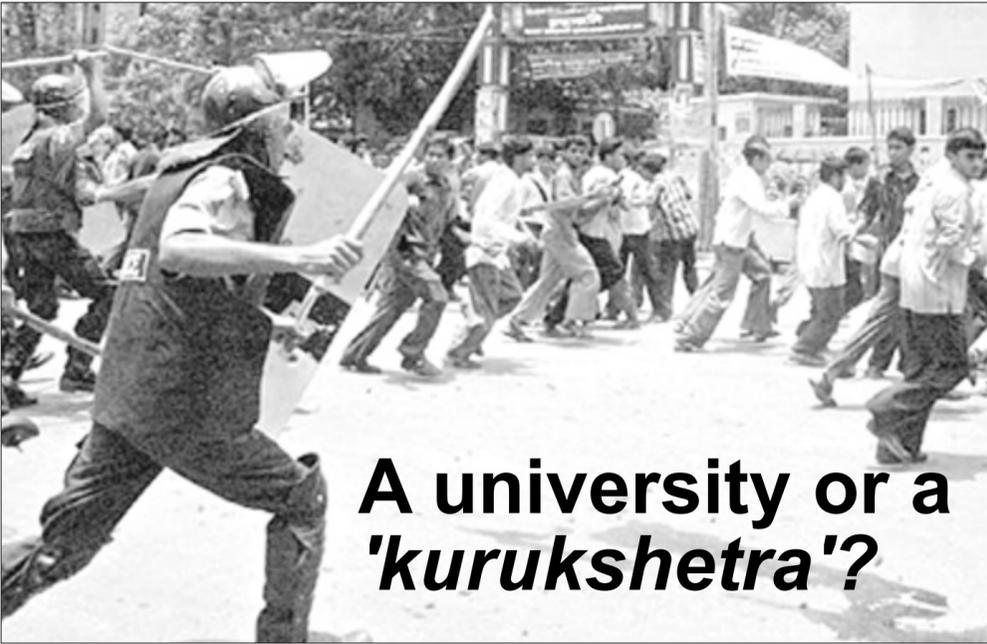


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



## A university or a 'kurukshetra'?

We've got a new university, which is "Jagannath University". Previously being a college under the National University, it was declared as an autonomous university. But with the declaration, the student wings of different political parties became busy to be the 'king' of the campus. Now

what is going on the campus? Should we call it a university or a 'kurukshetra'?

A university is a nation's identity. If the universities are like some other corrupt institutions, then how can we claim ourselves to be civilised? 'Attacking' each

other instead of 'studying' is the characteristic feature of campus life in our context.

But we do not want this. We want to see our universities in the list of 500 top universities of the world, at least.  
**MD. Niazul Islam Khan, BUET**

### Tsunami deaths

A devastating tsunami into beach resorts and fishing villages on Java Island on July 17 killed more than 350 people and left more than 160 missing. The fury of the tsunami was triggered by an undersea earthquake of the magnitude of 7.7 on the Richter scale.

We are extremely shocked by the tragedy that struck Indonesia. We condole the deaths.

**Emran Chittagong**

### Great Italians

Finally, the greatest show of earth came to an end and the Azzurries showed their ultimate vigour, courage and willpower to achieve the unforgettable victory. It was really great. From the beginning of the World Cup, the Italy team played very well and they always showed that they had a huge chance to be the winners.

Though there were lots of other favourite teams, there was something special in the Azzurries.

**Shoaib M. Siddiqui Dhaka**

### Could we be like that?

Just a couple of days back I came to Toronto as an immigrant. I was staying temporarily in one of my friends' house. As usual I was walking and getting myself familiar with the roads and shopping places. I went to a shop called 'one dollar

shop', whatever you buy, pay \$1 for each item. With some items buyers are paying 15% tax and with some no tax. I bought an item and got confused with the coin I had, loony or toony. Nothing was written on it. Then I asked the lady in front of me, she said it was a loony. She also said I had to pay 1.15\$ for that. I was searching if I had some coins or not. After a while the same lady appeared in front of me and was giving me some coin that would help me to pay the price. I had to tell the lady that I had enough money to pay but I was looking for some coins to make 1.15.

Later I thought where do we stand in our country. I am sure no one would come in that way, rather people would try to harass me in a situation like this.

