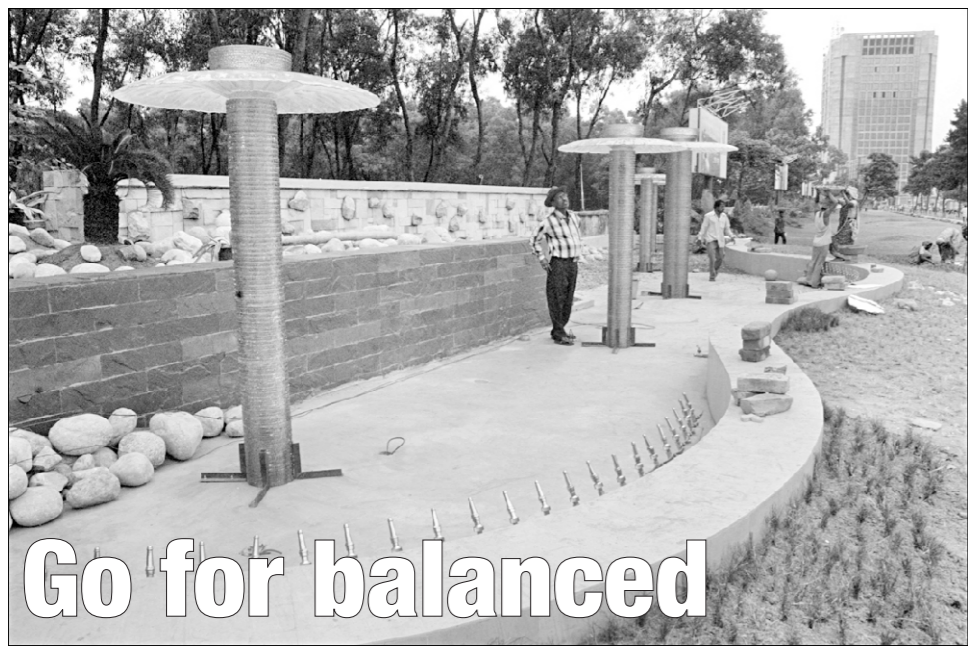


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Go for balanced development

The political leaders and people of Bangladesh are always talking about development of Bangladesh, calling it an "Emerging Tiger" of South Asia. But how can we be an emerging tiger with just a head and having no legs to support ourselves? Has anyone ever mentioned about the cities outside Dhaka? I agree that in Dhaka way of life has changed, standard of living has increased, people have a bit more disposable income in hand and can go to cafe and lounges and spend more on entertainment, but what about Barisal? Khulna? Comilla? And all the other towns and cities? What about their development? Chittagong and Sylhet are at least in a better shape than those places. I went to Barisal while I was on vacation in

Bangladesh in May, it's almost the same since I went there about eight years back. All the development and all the businesses are being focussed on Dhaka, thus this is causing the retardation of the economic development of the other parts. Dhaka is part of Bangladesh so are the other cities, our government should start a strategic plan to at least develop some of the other parts of Bangladesh as well. Instead of breaking dividers in the middle of the roads, breaking an old footpath and renovating it, the same money could be used in another city where it is really needed. With that money at least a road could be made in other parts of the country. If we look at our neighbours India, Pakistan, they have developed cities like, Mumbai, Delhi,

Calcutta, Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad etc. Not only they have a developed capital, but other cities are also well developed. But practically speaking, Bangladesh has only Dhaka. If we seriously want our country to grow, the growth should be spread throughout the country rather than concentrating on the capital only. I am not saying that we should stop looking after Dhaka, we should develop Dhaka but divert unnecessary expenses to other cities where these funds are necessary. I hope my request draws the attention of entrepreneurs and the government officials so that they can open their eyes to the entire country. Samir Ahmed, Purdue University, US

to change the society. For the rest of us in the world, she is a tale of how an ordinary person with an ordinary act of extraordinary courage could change a society.

