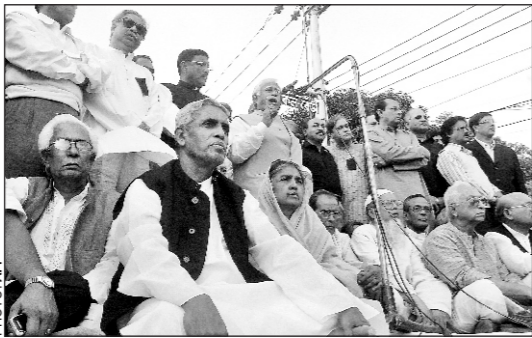


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# Problem of fanaticism



It does not require wisdom to see that Bangladesh is going through a difficult phase. It also does not require wisdom to see that our Government, Opposition and Civil Society are not adopting an optimal strategy to deal with this problem of fundamentalism.

In this present phase of globalisation, and after the 13th Saarc Summit where Bangladesh has promised to liberalise trade, Bangladesh needs to have an efficient economy where no unnecessary distortion will exist. However, the rise of terrorism will not allow us to achieve this goal. First, the

government has to allocate more funds to security. Moreover, uncertainty caused by the rise of militancy will affect FDI and private investment. Therefore, this will take us further away from our potential economic growth.

Furthermore, what we are observing is a double-standard behaviour from our government. First, it took them three years to admit that the JMB does exist and it's not simply a creation of the 'media'.

Second, when parties of their alliances, such as BJP (Naziur) spoke about the rise of fundamentalism, they nearly arrested BJP's

president and created a split in the party. Third, by keeping the Jamaat as an alliance partner, whose connection with JMB is becoming clear and clear every day, the BNP expects opposition parties to join them for a dialogue.

If the BNP is really serious about national unity, why doesn't it break the alliance with fanatic parties and then ask the rest of the country to meet for a 'dialogue' and become united against militancy? It will surely not do this because the BNP is more worried about its vote bank than national interest.

Look at the role of the civil society, specially lawyers, who are currently under threat. Are they not, by boycotting courts, doing what the JMB wants them to do? That is paralyse our system. What we have to be clear about, in order to deal with this problem is that the JMB not against a party, but it is against the entire system.

Therefore, our goal, those

who believe in Liberty and Democracy, is to keep the system functioning. We should take an 'Oath' that, 'Come what may, we will fight for our liberty and we will keep the system functioning'.

The future of democracy and liberty now depends on how the Government, Opposition, and Civil Society deal with this problem. However, if their action does not reflect honesty and patriotism, then the future is dark.

As for the JMB, their intention is to paralyse our system. So it is quite logical for us to assume that they will try their level best to create chaos on the day of the election in 2007 in order to destroy our democracy. Therefore, how the AL and the BNP tackle such a situation will be a matter of test. If they unite, then our democracy will survive.

**Ashikur Rahman**  
London School of Economics,  
United Kingdom

# Suicide attack : a wake up call

For the first time in the history of Bangladesh we have come across the incidents of suicide attack. Even in the period of the liberation war this type of attack was not launched against the Pakistani army. But now suicide attack is taking place under the shelter of our own countrymen against our own people. In this period of national crisis, we expected that the prime minister and the leader of the opposition would sit together with a view to forming a roadmap for combating terrorism. But unfortunately, as usual they failed to overcome their ego even for the sake of the country and took resort to some monotonous blame game. As a result, the real kingpins are still remaining out of focus leading to the security of the country being at stake. Though some preventive measures have already been taken by the law-enforcing agencies but yet it cannot provide us sound sleep since there is actually no effective way to resist suicide attack. Even the US army fails to do so in Iraq and therefore, at this point, the ability of our police and other law enforcing agencies can easily be presumed. The only way to confront this kind of attack is "Ideological Warfare". The Islamic Scholars, Imams of the mosques can play a vital role in this regard. At the same time, the media should launch a massive campaign projecting the

in the coming days. I think through surveillance on certain madrassahs police might be able to detect the would be suicide bombers.

**Dr. Arshad Ullah, Japan**

The Bangladesh government must investigate the fact who paid Tk 20 lakh for suicide bombing and from where the money is coming. In Bangladesh where most of the young people have nothing to do and have no future, it is easy for them to accept such offers. The law enforcers must check the family of the bomber who was caught by the police and find out who gave them money.

