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# Tigers fail again

As usual the Tigers went down meekly in the Test series. Once again our batsmen showed how untrained they are to play in the longer version of the game. Almost all of them chased the

balls outside the off stump; they stood still on the crease and regularly fished at the wide balls. There was absolutely no footwork, I think they need to improve a lot with their footwork.

Shot selection was also very poor. It seems they can't score runs in singles and couples which is inarguably the most vital thing to build up an innings. There is also a tendency among them to lose their patience after crossing the twenty mark as we've seen them throw their wickets away after reaching the mid twenties or thirties instead of going for a big score. I've also observed when the Tigers go on defence they do nothing other than blocking the ball. Thus the scoreboard comes to a halt, as a result pressure mounts on the batters. To ease things up they need to be more resourceful in defensive batting, they need to find the gaps and keep the scoreboard ticking steadily. We haven't forgotten that South Africa is a very strong team consisting of many top ranking players. I think if the South African batsmen can score double hundreds ours should be able to score fifties if not hundreds.

As far as the bowlers are concerned, they bowled with success in the first Test and despite the agonizing first day of the second Test they fought back well on the second day of the

Test. Here I'd like to congratulate Mohammad Rafique for becoming the first Bangladeshi bowler to be a member of the 100 club. I almost gave up the hope of Rafique reaching the milestone as the play progressed into the second day. But it was really very rewarding when he finally achieved it.

Our fast bowlers lack the fiery pace. In Test cricket raw pace is required to unsettle the batsmen. We've seen how Dale Steyn troubled our batsmen with his pace on a wicket that was hardly assisting him. I think it will help our bowling department if we hired coaches like Wasim Akram or Allan Donald to help our pace bowlers improve their bowling skills. Lastly, if we look at the first class career of our players we'll see they have very few big scores against their names. I think that is the reason behind their not doing well in Test cricket. The structure of our first class cricket is poor. We need to improve a lot in that area.

Hanaan  
East Ashkona  
Uttara, Dhaka



## Stop this cruelty

I was horrified to read in The Daily Star that the chicken being killed for bird flu are put in a sack and buried alive, if I have understood the report correctly. This is outright cruelty!

I would strongly appeal to the relevant authorities through these columns to stop this cruelty and find some other way, which surely exists!

An animal lover  
Uttara, Dhaka

but almost 7,000 students. No colour printer though, because it's way too expensive to maintain. After all, multiply 1,000 into 5,000, and if you still can't maintain one colour printer, God only knows where the money goes.

So if anyone tells you Bangladesh is poor and that we have no goal, scoff at their face!  
Asifur Rahman Khan  
One-mail

## Ekushey and our progress

The blood-stained 21st February, now recognized as the International Mother Language Day, is the recognition of all languages and cultures of the universe in order to preserve, celebrate and foster the world heritage, especially those on the verge of extinction due to the assault of the all enveloping western culture, branded as satellite culture.

It is unfortunate for Bangladesh that we didn't finish the construction of the projected International Mother Tongue Institute which can take the lead role to raise awareness among other nations on the significance of preserving the world languages through their plans, programmes and research work.

The government, The Bangla Academy, the writers and other organisations concerned supported by Unesco must work in a body to materialise the goals and objectives formulated in the declaration of the International Mother Language Day with the cooperation of the other nations and strictly implement the proper use of Bengali language in all spheres of our life. The supreme sacrifices of the language martyrs should continue to inspire us as a nation.

Amit Abdullah  
Department of Finance  
University of Dhaka

## Solar power plant

I am rather disappointed to learn from a news report published in DS on February 11, 2008 that the solar power plant installed by the Power Development Board (PDB) at Bagachola village under Barkal upazila in Rangamati at a cost of Tk.8 lakh is virtually of no use because of lack of proper management. The report further said that about Tk.4 lakh is being spent for salary of 29 staffs engaged for the maintenance of the solar projects.

