

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.



PHOTO: AFP

# Kansat and government

We were watching the Kansat situation in two satellite television channels--ntv and ATN, and also listening to BBC radio for a third eye view. None of them are projecting any good news for the Kansat people. Apparently, the government had failed to assess the situation when trouble started in January, which was followed by a unconcerned attitude of the government. It is becoming a regular and routine practice of the government not to accept any comments against any wrong done by it. This attitude was shown by a minister during a BBC World programme. I think it will help the government if they can accept positive criticism and act accordingly. Nothing is limitless, the government attitude will result in serious credibility problem for the government itself. We think senior leaders of the government, whom we very often see and listen to on TV, have the responsibility to keep the people informed about their position on any national issue, if necessary going beyond party lines. It is needless to say that the country is above politics. We hope the government will take a positive and appropriate initiative to resolve the Kansas problem on a permanent basis. Already, it has turned into a political hotbed. By the way I want to ask television networks that what you have ever been telling and showing on Kansat are no doubt good and quality journalism but who are your target viewers?

**A Bangladeshi abroad**  
*On e-mail*

Thanks to the government for the progress in resolving the Kansat crisis. We wish the rest of the issues would be solved amicably. We hope the concerned parties have learnt that there is no alternative to amicable solution.

Like religious hardliners, we have hardcore political leaders in the mainstream of politics. It is necessary to keep them away while dealing with politics and the people. We have observed that the process of peaceful solution to political problems is downplayed by primitive and harmful comments on the issue.

We are also observing emergence of a third force under the banner of intellectuals. I hope that their agenda will be clear and transparent to the people so that they can play a meaningful and non-partisan role in the matter.

**A reader**  
*On e-mail*

The police brutalities like we have been witnessing in recent times in Bangladesh are outrageous and out of proportion.

These have to come to an end immediately if we are to prove ourselves to be civilised. The people from all walks of life must demonstrate and protest against the barbaric actions of the police and the ruling party cadres. We simply cannot go back to stone ages.

I wonder if there is any system in Bangladesh to safeguard its citizens. Is the famous phrase

"Government is for the people....." wrong for Bangladesh?

If the government cares about people's welfare or its mandate, then it must stop the brutalities right away.

People need to bring the inefficiencies of the government and the local administration to rule of court. It is a shame that people of an independent country are facing such criminalities of their own government.

**Mamun Ahmed**  
*Las Vegas, NV, USA*

The recent atrocities committed by the police in Chapainawabganj are horrifying. Opening fire on a crowd of demonstrators is not only brutal and inhumane but also a blatant disregard of the democratic rights of the people. The involved police officers and magistrates should be held accountable for their actions. No one is above the law - not even the law enforcement agencies should get away with violating the law. People responsible for the barbaric acts in Chapainawabganj must be prosecuted.

Newspapers and other media should not be afraid of condemning such brutalities in a strong language. Your commentary on April 14, 2005 is a good beginning in this regard. However, the tone of the commentary was pessimistic.

Over the last four months, I did not notice any strong condemnation either from the media or the political parties. Even the left parties have largely ignored the issue.

It seems that beyond Kansat, life is going on as usual. Of course, the ruling party would want to downplay the significance of the events in Kansat. But, how come there is no public outcry about the issue? How come there are no mass rallies all over the county condemning the brutalities?

How come the massacre of our citizens is such a non-issue?

I am particularly distressed by the fact that there is a certain degree of tolerance of police brutality by the public. We have come to accept murders committed by Rab to be very normal.

Abuse of power is a dangerous thing. The abusers will love to move on to the bigger and more horrific crimes, if they are not challenged. We have to protect our democratic rights to speak out against the things that bother us. We have to protect our rights to be safe from the violence on the part of the state.

We cannot afford to sit quiet and mind our own business.

**Humayun Kabir**  
*On e-mail*

## This Ponting is that Ponting

Go Aussies go! Now it is time to say the same about Bangladesh, go Tigers go! Bangladesh started as an underdog but at the end of the opening day there was a mammoth total on the scoreboard of Fatullah stadium. This time players showed their patience to stay till the end of the day with five wickets remaining. And on the second day they reached a tremendous total of 427. The bowlers' contribution put the Aussies under pressure with the scorecard showing 145/6.

The way Bangladesh were playing it was hard to believe that they were the newborn child of Test cricket. Who knows, what will happen next? Actually, we won the match when we saw on TV the frown on Ponting's forehead. This is the same Ponting who criticised the Test status of Bangladesh cricket.

**Rajiul Hasan, Sydney**



PHOTO: AFP

## Even neo-cons have changed

With many top former US generals calling for Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld to resign, the crisis in Iraq brought about by the US military intervention, first in the name of dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and when no such weapons were found, in the name of bringing democracy, seems to be entering a new phase. On both counts, the Bush administration has led his country to a quagmire with no solution in sight.