Ashish Ahsan, Uttara, Dhaka

An oppressed lot

The Bengalees are a people who have been dominated by the British and by the Pakistanis. They were oppressed by both of them. And today we are known for our poverty alone.

Isn't there anything that we can do about our problems?

Md Rahman, One-mail

Managing Biman

Biman is in a 'Catch 22' situation as stated by Erfan Chowdhury (Nov 2). The government interferes for two reasons; one as the official guarantor of funds, and to provide some comfort and sustenance (unofficially) to interested parties in various purchase deals.

Regarding Biman's cash position the least said the better. Their Board of Director's grandiose plans to purchase eight new aircrafts is a 'pie in the sky'. Biman today even cannot pay for the fuel needed for flying. It has cut down on its flights, because of uneconomic load factor, may be saddled on them by government pressure, rather than commercial reality. They fly to New York, not because commercially it is justified; but as newspaper report says, the high-ups want it.

Biman in true sense is not a commercial entity. It is an extended stepchild of the Ministry of Aviation. Its plans are based on subjective ideas and choice; with no correlation to profitability or cash flow. In reality the airline is operationally and financially bankrupt. After all is said and done; directly or indirectly the government manages it; in their "seal of the pants" style. May be it is their expensive hobby, paid for by the unwary taxpayers!

S.A. Mansoor, Gulshan, Dhaka

Scholastica and traffic jam

I write here in reply to all the comments made by some of your readers regarding Scholastica and the traffic jam in front of it. Graduating from Scholastica only one year and a half ago, I thoroughly echo the woes of all the commuters who face the traffic jam every day.

But from what I have read over the past few weeks, I realise the other readers are not analysing the situation properly. I am a resident of Sector-1, Uttara; so I am also in a good position to understand this problem.

To start off, the traffic jam in question here is only limited to a certain time frame. To be specific, there is traffic jam when the school starts and when it ends. Apart from these two time periods, I know that there is absolutely no traffic jam whatsoever in the area. Come anytime between 9:00am and 12:30pm and you will find this place as quiet as the moon.

The second issue is the parking lot. A parking lot is only built for cars that will be there for a long time. In case of Scholastica, most cars just pick up their wards and leave. So I now ask, what justification can be given for the construction of a parking lot?

Traffic jam is not created by inadequate parking space, but by the sudden flooding of cars at a certain time. If you think a parking lot can reduce traffic jam, then imagine the same body of cars trying to enter the parking premises. Trust me, you would not want a traffic jam inside a parking lot!

I think all schools face this problem of traffic jam at the start and end of the day and that Scholastica has taken the possible measures to reduce chaos and disorder. As far as the Ms. Irat Rahman's comments are concerned, I believe she was trying to say what I have just said now - that all schools face the same problem of traffic jams. To add to that, in case of any school, parking lot is not an efficient resolution of traffic problems.

One more thing I would like to clarify is that Scholastica does neither have a gymnasium nor a swimming pool. Such false notions are better not expressed. It is also very much evident that readers are not much aware of the issues they are talking about.

AL bashing



This is in reference to a letter in your daily of the 1st November written by Mr. Masud. Awami League bashing is the order of the day. It starts with so-called misuse of Sheikh Mujib and extends up to Sheikh Hasina. Though the virulence of this attack is becoming feeble with each advancing day of the miserable failure in governance of the present government I would, for the sake of putting the record straight, like to look back at the pages of our history. When Sheikh Mujib became the head of the Bangladesh government in 1972

it was perhaps the most trying time for the nation. The infrastructure in the fields of all those that are vital for the nation were shattered. The transportation system, the economy, the liquidity, the educational institutions, the law enforcing agencies had become inoperative after the protracted battle. What is more, the agents of the Pakistani occupation forces were still stalking the length and breath of the country; the US government of those days was hell bent upon decapitating the newborn country. Surprising though it may seem, the so-called Muslim Ummah had not even recognised Bangladesh and was prompt in doing so when Sheikh Mujib and the frontline leaders of the country were killed. Imagine a nation in such peril when you talk about that three and a half year of Sheikh Mujib's rule. One may also know or have read about the fact that a large number of arms used in the war against Pakistan had found their way into the hands of the extremists and they had created a reign of terror in the