The solar power plant was set up to supply power and safe drinking water to the village. But none of the goals could be accomplished! The villagers informed that the water supply from the solar powered deep tube-well to a nearby Buddhist temple is absolutely unsafe for drinking. However, there was no mention, why the water is unsafe? Does it contain dirty materials or excessive iron or any other mineral?

Solar energy is a great natural source of power. The basic industry of our planet is agriculture. In fact, the efficient use of solar energy is a founding principle of agriculture. During the little Ice Age, the Medieval European farmers used elaborate field orientation and thermal mass techniques to convert as much sunlight into food as possible. Photosynthesis is an important process in plant which requires solar energy.

Fortunately, Bangladesh receives ample sunlight which can easily be converted into solar energy either through the photovoltaic effect or by heating a transfer fluid to produce steam to run a generator for the generation of electricity.

So, we should not ignore the great potentiality of our solar resource. Rather, small solar power plants should be installed in every part of our country, particularly in

the villages to generate electricity for domestic use as well as for running irrigational pumps. In this field, the government may take up a national programme for setting up solar power plants and their maintenance. An independent organisation is needed for solar power generation, distribution, and maintenance.  
Professor M Zahidul Haque  
Chairman  
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

## A banker's job

Looking into banking, one must first consider the advantages and the disadvantages of this particular career, and then decide whether the job will suit his or her individual needs. In general, a career in the banking industry seems extremely hard and very time consuming, and from time to time, has had me contemplating whether or not to major in finance. The type of work demanded is very diverse and seems very interesting, with very high compensation for individual performance. With that in mind, choosing to go into the banking industry could be very rewarding.

A career in the banking industry can offer exciting prospects if anyone enjoys working in a competitive and demanding atmosphere.  
Omar Khaled Rumi  
MBA (Finance), DU

## Public university

I am proud to be a student of a public university. When I go home, my friends, relatives and others appreciate me. It was my dream to admit myself in a public university and I succeeded. But it is a university without a library, without quality education and without quality teachers. And there is no accommodation facility for the students. Yes, it is our Jagannath University.

The university authorities take money from the students for the so-called "Development Fund". But they cannot give us a good environment for our proper education, they cannot give us the minimum facilities. If we don't get proper education, how can we contribute to the country?  
MHH  
Dept. of Sociology  
Jagannath University

## Education sector

The war on corruption that the government has been waging for over a year seems to have stalled. While some of the notorious political touts are in jail, elimination or reduction of corruption in some important public sectors is not apparent. For decades, the image of public universities has gone down because of corruption and irregularities in the administration.

The root of corruption in the universities, both academic and administrative, is in the process of appointing the chief executive, vice-chancellor. The appointment of vice-chancellors in the public universities was mostly guided by political dictum, rather than excellence and ethics. War on corruption raised hopes in the public minds that the government would attempt reducing corruption by eliminating the political vestiges remaining in the topmost position in the universities. But nothing has been done in this respect so far.

Md. Rafiqul Islam  
A university teacher  
Jessore

## Powerless policymakers!

The front page headline in a local English daily (Feb: 16) on the matter clearly presents the faltering and slow trend in decision making regarding investment in the power sector.

Our authorities seem to be butterfingers in this matter. Even the CTG, free from corruption and political push and pull, seems to be another lame duck on the issue. They are very keen to pass the buck to the next elected government; shirking this crucial national issue. Meanwhile, plant costs are going up and up!

Here the industry insider's remark on the subject as reported is well worth quoting. It states: "The progress in the last one year was virtually slow, even you can say frustrating." Where do we go from here? Possibly a further delay of around two more years while the new elected government settles in. Lying ahead is a hot and dark summer for the poor power consumers, when power demand is bound to go up! Our authorities seem to forget that time and tide wait for none. Meanwhile, we go on dithering in our decision making! One wonders who will at long last "bell the cat"? Timeframes for delivering new plants, its prices and delivery schedules are all bound to go up.