**Parvez Akhtar On-email**

### Why Ershad?

Day by day, most of the third world countries are going ahead, despite their limitations. On the other hand, Bangladesh is lagging behind due to its poor political culture. Nur Hossain, Dr. Milon and many other unknown men died for the establishment of democracy in the country. And General Ershad was the man responsible for military rule for eight years at a stretch. So why should we bring him back to politics?

**MAH Nazim, University of Dhaka**  
**Woes of divorcees**

I read your newspaper on a regular basis. I believe you need to write an editorial column on the current divorce practice in Bangladesh. Just in last seven months I have heard about 5 cases personally where the husband went on a pleasure trip to Bangladesh with his family for a short time and on his way back to America, left the wife and children with a notarised divorce letter, saying "I am divorcing my wife under oath". Because of my job responsibility in the US I receive some of the cases where it involves immigration issues of the spouses. In most cases the wife does not even bother to come forward and fight for her legal rights. There is law that protects these women and children. There are free humanitarian societies available for assistance. Please let the government of Bangladesh know about it and come forward to stop this inhuman practice through public news in newspapers, radio and TV. Let these criminals, who are divorcing their wives in violation of Bangladesh laws and regulations, and fleeing the country, face what they deserve.

I personally know one case where the husband (US citizen) took his wife (with Green Card/permanent resident) and their 8 year old son to Bangladesh and came back leaving a divorce letter with the driver of his father-in-law. He then went back and married secretly and came back to the US. His new wife is pregnant now. The divorced wife's family is very shy to seek legal help. She came

back to America with her son and found out her husband's family had taken all her necessary belongings leaving behind some remnants in the house. Now, the divorced wife is raising the child all by herself in Loss Angeles, CA.

Please let the parents know in Bangladesh when they are selecting husbands for their daughters looking at foreign passport or Green Card about this practice. Please let the humanitarian societies know what is going on. If the Bangladesh government and the US government work together on a treaty on family matter issues and extradition, it may help to reduce this practice. Also, if this news is circulated all over the country, it may reduce the practice too. At least the divorced wives can come forward to claim their rights.

**Shameema A. Rahman On e-mail**

### Issue of warrant in civil cases

One item that has struck me as odd, with regard to the news of warrants being issued against the prominent personalities in Dhaka, is the whole idea of warrants being issued in civil cases. I do not know if there are other countries where this happens, but there is something very illogical about this process. By definition, penalty in "civil" cases (defamation, etc) should be of a monetary nature. Therefore, possibility of jail sentences should not even appear. (Of course, some hundred years

ago, England used to have debtors' prison. Thankfully, that practice is looked back the same way that slavery is). Looking at the case at hand, here we have one person alleging and accusing others of defamation. Now, this allegation has not been proven in the court of law. And yet, warrants come out for their arrest. In criminal cases, the accused is often locked up even before his case is tried; but that happens because in the opinion of a judge the accused is considered a menace/threat to the society at large, and is, therefore, incarcerated. There is a logic to putting accused criminals behind the bar before the trial. However, I absolutely see no basis as to why the same should happen to people accused in civil cases.

What further intrigues me is the fact that it has not occurred to the lawmakers and law practitioners in Bangladesh that there is something very irrational and illogical about this practice! Perhaps it is time to take a second look at this portion of the law.

**Shabbir Parvez Oak Hill, VA, USA**

### Minister's interview

It was very fascinating to listen to the new political formula of Mr Huda, the communications minister, given during his interview with ntv. I, as an ordinary citizen, felt completely left out as far as the affairs of the government were concerned.

Mr Huda is a charismatic BNP leader known for his original views on certain matters, some of them controversial. We think it is time to look for a more constructive approach to strengthen democracy.

**A reader, On e-mail**

### Suggestion for EC

In the face of the miasma of dire controversies of bias and deliberate incompetence surrounding the Election Commission and the Chief Election Commissioner, they could invite the electoral authorities of India, the United States, Britain and perhaps Switzerland to audit the system (together with the concerned citizens of the Nagorik Committee and the Centre for Policy Dialogue) and ask the main political parties, both the opposition and the government, to designate representatives to participate in the audit. This is what the National Electoral Council of the much-maligned-by-the-US Hugo Chavez's Venezuela has done in the face of claims made by the opposition parties that his government was biased against them.