rural Bangladesh killing people on political or monetary considerations. In Bangladesh nine lawmakers have so far been killed. Of them seven were killed between 1972 and '75. It was against this backdrop that Sheikh Mujib had decided to opt for Rakkhi Bahini (RB). Be it as it may, I consider this an improper step. I think we would do better to think and talk. Coming down to the activities of Sheikh Hasina, I do not know if Mr. Masud remembers that she had allowed the press and the civil society to freely ask her questions in an open and

live session in the BTV. Can we even imagine our present PM to replicate such a concession? As for looting of the state properties, I would request the letter writer to please carry out an exercise of comparison of the benefits from running a government between the functionaries of two governments. Though corruption in any measure and form is despicable, the power that is in the present government would beat the Awami League easily enough. Fahmida Intekhab, One-mail



Md. Tauseef Anwar, Uttara, Dhaka

Hanging weight (!)

No tigress, animal, human, or living creature would be comfortable with a 2 kg electronic gadget hanging on the neck for a life time (news item on death of a Sundurban tigress DS 31/10).

These days mini electronic monitoring tools are available for tracing the movements of wildlife. I was wondering whether trying a mobile would work (it would, for a few days). Add a solar panel for charging. The tigress charged some persons in irrigation, and later the animal was found dead. Tiger population reduced by one! Alif Zabr, Dhaka

PMO office

Reading newspaper commentaries, it appears that the powerful PM office has apparently created a lot of non-transparency in governance.

Dual-processing creates confusion: a) usual secretariat processing; and (b) political processing (undesirable) at PMO.

The Parliamentary Committees appear to be helpless (plus, the absence of the opposition). AMawaz, Dhaka

Crucial moment

We are helpless in the face of natural calamities. We can't go against nature. Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, Wilma and the devastating earthquake in South Asia prove the point. India, Pakistan and Afghanistan were affected by the tremors. Forty thousand people have died in the Pakistani side of Kashmir and millions of people are now crying for aid.

India and Pakistan are increasing their missile capacities because of the Kashmir dispute. But this Kashmir (so called paradise) has become a place of death and destruction. Civilians are affected, not politicians or policy makers. In spite of all these, India has extended helping hand towards Pakistan. And this is an implementation of their "Track two level Diplomacy." Natural calamity has brought India & Pakistan together. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh & Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf should realise that this is the high time to forge friendship. This initiative will reduce their feud and help to implement the peace process between the two hostile countries. If India and Pakistan can remove tension among themselves, South Asia will be a tension free zone; people will feel relieved.

So everything depends on India and Pakistan.

Uma Das, Jahangirnagar University

National identity card

This write-up is in response to "Plea for a national identity card" by Tayeb Hussain. To begin with, the population of Sweden is under 10 million and that of Bangladesh is approximately 147 million. Can you imagine the amount of administrative costs and bureaucracy that will be involved if a system of National ID card is introduced in our country? There isn't enough tax revenue to

passport the idea of having an ID card is at best preposterous. People can't read or right but they will have an ID card that will contain their name, address or other information.

There are multiple other arenas where the monetary cost of ID cards can be better used e.g. education, public transportation improvements, healthcare etc. Before, we even bother with ID cards, it is important that Bangladesh develop a method of keeping a record of every birth in a system. Zeenat Z. Syed, One-mail

Newspaper

In reality? The papers are not published on quite a few number of days in a year. And then, there is even difference between Dhaka and Chittagong in respect of some Holidays. For example-- the papers in Chittagong today (07-Nov) have printed a holiday notice on account of "National Revolution and Solidarity Day" while the Dhaka newspapers have not done so! Lastly, there is the question of whether the agents will lift the Dhaka papers for Chittagong and whether the hawkers are willing to distribute them in case they also want to enjoy such an off-day. In the past, there was an instance of myself having to read The

Government living in a make-believe world?

