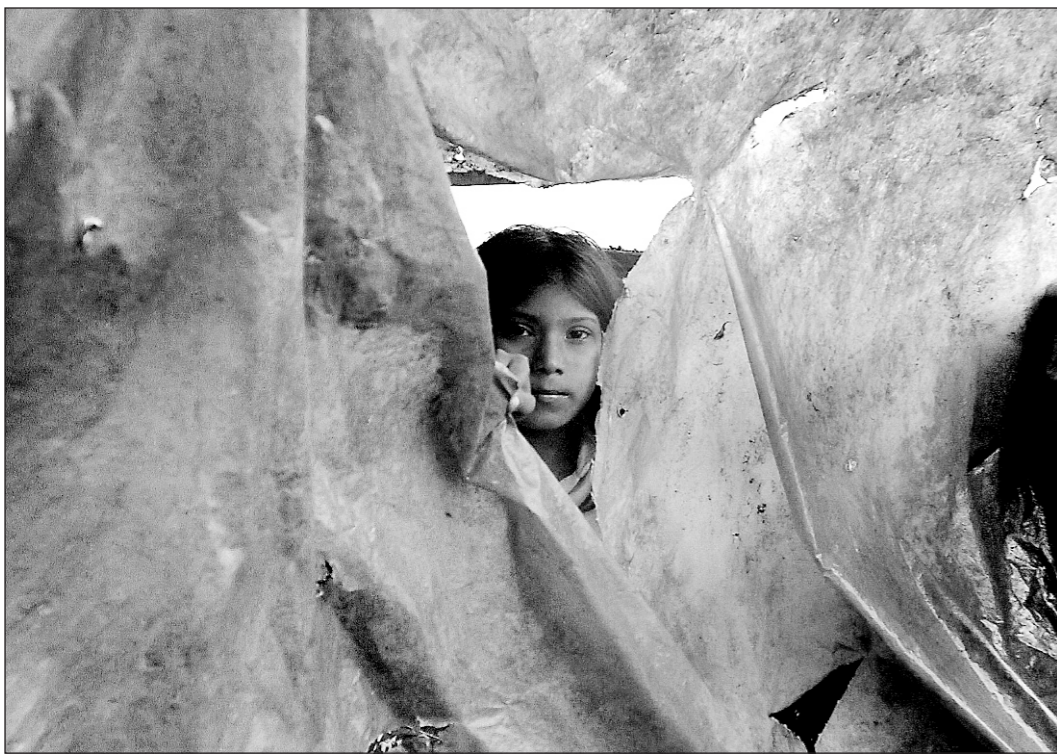


PHOTO: AFP

At this moment Bangladesh is in great danger because of violation of human rights, lack of women's empowerment, serial bomb blasts of 17th August and persistent political violence. Besides, already an American newspaper has published the list of "inactive" countries. In this list the position of Bangladesh is 17.

The image of Bangladesh is under threat in the entire world. India has affirmed that Bangladesh is a threat to regional security. So we need national unity for our greater interest. This unity can be achieved through dialogue between two main political parties. They can play a

significant role to protect our image in the entire world. So we need to create the right kind of political atmosphere to carry on the dialogue between the two main political parties. In this critical situation, only they can save our country.

A reader
Dhaka

Politics and Islam

It is a matter of regret that some militants of the so called political parties are creating anarchy all over the country in the name of establishing Islam.

But Islam doesn't support such heinous activities.
Abdus Salam
Meherpur

Supporters do matter!

The other day I chanced to visit DU Arts building and was amazed to educate myself of some intriguing aspects of present times, thanks to the exuberance of the modern generation of Bangladeshis. As I was walking along the long corridor young folks were all around with their juvenile

favour of one's supporters through SMS is going on from this morning in full swing to meet the deadline of this mid day. As we were stepping into his office room an ecstatic student almost bumped onto us while running, shouting to another for a scratch-card as he ran out of his own account of the pre-paid mobile. On my return journey by the Fine Arts Institute a polymer signboard enriched my experience further with an ntv logo and a vivid photograph of a singer appealing to vote for her through SMS for the Close up 1 contest. I said to myself, "Well, why not? This is also democracy -- newer approach though."