People of Bangladesh should not vote for the party which supports religious extremism or the party that takes advantage of this painful national tragedy.

**Dr. Farid Majumder**  
Darmstadt, Germany

The days of hypothesis, theory, and postulations are over. The snake is spitting venom in full fury thanks to the complacency, arrogance, insincerity, self-denial, insecurity, inactivity etc. of the bigger partner of the present government. They have nurtured the pseudo-Islamic terrorists, adorned

## Biogas electricity

This letter is in response to O.H. Kabir's letter on the possibility of electricity generation from biogas or natural gas, published in DS on 3 December 2005. It is certainly possible to generate electricity from natural gas or biogas. However, we need two conversion processes, chemical energy to mechanical energy, and then from mechanical energy to electrical energy. For these conversion processes, we need a suitable engine, similar to a automobile car engine which will convert the chemical bond energy of the gas to heat energy and subsequently to mechanical energy. The converted mechanical energy then can be utilized to drive an AC generator to give us electricity. So, we have to find out how much money we have to invest for these machines, how efficiently we can generate, and what would be price of gas that we have to spend to generate a unit of electrical power.

If the cost per unit of generated power is higher than the price we pay to DESA, then we have to decide what to do.

Of course there are ways for direct conversion from heat energy (burning gas) to electrical energy, however, these are not yet that efficient.

Another simple solution could be to utilize the commercially available small AC generators. Instead of using gasoline, natural gas can be used after some modification. In this regard mechanical engineers can give us some clues.

**Haidar**  
Toronto, Canada

## Militants and government policy

The intention is reflected in the result. The barbaric bombings in Bangladesh are the result of long term patronisation of the terrorists. Now, everyone is surprised but one should know you reap as you sow. The direct government patronisation is reflected in their policy.

I wonder why people are surprised - they should not be as their elected government is the patron of the events. It is not rocket science to understand the cause and effects. People of Bangladesh blame US citizens for electing Bush for the second time,

## Indo-Bangla relations

I have read the article "Indo-Bangladesh relations: Time for re-think & reconciliation" by Anwarul Haque in your newspaper. I completely agree with writer about the facts he has revealed. The Indo-Bangladesh relationship often goes down for the issues like Farakka Barrage, land transit between India & Bangladesh and also on the issue of gas pipeline through the territory of Bangladesh from Myanmar. From all these issues it seems likely that only the Indian people will be benefited and Bangladeshis will be dominated. But I think the Indians should be more amiable and friendly to Bangladesh. And whoever is the ruler of Bangladesh, the Indian government should think of the common people of the two countries.

In this way it will be possible to keep a good relationship between India and Bangladesh.

**A reader, Dhaka**



PHOTO: AFP

I guess it is time to face the mirror and see how ugly it looks there.

**Ashikur Bhuiya**  
On e-mail

## World AIDS Day

The World AIDS Day, December 1, has been an eye opener for me. I have learned how to be with the people I don't know, I have learned how to be with the people I know and who surround me in my world but above all it has taught me how to know myself.

Bangladesh has always been living in a conservative society which is more or less "FAKE" living with an idea of "nothing can happen to me" but as I have said world AIDS Day has taught me something and that is anytime anything could happen to

anybody, and just like any other conservative parents of this society my parents have tried their best not to discuss about it as they always carry the idea that their children will not get spoiled.

So just like you would make some time to take your children to the zoo or a museum or making sure your child has the best education and end up in a good university just like that make some time to give us, children, some knowledge about life.

**Fahima Zunaid**  
On e-mail

## What can I do?

I am a law student; within a few years I will be a lawyer. Who knows only for being a lawyer, or judge I can be killed, I can become lame, I can lose my hands. All the

time I have to remain scared. The JMB has put all the persons related to law under death threat. There is none in this country who can save us.

The government has failed. They can't protect us. Neither the opposition will be able to do that, they were in power when some bombs blasted, they could not even trace the JMB. Now what will I do as a law student?

