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## Independence *and* Mujib

This is the nation's disgrace that its citizens are being deprived of remembering and paying tributes to their beloved leader, father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the day of independence. The observance of the day without his name revered and his contribution recalled is a shame to the nation.

This day of independence is a glory and joy for everybody. But the state is shamelessly confining it to the supporters of the parties in power with their manufactured history of our freedom. So the other half of the popula-

tion are saddened. But they know the truth that this day of independence was/is the fruit of none but Sheikh Mujib's relentless struggle that he had waged against the Pakistani domination for long 23 years when he courted jail, faced treason charges (Agartala Conspiracy Case) and finally taken prisoner to be tried. His was the leadership that only comes on par with that of Mahatma Gandhi of India, Soekarno of Indonesia and Nelson Mandela of South Africa who all fought political battles against the tyranny of colonial rule, and finally got their coun-

tries freed. The world history therefore honoured Sheikh Mujib as the founder of this nation as it did for the above leaders. For his achievement of independence for the people, called Bangalees, Sheikh Mujib was adjudged the greatest ever Bangalee. Sheikh Mujib ceased to be the sole property of AL, and became the most admired Bangalee. It is our misfortune that the BNP knowing full well what is true and what is not, could not rise above partisan hubris and pay due respect to the man whose love for his people was infinite and that is why, at his call, first on the 7

March and then in the midnight of 25 March 1971 they joined the Liberation War.

History will reject its distortion and the detractors will learn the lessons of history after paying much for the lies they are harbouring. American poet philosopher Santyana's saying seems worth quoting here, "Those who forget the past will be condemned to relive it."

**Ahmed Niaz**  
Shekherterk, Mohammadpur, Dhaka

## Uncertainty in politics

The AL and its left leaning allies have been demanding reform to caretaker govt. and the Election Commission. According to them, No fair and free election would be possible under the present system. On the other hand, the BNP run government stated that if they (AL) really wanted any reform, they had to table their proposal before parliament.

On February 2, the AL placed its much-talked about 31 point demand or reform proposals before parliament. In the last session of parliament, the PM assured the opposition that they would form a committee where members would be selected from both the BNP and the AL and they would discuss the issue. But the PM did not clarify in her speech when and where the meeting would be held. There is mounting tension, confusion, and uncertainty in the political arena. Anyway, the earlier the government takes the decision and comes forward to solve this

problem, the better it will be for a free and fair election that people and the civil society are looking forward to.

**Md Zoned Emran**  
University of Dhaka

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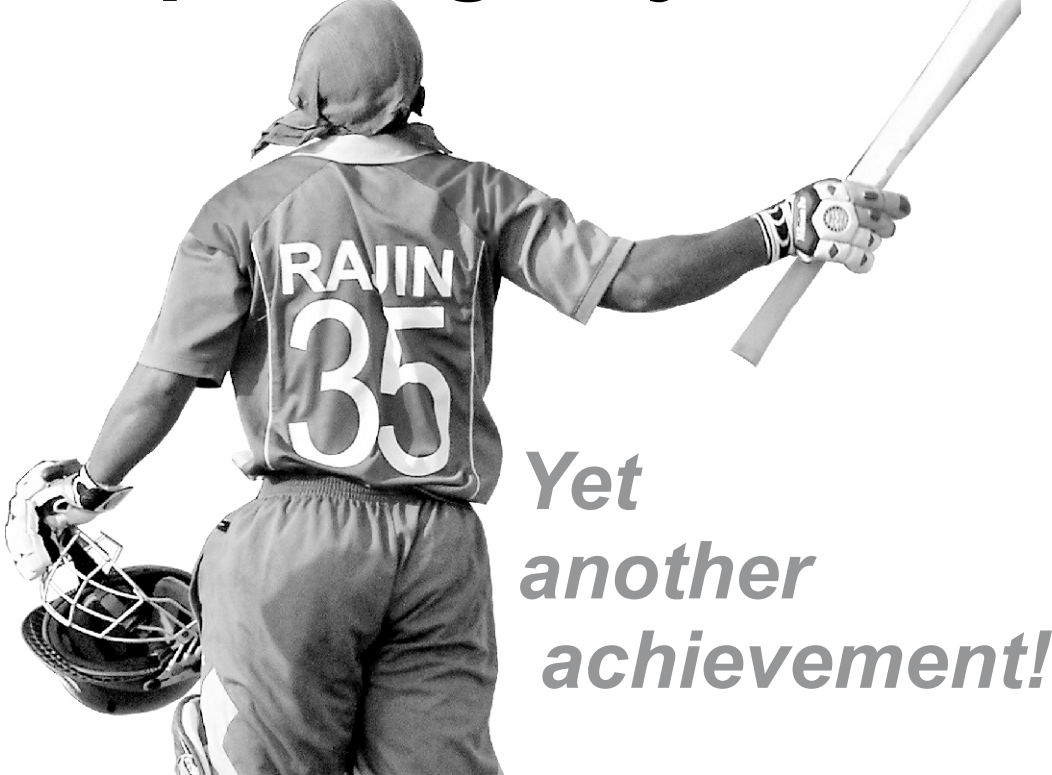
"I hope after the elections, no matter who comes to power the political parties would be able to reduce their differences and work-together because the challenges before Bangladesh are enormous," said the Commonwealth Secretary General during his visit to Bangladesh.

