

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.

Lord Buddha's hair



The Bangla daily Prothom Alo of 13 July carried a news item stating that a 19-member Sri Lankan delegation including five cabinet ministers headed

by their foreign minister was coming to Bangladesh on 16 July on a three-day visit to take away Lord Buddha's hair which was preserved in a

Chittagong Buddhist temple. Ultimately, the hair was handed over to them.

The news is incomprehensible, and to say the least

shocking. The hair is our precious heritage. Though majority of this country are Muslims today but there are Buddhists too amongst us. We were Buddhists before Lankans became Buddhists. By all criteria of history, culture and tradition the holy hair belongs to Bangladesh and should remain so.

Alternatively, does it mean that we are incapable of preserving our own heritage? Shall we give away our many black stone Hindu deity figures of ancient times to Nepal, a Hindu kingdom, or India, a secular but predominantly Hindu country for the sake of friendship as is being claimed in this case?

Everybody here knows that we do maintain a friendly and warm relationship with them as it is, and we do not have to hand over our precious heritage to convince them further of that relationship without setting a burdensome and painful precedence to develop friendly relations with other countries. Shouldn't

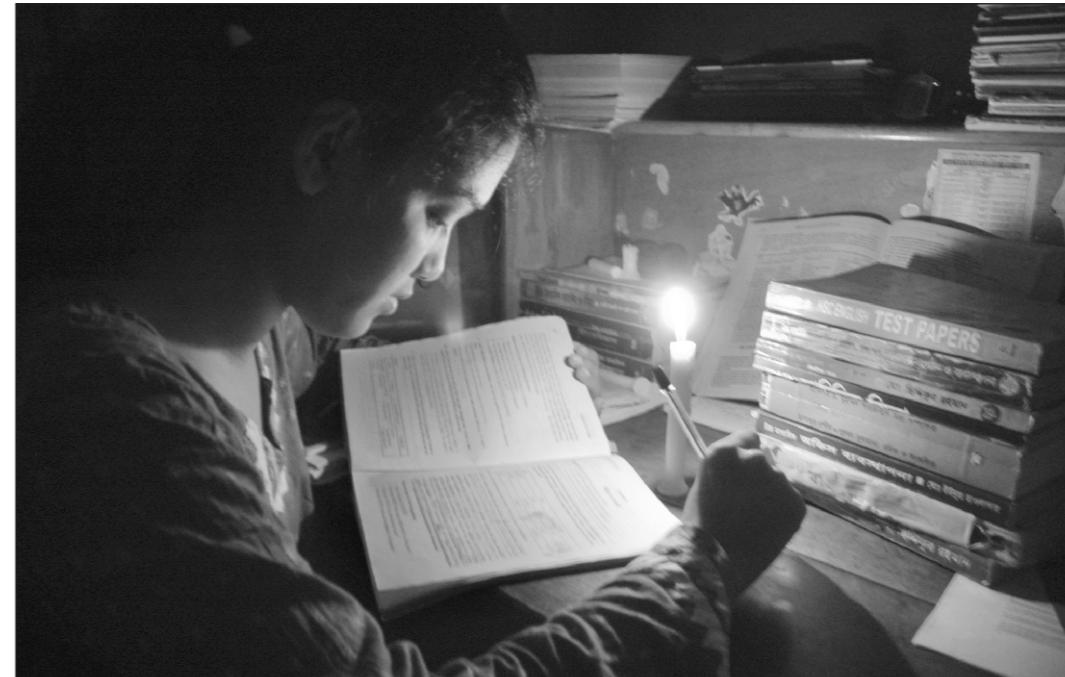
Myanmar, a contiguous Buddhist country would be a more serious candidate for the purpose of keeping such an important and precious Buddhist relic? What about Thailand or Japan? Aren't we interested to promote friendship with them through transfer of whatever worthwhile we have inherited from the past?

Consequently, it is deeply felt that we continue to keep our own heritage, in this case Lord Buddha's hair for our posterity.