**A frustrated student**  
On e-mail

## Traffic jam near PMO

Every evening there's a permanent traffic jam starting from Mohakhali Flyover to the Prime Minister's Office. The Tk 200 crore flyover is supposed to reduce traffic congestion. It's unfortunate that the jam remains for half an hour from 6:00 to 9:00pm on every working day. Therefore, the journey from Mohakhali to Farm Gate takes almost an hour. Usually, a bus can reach Farm Gate in 10 minutes in a jam free situation. So, people now waste their valuable time, energy and money on the road. Immediate steps are required to lessen this jam in front of the most prestigious office of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

**Mehadi Shameem**  
Free School Street, Dhaka

## Quality education

Though belated, the newly formulated law titled 'Non-government Teachers Registration and Certification Authority Act 2005', which came into effect on March 20 is the right move to ensure quality education as reported in your daily of November 24.

Teaching is not at all an easy job. Anybody with a degree cannot be a teacher. To teach, one needs, besides knowledge of the subject, some basic skills of teaching that can only be obtained through a recognised regular course of training. One cannot just walk in and start as a teacher. By creating the Non-government Teachers Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA), the government has fulfilled an overdue duty in ensuring an initial task towards quality education. The NTRCA must ensure that the existing teachers also get registration within a very short

time. Further, registration is not enough. It is the first step to becoming a teacher. After registration, one must get training to work as a teacher.

The necessity of a trained teacher cannot be overemphasised. The conditions of the quality of teachers in schools and colleges in the district and lower levels is simply awful. In order to give meaningful education to our children, all teachers in each school/college must be trained. It is a big task, no doubt. But it has to be done. For training non-government teachers, a number of training institutions should be set up with qualified instructors in each division, if not one in each district. This should be done as soon as possible. It would need a huge amount of fund and infrastructure. But since here is no alternative to quality education, we must have these training institutions on topmost priority basis. I would draw the attention of the government to this matter of vital importance.

**M. A. Sobhan**  
Sadullahpur Road, Gaibandha

## Harkate Badan

As part of the Eid special programmes arranged by Channel-I, an interesting TV play titled "Harkate Badan" was aired on Nov. 10, 2005. Perhaps for the first time a TV play touched the case of AIDS by casting one of the main female characters infected with HIV.

I strongly feel that the issue of AIDS should be incorporated into our TV plays to make the common people aware of the hazards of the dreadful disease.

The play was much entertaining. Tauqir Ahmed, Richi Solaiman and Hridy Haq portrayed the central roles quite creditably.

**Professor Zahidul Haque**  
Dhaka

who have kidnapped their personnel. Therefore, contrary to popular opinion western governments have no real qualms with talking or negotiating with those that used armed tactics.

The irony of talking to insurgents abroad with the clampdown upon Muslim communities in the west cannot be starker. Recent years have seen the silencing of the Muslim community through a mixture of legislation and bully boy tactics; mosques have been shut down, surveillance cameras have been installed in Muslim community areas, Khutbahs and sermons have been monitored and recorded, Imams have been vetted, hundreds have been arrested under stop and search tactics with the culmination in the current anti-terror bill which risks criminalising those that dare speak out against western foreign policy or in support of resistance struggles throughout the world.

Clearly, intolerance to those that advocate Islamic values and ideas by verbal and non violent means is, in the eyes of the West, far more threatening than those who resist or combat it through military tactics. How else can one explain the degree of militancy shown recently by the British Home Secretary when he poured scorn on the aspirations of millions of Muslims world wide when he said that there can be no negotiation about the re-establishment of the Caliphate or about Shar'iah law.

**Saleh Ahmed, On e-mail**



actual image of Islam. Above all, the politicians should realise that this is the last wake up call for them and if they still remain indifferent, the people of Bangladesh will never forgive them and there would be no light at the end of the tunnel. So this is the best of the time and this is the worst of the time to fight back against terrorism.

**Sagor & Tania, Dept of Law, DU**

Panic and doubt seize all! Everyone along with the law enforcers feels insecure!

A sense of insecurity prevails everywhere as attackers who are presumably the members of the JMB have, by now, turned into human bombs wrongly proclaiming it a 'jihad' against man-made laws. Obviously, this is fanaticism and those involved in the militant operations here have lost touch with reality.

We are deeply shocked and dismayed at the countrywide bomb attacks launched in a planned way by underground militant forces, who apparently belong to a particular religion as claimed by themselves. Here I mention the word 'apparently' because no religion allows either suicide or killing. At the same time, it is a matter of great disappointment for us that the criminals in most cases go unpunished.