Now it is a question to the politicians of Bangladesh: Have you realised the importance of working together to build the nation?

**Balanam Roy Sumon**  
Lalmatia, Dhaka



## A sporting Rajin Saleh



Yet another achievement!

Three cheers for the wonder boy Rajin Saleh! No, it is not for any of his superb performances in the recently concluded series against Sri Lanka or in the ongoing series against Kenya. His performance these days are pretty ordinary. Consequently, he is regularly on and off the field. But what amazed me, like many others, were his sports-manship and his image of an honest cricketer. Yes, I am talking about his true sportsman like gesture in the field during the third one dayer against Kenya when he came to the field as a substitute player. 'It is a tremendous catch' that was what the TV commentators said, but when Rajin Saleh got up from the field he himself signalled that it was 'not out'. Bangladesh team was almost celebrating and everybody took it as a surprise. I had the opportunity to watch the TV replays and, as commentators mentioned, it was very difficult to discard the appeal of the rest of the team. But Rajin Saleh was adamant and the batsman survived. This is a very rare site in cricket these days. "He could easily say he did not know what happened and the third umpire would have real difficulties to say 'no' to the appeal for out", the commentators said. Rajin by his commendable gesture proved once again the old proverb that cricket is a gentleman's game.

It reminds me of the incident where the so-called 'honest' Pakistani cricketer Rashid Latif picked up the ball from the ground and made a strong appeal for caught behind against a Bangladeshi batsman and the umpire at the other end obliged. But the TV replay showed a different picture and Mr. Latif got duly punished, thanks to the ICC. Rajin Saleh, my son, keep up the spirit. You are an excellent example in the society where

social values are gradually decaying. One day you may decide to quit cricket to pursue other priorities of life, but I am sure, your honest and wonderful gesture would ever be remembered by the cricket loving people of Bangladesh.

**Dr. Syed Kamaluddin Ahmed**

Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka

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Having batted with tremendous passion and determination, the Tigers outwitted the visitors in every department of the game. Having set an almost unassailable target of 302 in 50 over, the Tigers never looked off the course of winning, and drove home a creditable victory. I heartily congratulate the Tigers on having crossed the 300 mark for the first time in an ODI.

I would also like to add that Bangladesh should frequently play sides like Kenya and get used to winning, rather than always play and lose to top teams and get disheartened. Overall, thumbs up to the BCB--keep it up in the future.

**Mohammed Fahim Hara**  
Universal Tutorial, Dhaka

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Bangladesh cricket team showed an outstanding perfor-

mance against Kenya crushing them 4-0, which is also a sweet revenge for their past defeats. This achievement will inspire the Tigers to do better in future. As a Test-playing nation, Bangladesh team was severely blasted by some quarters that they couldn't play competitive cricket in the international arena. But the recent performances against Sri Lanka and Kenya gave the critics the right answer.

Bangladesh outplayed Kenya in all the matches and completed the series in grand style. The boys performed well in all departments including batting, bowling and fielding. There was a century by Razin Saleh, first five-wicket haul by Rafique, consistent batting by Sharier Nafees and many other positive results from this series.

I would like to congratulate Bangladesh cricket team on their great success and hope that they will continue this dazzling performance in future.

**Mohammad Abdullah-Al-Mamun**  
University of Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

### A f g h a n A b d u r Rahman

Recently, in Afghanistan a man named Abdur Rahman was tried in court.

His fault was that he converted to Christianity. If he is found guilty, he may be executed. I am curious about how my fellow Muslims are going to react to it. Are they going to come down to streets in protest for saving this poor man's life? Can it be considered outrageous that in a Muslim country, a Muslim cannot convert to any other religion without fear of reprisal? We keep on saying that Islam is a religion of peace but when it comes to show the attributes of true peacefulness in voicing different opinions, our true identity is exposed.