The Sri Lankans are most welcome to see this and other relics of interest without taking possession of them. They should themselves be friendly enough to suggest that it is much friendlier that such a heritage should better be preserved with the people of Bangladesh.

A citizen
On e-mail

Power generation



The Finance Adviser, Mirza Azizul Islam, said in his speech that the government had set a target to generate sufficient electricity by the year 2010. The demand for electricity increased but generation didn't increase correspondingly. So, the government has taken up short and

long-term plans. The Adviser said that they have planned to increase power generation over the next three years by 345MW in the first year, 900MW in the second year and 1,050MW in the third year. In the past, the maintenance of those power plants was neglected. The govern-

ment has taken initiatives for the maintenance of those plants.

So, I think the caretaker government is really doing a great job for ending load-shedding.

Sabrina Bint Rashid
Dept. of English
IIU, Chittagong

Sheikh Hasina's arrest

wrong about arresting Hasina?

A person is innocent until proven guilty and as such, it is the court that should decide if Hasina is guilty or not. If she is guilty then she must pay for her crimes and if she is not then she will certainly walk free. It's as simple as that. Why are some AL supporters making a big issue out of this? Can we



I am not a fan of Sheikh Hasina or her brand of politics. But I cannot help maintain that the CTG's move is ill advised and erroneous. By no means should Sheikh Hasina be above the law. But while she should be forced to face the full brunt of the law, if she is truly guilty, the apparent perception ought not to be that she is being perse-

cuted, rather than prosecuted. The hoopla that was created before and after her arrest made her look like the victim of child neglect. Even the parents of the retarded children become tired of taking care of and providing services to their children. These children suffer no fault of their own and depend entirely on people's support.

Despite the availability of healthcare facilities the numbers of physically and mentally disabled children have been increasing worldwide. Therefore, we must make our effort to provide the support and services to our disabled children so that they can

overcome the disadvantages and develop and grow normally. How

best we can provide these services would of course depend on several factors including the number of such children in a society, the availability of resources, and our

humane obligation and interest towards these children.

There are many ways to help these children. In addition to government and NGO efforts, any wealthy and benevolent person can support them by sponsoring one or two children with a little amount of money. We must acknowledge that we need to provide social support and justice to our handicapped children it is our moral duty and national responsibility.

In view of this I am soliciting necessary attention of our social welfare ministry and other relevant organisations.

Nazma Ahmed Kona
Babar Road
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

The editorial on the arrest of AL chief Hasina was a nice one and your view is expressed in a balanced and extremely logical way.

Chowdhury Shagana
On e-mail

The treatment meted out to a former prime minister by the government is unfortunate.

I strongly condemn this. Its long term implications would not be good for the country.

Raziul H. Molla
Overland Park, KS

People are extremely happy to see that the present caretaker government is fighting against corruption and the corrupt.

The CTG has really made the right decision of not showing any mercy to anyone who is involved in corruption.

Reaz, Uttara

The government has made a very bold move and we certainly can expect a backlash.

I request my fellow citizens not to take the law into their own hands.

Let justice take its course.

Ezaz udin
On e-mail

I was disappointed to read your commentary on the arrest of Sheikh Hasina. I support the action of the caretaker government because this shows that no one is above the law. If a person has been involved in corruption, supported it or have been ambivalent about it while holding an important position in the government of the country, why cannot that person be held accountable for that?

Anisur Rahman
California, USA

Lal Masjid tragedy



There is no doubt that the present political situation in Pakistan is critical. The country has always been a breeding ground of the religious extremists but recently the activities of these fanatics have escalated at an alarming rate. Before things get even worse, the Pakistani government must act against these intruders.

The recent incident at Lal Masjid was one such incident where the Pakistani security forces had to deal firmly with the religious extremists. It is definitely a red-alert situation.