**Khurshid Hamid Retd. Ambassador Gulshan, Dhaka**

### A funny episode

It was 7.30 pm. All was quiet in Dewanhat. My colleague was taking rest in the flat alone. Suddenly, he heard some one knocking the door rampantly. No doubt it was the act of robbers who were trying to break the door. He took shelter in another room and locked the door inside. He screamed but no body heard. Rather, the robbers started to break the door by using hammer. He then called us by cell phone. Instantly we informed the police. Luckily we got both the assistant police commis-

sioner and OC of Double Mooring Police Station at the first try. They responded very quickly and rushed to the spot. They got there within 10 to 15 minutes as the flat was very near to Double Mooring Police Station. There they found a locker mechanic using all his efforts and technique to repair the lock of the flat where my poor colleague got stuck. In fact the landlord of the flat hired the mechanic to repair the lock of the next flat but the poor fellow mistakenly got the wrong flat and my timid colleague took the hitting and pushing of the mechanic as the act of robber to break through the door. You can imagine what happened next. I don't have the wit and writing power to describe it. May be it will remain a red-letter day for him as well as for us.

**Mohammad Zakir Hossain NBL, Agrabad Branch, Ctg.**

### CPD and Bol chief

I was alarmed at the response of Bol chief Mr. Mahmudur Rahman to the CPD. From your paper, I learned that arrest warrants had been issued against CPD board of directors for their negative evaluation of Bol.

Intimidation by government officials and ministers against those who speak out has unfortunately become the norm these days.

This is not only a threat to one of the most respected independent think tanks in the country, but also to any individual and organisation that does not sing the same tune as our government.

This sort of behaviour has to be condemned in the strongest terms by all well meaning citizens.

**Saleh Ahmed Tanveer Professor of Mathematics, The Ohio State University**

### High-rise buildings

The multi-storeyed buildings everywhere are congesting the sky of Dhaka. Don't the developers and the owners of the buildings have environmental knowledge? Has money made them blind? Can money save them from natural disasters? People are constructing buildings as though they are in a competition to make high-rise buildings to have the first prize.

Most of the places of Dhaka are now filled with new structures. There is no big playground left in the city. We will not be able to produce international standard cricketers and footballers in near future.

In comparison to the last few years, we can see that there is less rain this year in Dhaka, which is not a good sign at all.

RAJUK should play a fair role in this regard. They have to have a law for making buildings in the capital as it is in New Delhi in India. The common people also must be conscious about this so that they can make a good, beautiful and pollution free environment for the next generation.

Seeing the present condition of Dhaka, I would like to comment like Coleridge, "Buildings, buildings everywhere...."

**Mrinal Sarkar Lecturer in English College of Development Alternative Dhanmondi, Dhaka**

### Islamic finance and trade

A conference on Islamic finance and trade was held in London on 13-14 June 2006. It was organised by the Muslim Council of Britain under the patronage of Mr. Gordon Brown MP, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the British Govt. Mr. Brown informed the audience that in Bangladesh there are about 4 million children out of school and there are 8 million in Pakistan.

It is heartening to know that we have less non-school going children in Bangladesh than Pakistan. This sort of news really enhances the image of our country. The contributions of the government as well as our teachers are behind this success. Nobody can deny that the present government has achieved enormous success in eliminating the tradition of copying (nokol) in exams. It means that the govt. has no lack of sincerity in promoting education in the country. Now my concern is that, despite the sincerity and willingness, why the government has not accepted the demand of a huge number of teachers of Ebtadya Madrassahs as well as community schools? It was in the election manifesto of the BNP that the salaries of these teachers would be increased. On the other hand, to increase the honorarium of MPs and ministers was not in the manifesto but they have increased it. The government should have increased the salary of these neglected teachers. It is immaterial whether they are teachers of non-government schools or madrassahs, the important point is that they are teachers. They are doing a good job; they are contributing significantly to the overall education of the country. Furthermore, this was the government which had encouraged the setting up of community-schools, because every year, a large number of new children are seeking entry to primary schools. The government schools even by introducing double shifts are unable to enrol all of them.

Last of all, I would like to request the government to accept the demands of thousands of teachers. Otherwise, if they close their schools and madrassahs, its negative impact will undermine the education sector as whole. Moreover, the government would not be able to implement the slogan of Doha Declaration, i.e. "Education for all" by 2015.

**Mohd. Masud Rana Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Jeddah, Saudi Arabia**



## David Beckham

I noticed a very interesting letter about David Beckham on Friday last. The writer was absolutely right in his thoughts as Beckham is not the best player, he is not even as talented as many other players of the world. But for his flamboyant image and lavish way of living, and a bit of model type look, he is always in the limelight. Also important is the fact that his wife Victoria Adams is a renowned member of "Spice Girls" and is one of the most famous pop stars of the age and known as "Posh Spice". Beckham eventually managed to marry her and came to more intense focus.