Perhaps my education was not complete. The following night some

me more enlightened saying, "Some thousand taka can be spent to distribute hundreds of pre-paid cards to friends and new supporters (Good news for the mobile companies) for sending as many thousands of SMS as possible". Quite a voting and competition for that matter!
Fazal M. Huq
Uttara, Dhaka

Unite the nation

At this moment Bangladesh is in great danger because of violation of human rights, lack of women's empowerment, serial bomb blasts of 17th August and persistent political violence. Besides, already an American newspaper has published the list of "inactive" countries. In this list the position of Bangladesh is 17.

The image of Bangladesh is under threat in the entire world. India has affirmed that Bangladesh is a threat to regional security. So we need national unity for our greater interest. This unity can be achieved through dialogue between two main political parties. They can play a significant role to protect our image in the entire world. So we need to create the right kind of political atmosphere to carry on the dialogue between the two main political parties. In this critical situation, only they can save our country.
A reader, Dhaka

Iraq situation

I read the article "Exploiting rifts in the insurgency" by Fared Zakaria published recently in your daily. He wrote, "The vast majority of Sunni organisations in Iraq including several insurgent groups have called on Sunnis to mobilise and vote to defeat the constitution, which they view as anti Sunni." It seems the writer is only interested in all negative things taking place in Iraq, like the United States or Britain are.

Roney
One-mey

SC directives

The time extension game that the government is playing with the SC directives, as you have rightly pointed out in your editorial, shows that it is not at all interested in separating the judiciary from the executive. Had it really been sincere, it could have done so a long time back.

What is really surprising is that the government(s) is interested in demonstrating to the public that it wants the judiciary to be really free from executive control. Why this pretension? You cannot be more democratic than you actually are!

Now the government is raising various issues to prove that separation of the judiciary is indeed a difficult task! Why this farcical show? The Supreme Court has very rightly rejected the latest government prayer for time extension. The judiciary is living up to our expectations.

The nation expected that the two major parties would fulfill their election pledge and give full freedom to the judiciary. But that hasn't happened so far. And there is reason to believe that it may not happen at all in the near future.
Mansoor Raja
Dhaka

Agood report

"Report Card on Ministers" is indeed an example of courageous journalism. As a reader of DS I must say it has enhanced my respect further for this paper. Ironically, ministers are untouchable in our country. Whatever wrong, injustice they do they always get away with that.

No one even dares speak about the crimes committed by ministers. The Daily Star has taken a very bold step to make those crimes public.

Kabir Hossain Taposh
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka

I wish...

I wish I lived in Husain's world. I wish all problems could be resolved by simply appealing to long, cumbersome and unused words ("hegemon"). I wish life were as simple as it is in Husain's world, in which governments had the resources to both protect against terrorism, fight a war as necessary, and deliver instant aid to victims of natural calamities. At a moment's notice, without regard to other issues.

Perhaps if Husain were to separate issues, treat each individually, in a reasoned and coherent manner, and preferably in simple English so that uneducated people such as me could understand, then we'd all be able to understand and appreciate what he's trying to say.

As it is, I'm left trying to understand the link between the shooting of a person in the London Underground, or Palestine self-determination or "Chechnya's struggle for independence" to the assistance of victims of Katrina or the Pakistani earthquake.

In short, Husain, I'm confused. I do remember when, as a student, I would join almost any demonstration in London or in the US. We would chant and shout about the war in Vietnam (yes, I'm showing my age here!), about equality, imperialism, women's rights, capitalism, and so on. In short, whatever the cause, we would join in and make a noise. And that's how I see Husain's convoluted and archaic rhetoric. Any cause in a storm.

Could we not attack each issue on its merits, without a general and somewhat disorganised tirade against the West? I'm sure, deep down, if I cared to translate and digest the rhetoric, Husain has a point to make, but let's calm down, take a deep breath, and then discuss. Or, let's all go down to Dhaka University and make a noise, it's all they seem to do there.