We are simply appalled and perplexed to watch these brutal and heinous crimes by these fanatics. The Pakistani government must do something to rein in those responsible for the Lal Masjid tragedy.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttra, Dhaka

I have mixed feelings about your 17 July commentary ("This is no way to strengthen democracy"). I readily agree with your assertion that our military, the 'knights in

shining armour' as they would prefer to be seen, is not a magic potion for the country's mess. But your argument that Sheikh Hasina's arrest, or the probable arrest of Khaleda Zia in the near future, is a threat to democracy is rather infuriating.

Equating freedom to plunder and go unchallenged with democratic tenets is not acceptable. Period. There is no dispute that legal proceedings against Hasina for her alleged misdeeds could have proceeded without her being arrested or interned, but I do wonder whether the caretaker government had any option left. By extension of your logic, all those who have so far been arrested, for the inglorious, ingenuous and blatant way they have looted the country, should be set free pronto for the sake of democracy!

Moreover, while scanning through the picture, we also find him standing on the left side of the patient. In the examination methodology, as is written the most of the standard medical texts, one must stand on the right side of a patient while examining. In medical colleges, many students fail to score pass marks while adopting this wrong technique during his or her final year exams and had to appear in the exams again in the next session. Now a medical student might ask their teachers: "Sir, why was I punished for this mistake?" As a teacher, he/she would have 'no' answer to the question and the act!

Last question: was this an important national event of the health sector that warranted our adviser to pass more than two hours of his peak office period beside these patients?

Dr. Ahmed Badawani
Sylhet, Bangladesh

Disappointing editorial

I have been extremely disappointed with the editorial published in DS on Sheikh Hasina's arrest. It seems your newspaper is very sympathetic to the AL chief and has forgotten all about her past activities. You have quite literally trivialized and dismissed the charges against her. You should have known or acknowledged that corruption during the AL regime would not have occurred without the party chief's consent and if you are under the impression that only a few of the AL politicians are corrupt and Hasina is innocent, then I have nothing to say.

By the way, the CTG has my full support.

Asif Rahman

Canada

Some questions

Today (16/7/07) on the last page, a picture caught our sight: The Hon'ble adviser or the Health and Family Welfare Ministry examining a child in a Dhaka Medical College Hospital bed with deep sympathy (one can find his affectionate hand over the child's hand). As a physician and guardian of the health system and health of the people of Bangladesh, he has every right to be there. One must also honour and appreciate his endeavour and dedication. He has passed a considerable amount of time beside these unfortunate children despite his busy schedule as the adviser of three ministries (from 12 noon to 200pm). Definitely the families, victims and the physicians treating them are boosted by his gracious presence.

As a physician the question arises in my mind- what he was trying to find in the lungs of a patient with mass hysteria? To the best of our knowledge there is nothing as

such.

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Your commentary

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Tigers in trouble

Not a good time for the BD cricket fans! What we have seen from the Tigers recently is an instance of perfect nightmare. Do we actually have anything to praise our juvenile and promising cricketers? It is hard to believe that our young Proteus defeated the mighty Proteus and the strong Indians in their World Cup encounters. Those wins during had given us the impression that Bangladesh are no longer minnows. We remember that a lot of criticism had gone against us and some cricket analysts commented our performance as 'stroke of luck'.

c. The Ministry of Law and the Parliamentary Affairs had failed in the immediate past to enforce rule of law, but apparently had supported controversial political steps.

d. Independence of the constitutional institution is not only dependent on the law, it must have quality of leadership with strong mind, professional quality and independent decision making capacity, irrespective of any political pressure.

e. Definition of corruption is basically limited to financial transaction and misuse of powers. "Moral corruption" is not well defined or understood and not also accountable.

f. One would expect a quick and positive response from the politicians to end the current political crisis.

A reader, On e-mail

What is so wrong about the arrest of Sheikh Hasina? We all believe in justice and the law of the land, don't we? If the police suspect someone, they have the right to arrest and question that person. This is how things should be. And it is a good thing that the police now have the power and the freedom to arrest even untouchable people like Khaleda and Hasina. We should be happy about it. Don't forget that even Tony Blair was questioned by the police recently over the cash-for-honours issue. So what is

the right decision of not showing any mercy to anyone who is involved in corruption.

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