Meanwhile, our policymakers including the CTG are entrenched possibly in the old spirit of the old saying "Slow and steady wins the race". Maybe slowly, but surely they will realise the folly of this logic, as timeframes and plant prices go sprinting by!  
S.A. Mansoor  
Dhaka

## Missing "Crosstalk"

I have been a subscriber of The Daily Star ever since its inception and have also made some odd contributions at various points of time. It needs no mentioning that over the years DS has emerged as the best English daily offering the most balanced read in comparison to all the other newspapers on the stand. Its founder editor, Late S.M. Ali happened to be a close friend of my father and we have witnessed the rapid growth of The Daily Star to what it stands for today.

To regular readers, "Crosstalk" by Mohammed Badrul Ahsan on Friday needs little introduction. It is one of the finest columns and has been a Friday treat for many like me. Mr. Ahsan is one of those versatile and gifted writers who has the ability to make a simple subject shine with brilliance simply with his dexterous writing skills. He is perhaps one of the most well-read and learned columnists that we can boast of today. A collection of his essays had hit the bookstores some years back under the title, "Old Man in the Woods" and it was a pleasure to come across this humble looking masterpiece lounging among prized collections in many a household both at home and abroad.

Unfortunately, for those of us whose Fridays would start with a relishing "Crosstalk", the last few weeks have been very disappointing and even frustrating to some extent as it is no longer appearing.  
Shaily Fatima  
Banani, Dhaka

# Migrant workers

A couple of news reports and writings on labour migration has drawn my attention. I am referring to the following two.

First, a Dhaka daily published a report with a photograph on 02 March issue on the return of 34 Bangladeshi workers from Malaysia. They reportedly spent five months in a detention camp following their protest against abuses by the Malaysian employers. The returnees are part of the 800 workers who worked in four textile factories in Batu Pahat district in Johor state of Malaysia, but thronged Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur to protest low pay, longer work hours and other kinds of abuses.

Secondly, different newspapers on the same day (02 March) published a report quoting a release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka, that the number of workers who went for overseas employment in 2007 is almost double the previous year's number. In 2007, a total of 832,000 individuals got clearances from the government departments concerned. However, the actual number of the workers who left the country was nearly 600,000. The number of individuals having clearance in 2006 was 381,000.

A total of 159,000 individuals have already left for work abroad in the first two months of the current year (2008), compared to 78,000 in the same period last year.

In recent times, there is an upheaval in the overseas labour market. It goes from Malaysia to Saudi Arabia. The reason behind this is still unknown to the public.

Some interesting information has come out through the media about Saudi Arabia. The Bangladeshi migrant workers were considered as cheap, hard working and dedicated to work until recent times in Saudi Arabia. However, the situation is now a bit different. There are 'syndicated stories' in local newspapers in that country against Bangladeshi migrant workers. Law enforcement agencies are also active against the Bangladeshis reportedly involved in 'criminal activities.'

The labour exporting sector is the prime foreign currency earning sector of Bangladesh. In 2007, this sector earned US\$7 billion for our exchequer. So, I don't see any arguable reason why successive governments in Bangladesh are still not paying due attention to the sector. There should be some short-term crash programmes and some long-term initiatives.

Short-term actions should be like expanding the scope for overseas employment and regular flow of labour migration, minimal service cost for migration, negotiations and signing bilateral agreements with destination countries for ensuring the rights of the individuals as

migrant workers, ensuring better salary packages, pre-departure orientation for the workers on the general law and social norms of the destination countries, awareness for female migrant workers on potential abuses and complaint mechanism etc. The government should be tough on the unscrupulous recruiting agencies and individuals engaged in smuggling and trafficking of human beings in the name of labour migration.