Confused
Baridhara, Dhaka

Killers at large

More than two years ago, On July 2003, Chittagong business magnate Jamal Uddin was abducted at night on the way to his home from the business place. On August 17, the same year, he was murdered in a barbaric way. By fastening his hands and legs with ropes, he was thrown to a ditch, then the ditch was covered by soil; a tree was planted at the same time of his demise just over the burial. The members of his family demand a neutral investigation into this abduction and killing. But till now the law enforcers have failed to do much about it.

The killers are well identified criminals. So, why are the law enforcers failing to bring them to book? Even the main accused in the case is yet to be arrested. What do the police have to say about it?
Mars Sohel
Dept. of EEE, BUET

BNP and AL

Sheikh Hasina has said that she has no objection to TIB's recommendation that she, as the opposition leader, declare her wealth but would only do so provided the Prime Minister does the same. The Awami League itself is crying hoarse and blaming the present government for all corruption that made Bangladesh top the TI corruption index for the fifth time. Both BNP and Awami League leaders, if they are serious about stamping out corruption, should go ahead with declaration of their wealth and participate in elections if their names are cleared of corruption charges/accusations. This would help erase the public perception that our leaders are corrupt.

As both have corruption charges against their names, this is the right time to sort out the matter.
Nizam Ahmad
One-mey

Rezz

Mr. Habibur Rahman, former Charge de Affairs of Bangladesh in Afghanistan, passed away in a London hospital on Friday, the 14th of October 2005. At the time of his death he was 69. He left behind his wife Ferdous Rahman, two daughters, one son and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

Mr. Rahman was born in a respectable family of Gopalpur, Tangail district. He graduated from Jagannath College and later did his Masters from Dhaka University. He was elected General Secretary of Salimullah Muslim Hall in 1957. With many of his contemporaries he was so popular that most of them called him "Habib

Bhai" as a mark of warm respect.

After leaving the University he left for London and pursued higher studies. Thereafter he joined the then Embassy of Pakistan as Education Officer. In this capacity he rendered enormous services to help the students from East Pakistan who studied in various Universities and Inns. Many of the Scholars and Barristers of Bangladesh today recall those days of UK with utmost gratitude to Mr. Rahman without whose personal intervention many of them possibly could not complete their studies.

In 1971 he was deeply associated with Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury in his mission to lobby abroad the cause of Bangladesh and raise funds for the Liberation War. When Bangladesh came into being he joined the Bangladesh High Commission in London as Third Secretary. He retired as Charge de Affairs of Bangladesh in Afghanistan when the country was under siege by Russia.

After retirement Mr. Rahman devoted himself to social work and rural development. With single-handed efforts he set up a primary school in his village. Within a span of five years the school was converted to a high school. Through Mr. Rahman's guidance and supervision the school is run very professionally. This year's SSC results more than proved this point. The Secondary Board of Education has recognised the school and it gets monthly grants from the government.

Ruhul Amin Mazumdar
Boston, USA

BNP's options

BNP might have to go it alone during the next general election, judging by the reactions reported in the press of the conference of the dist chiefs held in Dhaka recently. Too much centralisation in Dhaka metropolis, whether it is politics or bureaucracy. The districts continue to be neglected in administrative powers (a perpetual old issue in regime after regime).

The other background factors are the introduction of religion-based politics, the high prices of daily essential food items; and the corrupt environment; absence of law and order at vertical and horizontal levels; the hostile attitude of the foreign powers. Now the energy crisis (distribution, operation and maintenance have added to the headache of mismanagement and lax interior atmosphere).

Both the major parties are talking like ostrich with the head under the sand; confirming our commentary in the DS (Oct 17). Enjoying overall majority is not a cover or protection for continuity. The philosophy of the partners need to be reviewed in depth. Violence in the name of Islam cannot be supported by any sane or wise Muslim individual. Keep clear of suspect company!

It is too late for BNP to travel in the same barge, without outraging public opinion. Alone, it would face a formidable opposition ruled by the heart (faith), full of venom and hatred--some willing to act as suicide bombers!

The two major political parties are in danger. In fact, politics itself is in danger of being imprisoned for a while.

Alfa Ahmad, Dhaka

Weakened leadership

As a senior citizen I wonder why the current leadership depends so much on past names. We know what the latter did; what we want to see is what the contemporary leaders can do, and how they do it. There appears to be some lack of self-confidence and too much anxiety to depend on the past props and names; resulting in mantra culture.