If the Press reaction to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's 10 October Radio and Television speech to the nation is any indication, she may have lost touch with people and is living in a world of virtual reality and fond illusions, surrounded by flatterers, sycophants and courtiers feeding her with assumed success stories of her administration. The reaction of the overwhelming number of Press to her speech

oust the elected government, the issues the press took up with the prime minister's speech for severe criticism and censure were a dysfunctional and rubber stamp parliament hamstrung by political intolerance and repression of the opposition; insensitivity to criticism about an inordinately large and expensive cabinet without sufficient job assignment to state and deputy ministers and advisers with the rank and status, perks and privileges of ministers; disuse of the institution of the caretaker government by the 14th constitutional amendment providing for extension of retirement age of judges by two years to manipulate appointment of the immediate past chief justice as the chief adviser of the caretaker government; appointment of chief election commissioner with alleged background of BNP credentials and recruitment of BNP cadre activists as election officers to frustrate free and fair election; foot dragging and soft peddling the implementation of election pledge for the separation of judiciary from the executive, as a political ploy and leverage to bend the law to control and persecute the opposition in spite of Supreme Court directives and 12 extensions of time to separate the judiciary etc. Abdul Hannan, One-mail



While disapproving of the opposition tactic of boycott of the parliament and giving ultimatums to

pay for the initial introduction of this process. Because right now we have 146 some million people who need to be introduced into the system. A new infrastructure needs to be introduced. There are multiple security issues because ID cards lead to identity theft and, worse, loss of privacy. In a country where majority of the population do not even own a

holiday

I would like to point out that we have not yet been able to embark on rational decisions regarding the implementation of the Newspaper Holidays and distribution system in this country. First of all, we have to make it clear-- there should not be any Holiday for Newspapers at all, same as the other essential services (fuel-pumps, etc.). But, what do we see

Daily Star on the Web sitting in Chittagong, as that particular issue had not reached that port city at all! CNR, Chittagong

Pawns

Can't a soldier say, "I love peace not war," can't he say, "I love my mother more than my blood." He can. Since Iraq invasion, according to AP, 2035 American soldiers have died for the sake of war on terror (or war on innocents). The number is still soaring. A soldier there can even say, "I am the most unlucky man on this earth," who doesn't know when the war will end, how much respect will he get from the people and for whom he is fighting. Will the Arabic textbooks recognise these men as brave soldiers or just invaders?

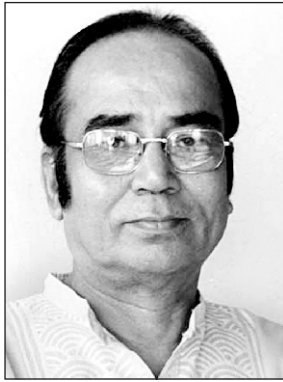
Why should we hate these pawn soldiers, who joined the army for raising money for college, for serving their nation or for protecting humanity? They are also human beings; they have love for people around them. They are just misguided. May God help them.

Tahsin Hyder, Maple Leaf International School, Dhanmondi, Dhaka



PHOTO: AP

Passing away of an icon



When celebrities die their deaths are followed by obituaries with glowing tributes. Those who die are no doubt remembered and missed by their near and dear ones. Others, however, tend to forget the obituary notes as the writers and speakers often write and say what the deceased person did not say or do.

The tribute you paid to the late Enayetullah Khan published in the front page of The Daily Star of November 11 is a masterpiece by any standard. I do not know if there is anyone in Bangladesh who could describe more eloquently and at the same time more truthfully the late Enayetullah Khan Mintoo as you have done. And this you have done in no time after his death as an instinctive and instantaneous reaction. Your words came from your heart and they went deep into our hearts.