Beckham lacked the talent to be an international level player but definitely he drew more attention than others, not for football skills but for other related matters. With due respect to David Beckham, I've to say he is a man who gets more coverage than he deserves.

**Sloppy Chap Dhanmondi, Dhaka**

## A football sensation

Zidane is among the best players in the history of football. His performance in the World Cup was exemplary, and the way he led his team to the final made him a hero. But his reaction to a personal insult during the final match was not expected, neither was what Materazzi did. Hence, Materazzi deserved to be punished for provoking and making harsh comments.

It is quite natural for one to lose temper on hearing personal comments. Moreover, Zidane is known for his bad temper. But we should look at it as a breakdown under pressure, rather than a negative act.

**Syed Nazmul Alam Gulshan-2, Dhaka**

## Tejgaon College

Tejgaon College presently located at Farmgate, the nerve centre of Dhaka city, has attained the age of 45 years. It started its journey as a night college in a school campus at Sadarghat. With stop-over at different points- Tejgaon Industrial Area, Alia Madrasa (Bakshi Bazar), Polytechnic School, Al-Razee Hospital Building and it has finally settled at Indira Road, Farmgate, Dhaka. It is now called a University College since it now offers Honours and Masters courses on 19/20 subjects under National University. From infrastructure and financial standing it may be assigned a grade-one position. No non-govt educational institution of Dhaka city is comparable with this college if structural developments and financial stability are considered. As many as 20/25 small colleges of suburban areas may run smoothly with the monthly establishment costs (salary and allowances) of this college. Anybody entering into the college must be surprised to see the infrastructure of the college. Established on over one acre of land, there are six multi-storeyed buildings- five six-storied buildings and one one-storied building- in addition to a good number of semi-pacca structures. If managed properly this college may develop within a very short time as a first grade seat of higher education. In spite of its excellent location well connected with all the areas of Dhaka city, the college is yet to gain the status befitting its potential.

**M Sadeq Chairman, Dept of Management, Tejgaon College, Farmgate, Dhaka**

# Education sector in disarray!



Following some successes through movements by different groups over their accumulated grievances early in the year, the teachers and employees of all levels of schools joined in phases the election year feast of strikes, marches and fast unto death and even the threat of self-immolation to realise their demands.

The participants in the first phase, non-government primary school teachers, received some fulfilment of their demands for which the government provided funds in the recently passed budget.

However, the later groups of strikers from the non-government secondary and higher secondary schools and colleges are now faced with a government stand that since the budget has already been passed for next year, it cannot find another Tk 750 crore to meet their main demand for 100 percent basic salary support from government sources.

While the impasse continues with closure of schools, and teachers and employees on the street, the students, their parents and the nation watch a sad spectacle of the most important nation-building sector pass-

ing through chaos. It is tragic that such restlessness and dislocations are occurring at a time when gradual improvement in high school education is taking place as reflected in SSC results and the students in general are moving out from politics to pay more attention to their studies. The timing and magnitude of such disruptions may appear to condemn us as a nation destined to be doomed in perpetual instability.

But a closer analysis would show that our problems are basically system-related, reflecting our 'Andolan' dominated policies of resolving disputes and problems. The demand and response system in our governance is dominated by our inaction till the grievances and problems are accumulated and the sufferers join the streets and make the operation of their sector no longer viable. Our policy makers wait till Andolans become politically costly for them, while the parties suffer and the nation loses. To avoid such situations, many nations have developed pragmatic ways of dealing with grievances in essential sectors like education, health, police and other vital

public services allowing several processes of negotiation, mediation, and finally arbitration so that the strike will not be necessary or will be forbidden.

We not only have failed to develop any such system of resolving legitimate grievances of our essential service men and women including school teachers and staff but also continue to establish unnecessary layers of schools, creating disparity and discrepancies in basic salary and benefits of teachers and staff. Our political parties and their leaders make promises to get political support but do not keep their promises when they go to power.

But the long term solution to these kinds of grievances in various sectors lies in radically changing our pro-Andolan decision making process to pro-dialogue and compromise solutions.

**Dr. A. T. Rafiqur Rahman Professor, City University of New York, USA**