The name of the party is not critical, but the current performance is. If a current leader leaves a party and works independently, his performance might suffer only marginally and locally, (the principle and approach must be right for the people); as he is not denied the native qualities of his head and heart, and his knowledge and experience do not evaporate, nor are they quarantined.

In Dhaka, the situation appears to be the reverse: the leader clings to the followers (and not the other way round). The followers are spoiled, and become sycophants. There is too much oiling and gassing in our politics (slippery foundation). This is undemocratic in the long run, as the public favours are not equitably distributed.

Any genuine leader has a big problem working in a have-not society, which is subjectively oriented, in actions and reactions. The spirit of sacrifice and humility is pitted against leashing egotism. The order of public service priorities changes (one reason for the boycott of the parliament by successive oppositions). When two major political parties dominate in a country, they tend to adopt closed-door policies, starving the roots of democratic games. The games are played too seriously, but not in the right spirit (winner takes all, for example).

How to get out of the trap? Ventilation. The types of political ventilation

available need not be elaborated here. Charity begins at home. First wazoo, then namaaz. Inner cleanliness comes first. What is noticed is the external saaj-goaj. The gift of the gab is being prostituted.

There are many aspects of different approaches to the political malady prevailing in Bangladesh today. The amateurish points noted above should stimulate deeper analyses by the experts.

A Mahasen, Dhaka

A well-timed commentary

Your commentary on Oct 21 captures our collective angst and frustrations over the rampant corruption in Bangladesh. The media remains the only outlet which brings into light unabashed abuse of authority and power by our politicians. Blaming the free press for our corruption ranking exposes the utter incompetence of our political leaders.

It is indeed painful to see how we have grown immune to all the corrupt practices surrounding us. These practices are not changing, because the people with the authority to put a brake on them are the ones who gain the most from the illegal practices which have systematically broken the backbone of our economy.

Thank you for representing the people and shedding light on the real problems.

Nafisul Islam
Washington DC

Substitute teachers

I am a student of a big English medium school, well-known for its size and strength, situated in Dhanmondi. My annual exam is in December, 2005. But my classmates and I are facing acute problem due to lack of teaching personnel. Some of our teachers frequently go on leave with prior approval, on private or personal grounds. They are usually inexperienced, unqualified and have no classroom or subject knowledge or even teaching skill or device. They are hardly acquainted with our subjects and the only thing they do is keep us absolutely mum/quiet in class. These

Iraq situation

I read the article "Exploiting rifts in the insurgency" by Fared Zakaria published recently in your daily. He wrote, "The vast majority of Sunni organisations in Iraq including several insurgent groups have called on Sunnis to mobilise and vote to defeat the constitution, which they view as anti Sunni." It seems the writer is only interested in all negative things taking place in Iraq, like the United States or Britain are.

Roney, On e-mail

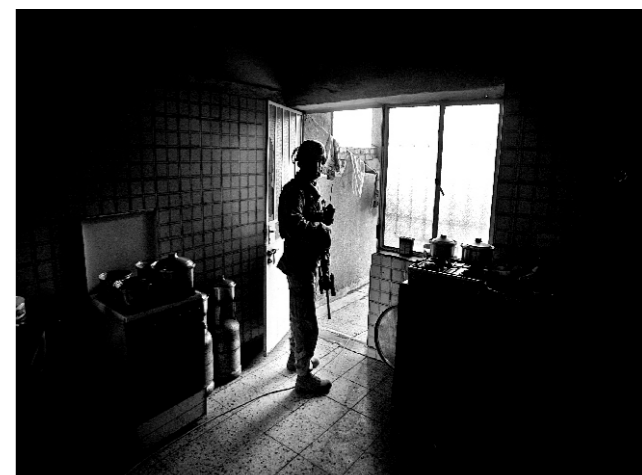


PHOTO: AFP

substitutes are either related to the absentee teachers, unemployed friends or their sibling's friends. This happens all the year round causing damage to our studies, especially during exams. Our teachers who go on leave, both on long or short term, usually pay the substitutes a small amount of money from the absentees' salary which is satisfactory to these young men/women who do not have any source of income or have no other employment elsewhere.