Although you had political and ideological differences (known to those who knew you both and who read your articles and editorials), I wonder how you could rise above all the differences to give Mintoo what he earned through a long struggle and deserved as a matter of right. It is a pity that Enayetullah Khan will never read what you wrote in your daily and not hear what you said in the NTV interview.

In a country where our leaders could not rise above small mindedness on matters of national interest you have fully upheld the rights of the person who consciously disagreed with you as a matter of choice.

I hope people will learn how to respect someone who deserves respect, how to honour an honourable person.

I am sure many more people will write about the late Enayetullah Khan. I doubt, however, if anyone can match your truthfulness, eloquence, and objectivity.

Ruhul Amin Mazumdar, Boston, USA

Mr. Enayetullah Khan the Journalist hardly knew me. Yet I was deeply bereaved at his sad demise. In the early sixties we used to live in Dhanmondi and our telephone number was 2776 and their's 2775. There would be some misconceptions and wrong calls sometimes- quite interesting. I met him first at my cousin's residence in Dhanmondi in a birthday party in the mid-sixties. Our uncle and late Justice Jabbar Khan studied law together and practised in Barisal in pre-partition days, to where both of them belonged. Dhaka was a small town then. I was highly impressed by Enayetullah Khan's personality, eloquence, knowledge, and started liking him- his way of talking, making a point, his confidence. I was accorded the opportunity of visiting the national Assembly session of the then Pakistan at Dhaka through the courtesy of Enayetullah Khan. He provided me with a visitor's pass from the speaker's quota. I am ever grateful to him for that visitor's pass. The good impressions are still imprinted in my mind. I met him last at a wedding party where he was receiving guests as the 'kannapaksha'. He looked sick and a bit emaciated.

Being an avid reader I subscribed to 'Holiday' regularly in pre and also post-liberation days. I would remember him as somebody who used to write very difficult English, a good suave journalist, an excellent and critical political analyst, as somebody who crossed swords many times with the establishment, as somebody who loved to remain in controversy and gossip.

Dr. Syed Nasrullah, Dhaka

Leadership and management

The letter 'Sheikh Hasina' (1 Nov) prompts me to write this and point out that leadership and management are two distinct and different functions. Confusing the two is fatal for a leader as well as the country as Sheikh Mujib so tragically proved. Whereas leadership may be an inborn quality, indispensable in times of turmoil and uncertainty, good administration and management abilities (during a stable period) must be learnt over long periods of accountable and responsible service to maintain a system according to the maxim 'To command is to obey'.

So all our political leaders should take note of this difference and provide leadership only when it is necessary and know its limitation of effectiveness and use. Otherwise, we will be in a perpetual state of crisis.

Shafi Ahmed, London, UK

Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks died on October 30, 2005, at the age of 92. She was known as the mother of civil rights movement.

Back in 1950s, Blacks in the southern states of America were subjected to segregation laws. They were not allowed to vote. Some theatres, restaurants, and even churches were off-limit to them. In Montgomery, Alabama, Blacks were forced to ride in the rear of buses. They had to stand if Whites wanted their seats. On December 1, 1955, Parks, an ordinary 42-year-old seamstress on her way home from work, refused to give up her seat to a White man.

Nothing dramatised the civil rights movement more than Rosa Parks' simple non-violent protest by not giving up her seat. (Later another dramatic pick came with Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech). She was arrested. This set off Montgomery bus boycott. Blacks started walking miles after miles to go to their work, sending bus companies almost out of business. These protests also shot Martin Luther King to prominence as leader of the non-violent civil rights movement. Finally, in November 1956, the Supreme Court of America declared segregated bus system unconstitutional. The victory encouraged the civil rights movement to snowball into an even bigger movement against all racial discrimination. By the 1960s, all racist laws in America were revoked.

Rosa Parks' story is not limited to one bus ride. All through her life she remained active in the struggle for equal rights.

At a time when Hurricane Katrina exposed fault lines of race and class in America, citizens there should revisit the Rosa Parks story as an inspiration