Even some neo-cons, who encouraged the Bush administration to take such a move, now, think it was a mistake to go into war in Iraq. One such prominent neo-con is Francis Fukuyama, a former senior State Department official, who first propounded his theory of the victory of the US-style capitalist democracy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union collapsed by the late 1980s, Fukuyama came up with a theory which made him a celebrity overnight.

"What we are witnessing," he wrote in an article entitled "The End of History", "is not just the end of the Cold War, or a pass-

ing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."

It was the summer of 1989 and the Berlin Wall was about to fall. The velvet revolution in Eastern Europe followed in short order and the Soviet empire was to collapse. It was an exhilarating time for neo-conservatism and Fukuyama was encouraged to turn his article into a book, which became a runaway bestseller. Although Margaret Thatcher famously remarked, 'end of history? Beginning of nonsense,' Fukuyama became a darling of the neo-conservatives who were articulating their ideas about what they called Project for the New American Century. Their ideas were centred on the premise that America should use its overwhelming economic, political and military powers to bring down the remaining autocratic regimes and reshape them on its own image.

It was Francis Fukuyama who wrote a letter in 1998 to then President Bill Clinton on behalf of the Project for the New American Century, urging him to overthrow Saddam Hussein over his rows with the weapons inspectors. Among other signatories were present Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and current World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz. Not surprisingly, Rumsfeld has become the principal cheerleader for Bush's decision to invade Iraq. Naturally, Fukuyama also celebrated the US invasion of Iraq.

Now he thinks that the war in Iraq is wrong and will have disastrous consequences if not quickly resolved. In his new book After the Neo-cons, published recently, Fukuyama says: "I have concluded that neo-conservatism, both as a symbol and a body of thought, has evolved into something I can no longer support." He thinks that Iraq war is a bad war and that democracy cannot be imposed at gunpoint.

It is now clear that democracy works best when it is home grown, not when outsiders do impose it. By trying to



bring democracy through the point of a gun, the Bush administration might have undermined the very existence of Iraq as a unified nation. The once-dominant Sunni minority have shown no interest to submit to the rule of Shi'ite majority in the name of democracy and the now-dominant Shi'ite majority are not interested in any compromise which they fear might bring back the Sunni domination and the Kurds are looking for an opportunity to secede.

Interestingly, Iraq's Shi'ite prime minister Jaafari, who gained office through the democratic process, is now warning the United States to stop interfering with the country's political process.

The result has been a never-ending bloodletting among various groups with the American forces caught in the middle.

**Mahmood Elahi**  
*Iris Street, Ottawa, Canada*

### Bangla Motor crossing

We are all aware of the recent death of a senior journalist at the Bangla Motor crossing. This was not the first time that such an accident took place. About three years ago a brilliant graduate engineer, only 27 years old (son of a poor school teacher), died at the same spot, again knocked down by a bus.

I was very pleased when the Mayor in a recent announcement declared that the junction would be widened and made safer for the pedestrians and for smooth running of the vehicles. He also declared that two buildings on northeast & northwestern sides of the square would be demolished for the purpose.

To my utter surprise, I noticed that the completion of the under-construction building on northeastern side is going on in full swing!

Does it mean that the Mayor's announcement has been overturned & cancelled? Or Rajuk does not give any heed to such an important announcement?

If you investigate that side of the corner, how come Rajuk could give permission for such a building in the first place? The footpath is narrow and there is so much obstruction in that corner that even two people cannot pass through the footpath.

I appeal to the Mayor and Rajuk officials to look into the matter.

**M N Alam**  
*Dhaka*

**TIN certificate and land registration**

TIN certificate has become obligatory for registration of any land and building, whatever it may be, and the law ministry introduced it in 2004. Now we should know what is a TIN certificate? TIN probably was introduced by the NBR for the genuine taxpayers and it was mandatory for the business circles, garments owners, traders, importers and exporters of all kinds. Like the trade licence the TIN [Tax identification No.] certificate is a must.

But under what calculation of our law ministry it was decided that each and every purchaser of any property must submit a TIN certificate?

Here I would like to narrate the case of one widow, who after selling her land for Tk 5 lakh had purchased one small flat with the same amount, and during registration she was asked to submit a TIN certificate and she obviously told the registration clerk of Tejgaon that she had no TIN and she would not be able to submit any certificate.

Then the clerk asked her to pay Tk 5 thousand and accordingly she paid the money for TIN and the next day her land was registered with a TIN certificate. Thus it is assumed that the law ministry has indirectly granted some incentive to the mobile tax advisors and lawyers along with the NBR to earn a lot by issuing so called TIN certificates.

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

**Chittagong airport saved!**

Thanks to the Mayor of Chittagong for saving CTG Int'l

Airport from foreign management.