It is interesting to point out here that the school appointed a "permanent substitute teacher" to take substitute classes, who also recently went on 'leave' assigning another lady teacher as a temporary replacement.

Our school authority does not bother about a quality or professional teacher as long as s/he can keep us quiet in class. They only ensure that "the class has a teacher", may be for teaching. This seriously hampers our progress, and we feel, only qualified teachers and or educated persons who are teachers by profession and not teaching for the time being, should teach us in our classrooms.

We request the ministry concerned to verify all such matters and help us complete our education smoothly. Please do justice to us, our future depends on it.

Victim
Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka-1209

Supporters do matter!

The other day I chanced to visit DU Arts Building and was amazed to educate myself of some intriguing aspects of present times, thanks to the exuberance of the modern generation of Bangladeshis. As I was walking along the long corridor young folks were all around with their juvenile outfits and of course refurbishing vivacity that for a moment shifted me back to my

golden student days. Although greeted by the natural din and bustle I got vexed with continuous beeping/snoozing sounds of mobile phones' SMS. My host Professor was not in office room and I was told he could be in some other room or may be in a classroom. While having a detour, I walked further down the long corridor when some interesting posters caught my eyes: "Please vote for XYZ, on such date, Send SMS to 1234 in favour of XYZ of

ntv Close up 1, Tomaakey Khujche Bangladesh." In no time I discovered that instead of wall writings and graffiti like earlier years the clean walls of the Faculty Building is posted with quite a number of these kind of posters. Well, no wonder, some of those are even printed from established offset press with luminous photographs. As I was wandering, I found some writings as well inside classrooms, on black boards/white boards with various coloured board-markers.

My host Professor rescued me in the wonderland only to give me yet some more knowledge. Voting in favour of one's supporters through SMS is going on from this morning in full swing to meet the deadline of this mid day. As we were stepping into his office room an ecstatic student almost bumped onto us while running, shouting to another for a scratch-card as he ran out of his own account of the pre-paid mobile. On my return journey by the Fine Arts

Politics and Islam



It is a matter of regret that some militants of the so called political parties are creating anarchy all over the country in the name of establishing Islam.

But Islam doesn't support such heinous activities.
Abdus Salam, Meherpur

outfits and of course refurbishing vivacity that for a moment shifted me back to my golden student days. Although greeted by the natural din and bustle I got vexed with continuous beeping/snoozing sounds of mobile phones' SMS. My host Professor was not in office room and I was told he could be in some other room or may be in a classroom. While having a detour, I walked further down the long corridor when some interesting posters caught my eyes: "Please vote for XYZ, on such date, Send SMS to 1234 in favour of XYZ of ntv Close up 1, Tomaakey Khujche Bangladesh." In no time I discovered that instead of wall writings and graffiti like earlier years the clean walls of the Faculty Building is posted with quite a number of these kind of posters. Well, no wonder, some of those are even printed from established offset press with luminous photographs. As I was wandering, I found some writings as well inside classrooms, on black boards/white boards with various coloured board-markers.

My host Professor rescued me in the wonderland only to give me yet some more knowledge. Voting in

youngsters at home did that favour to me. As I narrated my jocular experience I was persuaded to give company to the youngsters in watching the very programme of "Close up 1". I was startled by remarks of the judges who were disappointed only to mention that their 'evaluation' very much differed with the voting pattern of the viewer judges. That reminded me of the same kind of resentments of the judges of the proto-type programme of this one, the Indian Idol. Two singers came in turn, quite vibrant, but tensed up naturally as one must fall out of the race. There came one of the contestants whose name I was able to recollect from DU posters and mention at home. Judges' grading differed and she, the lower mark-scorer was nervous, as she herself admitted of some mistakes and not of excellent performance. Some young viewers by me bet on her winning. To my exclamation she did -- with a vast majority votes. At the very end of the programme she did thank her supporters specially all the folks from Dhaka University. "Number of supporters does matter", I murmured. Then the young spokesperson made



PHOTO: AFP