I would like to see the same outrage as the blasphemous cartoon generated on this occasion also. Anyone in a civil society can choose whatever religion one wishes to. It cannot be one-way street for Muslims and two for others. It is hypocrisy to say Islam is a religion of peace and keep quiet when our fellow Muslims are involved in barbaric acts like this. If we want anyone to respect our religion, we need to be an example of a respectable tolerant society. We cannot pretend to be victims all the time. Also those of us who are thinking of establishing Islamic rule think hard as to the people who are going to rule. With this type of mindset we will go back to barbaric ages faster than we can even imagine.

We have to remember that even if the West is bad that does not make us better Muslims unless we can exhibit the acts of goodness at all levels.

Pointing out the evils of the West does not help us progress. True and prosperous civilisations compete with each other, do not clash.

**M. Hassan**  
Plano, TX USA

### Militancy

Top militant Sk. A. Rahman and his second in command the so called Bangla Bhai have been arrested. The nation is waiting to see the fate of those militant goons. Our govt should not play any hide and seek with those culprits. Immediate punishment should be awarded to them without wasting any more time and that will help a lot to wipe out any sort of militancy in Bangladesh.

**Peerzada Syed Rofiqul Hussain**  
Hiala Shaheb Bari, Habigonj

### Why this change?

In our childhood days, we used to know our cricket board as BCCB. Interestingly, the name of the board has undergone change twice in the last few years. When our national cricket team started to make a mark in the international cricket, the then board officials changed the name of the board to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to run the board, in their words, professionally. I wonder whether

name has anything to do with professionalism.

Ironically, the name BCB was short lived. With the change in our government, new officials, most of whom had little cricket background, captured the cricket board. They were not amused by the name given by their predecessors and preferred to go back to the old name. However, there is confusion among the sports fraternity since the media uses both the BCCB and BCB.

Interestingly, our board is again planning to have a new name - Cricket Bangladesh, following the footsteps of Cricket Australia. BCCB or BCB, whatever the name may be, definitely owes us an explanation as to why this name change or what good this name change will bring.

**Mohibul**  
Dhaka

### PM's India trip

The outcome of the recent visit of our PM to India was published in our national dailies in different ways, mostly according to the party affiliations of the dailies.

I believe the media should be objective here. Otherwise, we get confused. The Daily Star's role is commendable and responsible in this regard. Please keep it up!

**Islam**  
On e-mail

### Attention:

#### Telephone authorities

Let me take the pleasure of thanking Ms Mahbuba Jannat for her write up in The Daily Star on March 22, 2006 entitled "Ghostly phone bills in Badda". God alone knows how many T&T subscribers are suffering because of T&T mismanagement. Why cannot the organisation control the unscrupulous linemen? Similar incidents had taken place with my telephone (I don't want to disclose the number, lest the line goes off for good). I was away for about a month and the telephone was not used at all but at the end of the month I received a telephone bill of Tk 530.00. I am lucky the bill was not in thousands. Currently, the telephone has a noise without a dial tone. I can neither receive calls nor make calls. Interestingly, it occurs from the last working hours of every Thursday and without any complaint the dial tone is restored on Sunday morning. My telephone is locked with 01 code barring all outgoing calls. I am waiting for the monthly bill.

It is for certain my fortune will be no better than those unfortunate subscribers of Badda area. Will the telephone authorities kindly see what is going wrong?

**Shams**  
Baridhara, Dhaka

### When shall we respond?

We, as a nation have witnessed / encountered many calamities natural and man-made that

affected the stability of different sectors in the country in the recent past. These phenomena encompassed almost all levels of our social life. An all engulfing corruption, violation of human rights, a spiralling price hike of essentials, growing tribalism and more frighteningly the rise of religious terrorism, to mention some that have almost eaten up the social fabric based on a secular democratic frame.

All these unnatural growths of the dark depict the dire condition that we are trapped in. A cynical time it is.

Strange is the fact that whenever anything bad or sinister takes place in individual or collective confines you see to your utter frustration and helplessness that the authorities concerned remain utterly indifferent showing their bare-back to you. Justice the mirage-- in modern times, is transformed into a strange phenomenon it is delayed only to be left into oblivion later or just to be blatantly ignored. Talk of conscience- a stale or obsolete abstraction! Democracy - a naked duplicity. Where are we going? We are, in fact, going nowhere- trapped in abysmal intolerance.