In terms of long-term activities, the government should look into the following: overhauling of the existing policy and the legal and administrative framework to meet the needs of the present day labour migration, building up the capacity of the relevant ministry and departments, developing a database for registering complaints regarding exploitation and abuses in the labour migration processes, blacklisting those engaged in exploitation of migrant workers, promoting fair and ethical labour migration etc.

Besides, a separate national authority with



sufficient power and resources should be set up to deal with migration related issues. It is evident that the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Welfare (MOEWOW) is a neglected institution so far.

It is learned that the MOEWOW has approached the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for their technical assistance. Let us see what the outcome is.

The government should also look into the recommendations of the recently adopted Abu Dhabi Declaration (January 2008). Enhance knowledge in the area of labour market trends, skill profiles, remittance policies and flows and their interplay with developments in the area. The other points include building capacity for effective matching of labour demands and supply, preventing illegal recruitment practices and promoting welfare of migrant workers.

Udatta Bikash  
Human Rights Researcher and Trainer  
Dhaka

## Earthquake

In the early morning of Wednesday 27th February 2008, large parts of England and Wales were hit by an earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter Scale.

Most earthquakes are caused by Plate Tectonics. The earth's shell consists of a number of sections or plates that hover on the molten rock of the mantle. These plates move on convection currents caused by high temperature rising from the centre of the earth. The hot molten rock rises and spreads out on the surface, creating new

crust. The crust spreads out forming a new plate until it meets another plate. One of the plates will be pushed down into the internal of the earth and reabsorbed into the mantle. Plates can also be packed together to push up mountains when they crash or move sideways along transform faults.

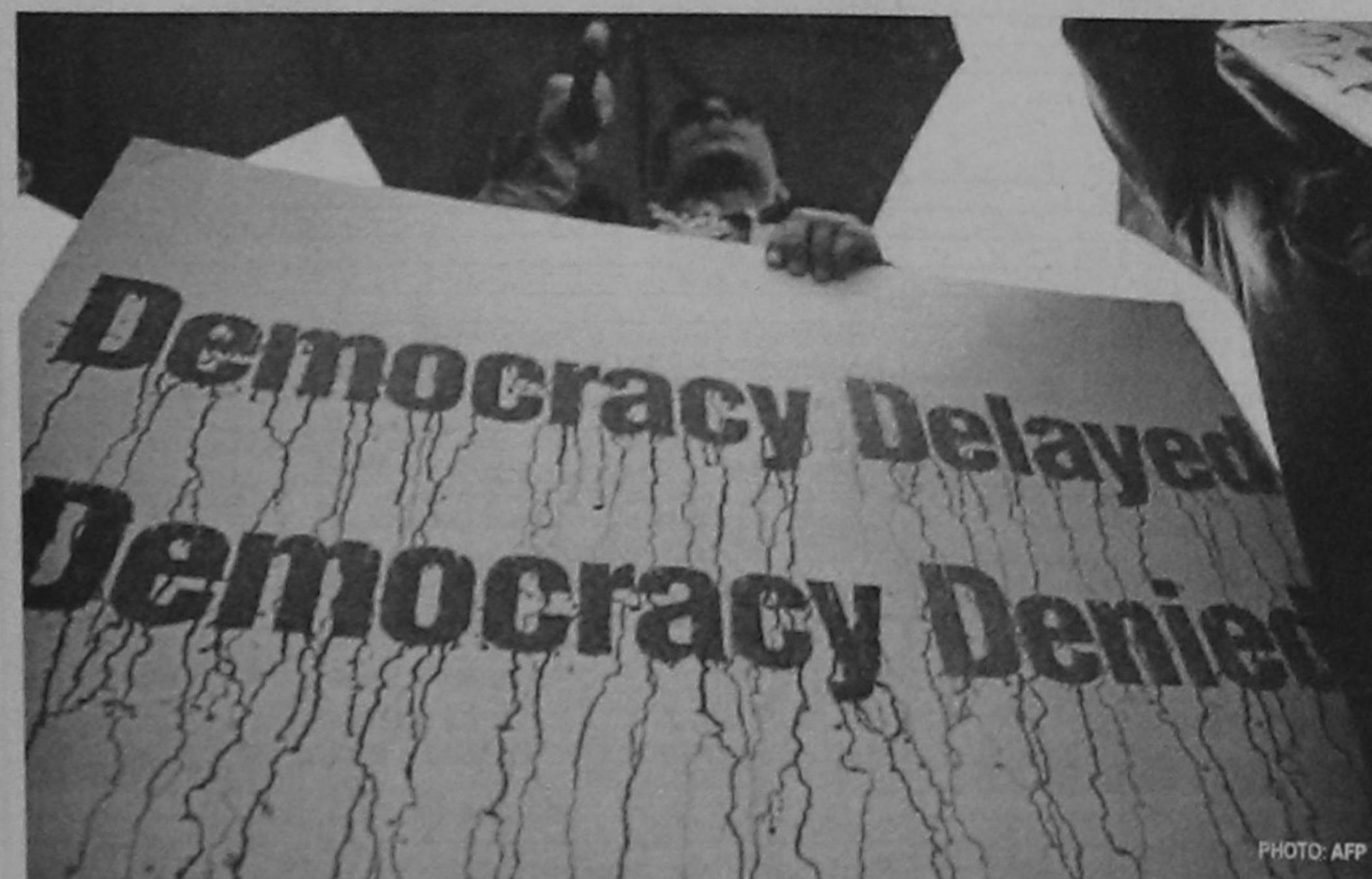
I was woken up at around 1.00 am early on Wednesday 27th February 2008 by a trembling movement and instantly saw constant tremor of our front window. It was very terrifying. The whole