Consequently, people are now going psychotic, lawyers and young judges are thinking of changing their profession following the suicide attacks particularly on courts.

It is a matter of deep concern that these militants claim to establish Islamic law, though Islam does not allow any militancy or operation of underground forces. It is very obvious to all, especially to those who are conscientious, that the masterminds behind the dastardly attacks have motivated a large number of youths most of whom are poverty stricken.

I, therefore, strongly believe that both the electronic and the print media have got a significant role to play in motivating people in general and thereby let them know about the real teachings of Islam.

Islamic programmes on TV channels should deal with the common problems of our society like terrorism, corruption, poverty alleviation, unemployment problem, bribery and dowry. It is really awful! We must overcome the situation.

**Md. Mustafizur Rahman, On e-mail**

It is really shocking news to me that suicide bombings have been started by fundamentalists in Bangladesh. The death of the renowned political figure like Mr. Kibria and several attempts to kill Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina have proved that it is the work of an extremist group under the umbrella of an influential group.

It seems that more bombing will be taking place

them, bestowed all the 'ahallad' on the militants and tolerated all their misdeeds. And now the country is in turmoil. Insecurity is written on the face of every citizen. Yet, we shall overcome!

M. Nurul Huda, Ex. IGP in his article captioned 'confronting religious extremism' in DS- November 30 has presented a pragmatic work plan for the annihilation of the terrorists. M. Harisur Rahman - DS-25 Nov. and M. Khan- DS 28 Nov.- in 'letter to the editor page' elaborated upon the pointlessness of Madrassah education in Bangladesh and also recommended solutions towards integration of 'Madrassah' education with the mainstream education system. The suggestions are worth taking into cognisance, and executed. So far, the BNP has been beating around the bush, and hollow words and rhetoric dominated their action plans. People do not trust them as they kept on denying the very existence of the terrorists. They are too much obsessed with the 4% vote of 'Jamaat'.

We assume this as the last chance for the BNP to rise to the occasion and prove their sincerity in rooting out the problem.. The terrorists ought to be hit very hard and deserve to be completely annihilated from this land of secular, tolerant people. We need to build a peaceful, safe and prosperous country for our future generations.

**SN Mamoon, Dhaka**

First, I would like to thank DS for giving me this opportunity to convey my feelings to you. I am very much impressed with how professional DS has been in providing its readers with real information, it is commendable journalism.

I am asking a question. Are these fundamentalist JMB men sheltered by the government, if so why? Many people are asking what is the benefit of sheltering the JMB? I have been curious about this issue and did some analysis and found that there could some particular benefits for the government to have these terror attacks at this certain point of time. We have all seen that the government has sheltered and helped the JMB to mature over some period of time. It has been seen that Bangla Bhai used to hold his public speech with police protection and also his goons used to do motorcycle parades with police protection! There are countless photo evidences to prove this point. Reports say the second in command of Bangla Bhai was caught by Rab, but had to be released after a call from a particular place. Why was he released so quickly? Who were after it?

**Tanvir Ahmed**  
Gulshan, Dhaka

# Talking to insurgents!



At a national reconciliation conference in Cairo last week, Iraq's President Jalal Talabani said that he was willing to speak to insurgents and those that are involved in resisting US troops within Iraq. Talabani went on to say "If those who describe themselves as the Iraqi resistance want to contact me, they are welcome".

This follows similar reports, which emerged earlier this year of how US defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, facilitated regular contacts between the Iraqi government and insurgents.

The admission and willingness of the US, and its allies such as the Iraqi government, to talk and negotiate with those that are militarily opposing it flies in the face of the oft repeated mantra that 'we don't talk to terrorists' and contradicts the West's moral superiority in claiming not to negotiate with those that oppose it by military means.

Examples abound of western governments who have had elaborate dealings with 'terrorists' and groups engaged in material combat such as America's support of paramilitary organisations in Latin America during the 1970's and 80's, the behind the scenes negotiations with the Iranian hostage takers by the Reagan administration and Britain's talks with Sinn Fein and the IRA prior to the IRA's denouncement of the armed struggle. Indeed, since the Iraq war many European countries have given into the financial and logistical demands of the captors