Haven't we seen drowning of thousands of human beings in the ferry or launch capsizes - road accidents and collapsing buildings? Haven't we seen how the roaring fire engulf the helpless innocents trapped at places called garment factories? The list includes recent fires at two garment factories in Chittagong with lots more to happen any time.... you never can tell.

Unfortunately the fact that this kind of fatal destruction inflicted by the sheer indifference of the people on command is taking place one after another at just regular intervals like that of a drama - tragedies though- yet no proper action is taken to uproot these ills once and for all.

Yet we've to keep breathing think positive to bring about some good for our motherland that got its sacred independence in this very sacred month back in 1971. We, in fact, can keep our glories intact from being adulterated by the forces of the dark or the consciously unconscious behaviours by the people in a pretended sleep-the opportunists devoid of the essence of being humans...who deserve to be sorted out and taken to task with a fare dose of moral thrashing to bring them back to their normal selves!

And now that fire and building collapse are a common phenomenon, it is high time that the government does its duty that had been entrusted to it by the people, to ensure an atmosphere where people won't die under such unfortunate circumstances.

The time is turning out to be a bleak one.

**Rafiqul Islam Rime**  
Agrabad, Chittagong

### Tata's investment

### plan

The government of Bangladesh is to take a vital decision regarding the investment of Tata, which may well have a profound impact on the economy.

Recently, renowned economist Wahiduddin Mahmud submitted his report to BOI. This report contains vital issues that the government must address before an agreement could be reached.

First and foremost is the issue of gas price. Tata is actually investing here to take advantage of availability of gas and a huge market. So they need to pay the proper price if fairness is to be endured in the deal. The government of Bangladesh should not compromise regarding the price of gas.

On a positive note, investment by Tata may send a positive signal abroad.

As a result, flow of FDI is likely to soar up in the near future. Thus benefiting the economy in the long run. There are also additional benefits in the form of improvement of balance of payment and job creation.

Investment by Tata may also help to mend ties with India.

**Zahedul Amin**  
IBA, DU

### Bangladesh moving ahead

Private sector is the backbone of economic growth around the world.

What is not our national interest?

- Inefficient public sectors
- Undemocratic government
- Irresponsible opposition
- Unnecessary haral
- Uneducated leadership
- White collar thieves in government and business who steal people's money.

You can name a lot more. We all observed how politics played a destructive role in Bangladesh. We have to overcome our narrow interest and partisanship. The interest of the country should be above our partisan politics and personal interest. People are smarter than politicians. They can recognise what is right and what is wrong. When time comes they will choose right over wrong. We should look back and realise what mistake we made after independence. Thank god, we turned 180 degree to the direction of growth and prosperity. We have to look after our nation's interest, not the interest of our partisan politics.

We are growing economically, politically and socially and moving to develop a civil society.

We have huge trade imbalance with India, China, Thailand, even Pakistan. Only private sectors can compete in the world market. Instead of importing goods and services from those countries, we should create an environment so that those countries can set up industries in Bangladesh to serve the local market. We can kill two birds with one stone - job growth

and reducing trade gap.

**Ekram Beal**  
Look-East Club

### Desa and corruption

Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa), though plagued by unbridled corruption, had been enjoying the cash incentive provided to them as bonus by the government for 10 years until 2001 (DS report March 24). The reason being this incentive was introduced so that it may help to root out unabated corruption and help Desa to get into systematic billing and alleviate the nagging systems loss. However, the scenario is totally different at Desa. As the saying goes 'You can never change the colour of a coal as much as you wash it.' Desa is no exception to it. The company is taking advantage of the bonus preparing books showing made-up figures of recovering unpaid electricity bills. They even did not hesitate not to bill hundreds of companies for several years and their meter readers also started issuing fictitious bills in order to alleviate systems loss. However, fortunately or unfortunately the scam has been detected recently.

While accepting his inability to contain corruption the chairman of Desa stated that his hands are tied to unionism. Whatever the case may be we strongly recommend that the government take drastic action against the corrupt elements.

**Humayun Hyder**  
Zigatola, Dhaka

### No price hike!

Our venerable ministers that there is no price hike in our country have bombarded us. Do they really go shopping with the general people? Or they get the information from some of their salaried staff only?

**Arif**  
Florida, USA

### Citizens' group in BD politics

In 1971 we fought to build an independent Bangladesh...not like this one.

I, days back, begged pardon to my 15 year old child for what we have failed to achieve.

I congratulate you all for taking the right steps and would like to work for bringing back sane politics to the country.

**Ahsan Zaman**  
Mymensingh