earthquake lasted for a few seconds.

First I was not sure what was happening. I also heard some noise outside and looked through the window and saw people talking, staring and wondering what had happened.

I then switched the TV and put the Sky news on and saw that news flashing, stating that tremors hit the country at about 1:00am and the earthquake was measured at 5.2 on the Richter Scale  
Professor Abdul Rob  
UK

# Fate of Pakistan



It is really unfortunate that the people of Pakistan have never had truly democratic rule in their country. Elimination of extremism and establishment of democracy are two of the biggest challenges for this country.

Now, it is the responsibility of the newly elected government to work jointly with the mass media to establish a transparent democracy.

I hope the people of Pakistan will have their dreams fulfilled.

Rizwan Ahmed  
Department of English  
Rajshahi University, Rajshahi

# Avian flu

Several opinion-based articles have been published in DS about the recent outbreak of avian flu, its implications and media coverage of this particular issue.

I would like to highlight some of the issues that made public health experts across the world very concerned about the continuing outbreak of avian influenza in poultry and the danger of its being contracted by humans.

First, I should address some of the scientific facts. Although the number of cases of humans being infected is still low, the danger is of course there.

We all know that it is a type of influenza caused by a virus usually limited to the bird population, but it has crossed the species barrier. Since 2003, the virus has gained the capacity to not only affect the poultry, but also to cause deadly diseases among humans. As it is a new type of influenza, we do not have any immunity against it. This lack of immunity and certain deadly characteristics of this particular virus resulted in fatal infection. Besides being very infectious in nature, the influenza A virus has extraordinary adapting capabilities to change its genes and broaden its host range. This has happened before, in the 1918 pandemic Influenza A virus strain originated from avian sources and caused the most deadly pandemic in recent history. There are questions about excessive media coverage. I don't think this is correct. We must remember



that this is an emerging infectious disease, that has the potential to spread across the world. The current virus strain (Influenza A H5N1) originated from southern part of China and is now deeply entrenched in poultry population in over 40 countries in three continents, including Bangladesh, and it shows no signs of slowing down.

In Bangladesh, three relevant government agencies have started preparing for it since 2005. Now it is time to adapt and face the challenge. And we need the media more than before to be part of that procedure.

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