Question: What is the criterion in policy making when sensitive installations are handed over to foreign groups?

**A Mahasen**  
*Dhaka*

### Save us

The events are degenerating into a man made disaster for the country. When will sense prevail in our politicians' minds to save the country? Around five million Bangladeshi people who are residing abroad are contributing billions of valuable foreign currency to the nation. Our sisters in the garments sector are performing their role with their hard work in an unsafe environment. Farmers are feeding the country.

I would like to know what our politicians are doing except interrupting this progress by giving 'karmasuchi' or in the name of public order fooling the whole nation just to grab power.

**Dr. Md Mozahedul Islam**

*On e-mail*

### Keep an eye on teenagers

It would be tough to find out a single locality in the city without a cyber cafe. Still our high school level is not so much updated like in Europe. And our study method is not based on assignment, so we don't need to collect information from the net. But if you go to an cyber cafe you could find most of the users are youngsters. Just think for a while what are they doing there? They can easily get through taboo sites & get sexual entertainments from there. Are not they

### What's going on?

How is it possible that in a democratic country people are being killed like birds? Perhaps the whole country is lost in a deep slumber; nobody is uttering a word.

The government is violating every norm of a democratic system. Enough is enough!

**Dr. Ujjwal**  
*Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital, Dhaka*

**Not the worst of times!**

I am reluctant to question an educated reader who writes a letter to the editor but Dr. Ujjwal recently wrote: "Prof. Yunus is

looking for honest men. The truth is that we are passing through the worst times in our history. The truth is that this time is not to be compared with any other time. The truth is that the powers that be are involved in activities that violate all democratic norms and ideas."

While it may be true these are not the best times, Dr. Ujjwal's comments that these are the worst times in our history and that this time is not to be compared with any other time means that he is not doing justice to history. To make his comments have ANY validity, Dr. Ujjwal should provide some basis for his comments other than "The truth is that the powers that be are involved in activities that violate all democratic norms and ideas."

That last statement isn't necessarily THE truth; it's simply an unexplained statement.

**M.M. Haque, On e-mail**

### Politics and nation

I think if the political parties take the solution of every crisis as the nation's interest and seek for a resolution like the reform of electoral system and the caretaker government, it will be beneficial for the nation.

**MD. Mehedi Hassan**  
*Ibrahimpur, Dhaka Cantt, Dhaka*

## Baisakh in Old Dhaka

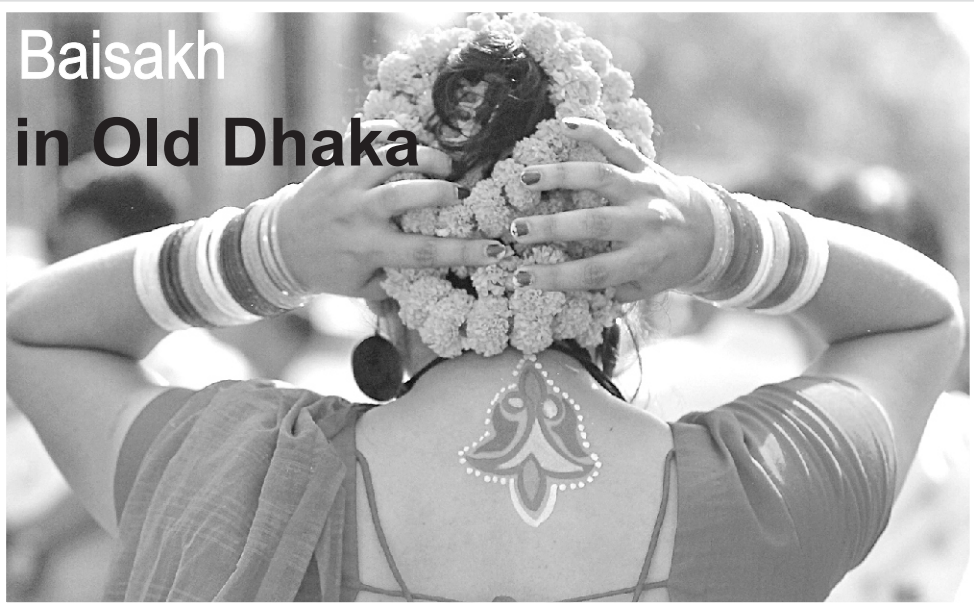


PHOTO: AFP

The tradition of Pahela Baisakh celebrations in Old Dhaka has been changing with time. Old is always gold. The inhabitants who live here year after year have unusual traditions of their own. 'Dhakayas' used to celebrate Pahela Baisakh by opening fresh ledger, which is known as 'Halkhata'. They calculated the whole year's incomes and expenditures.

But things are a bit different now. People usually spend the day having a lot of fun.

**Mohammad Sultan**  
*On e-mail*