

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.

Diplomatic failure in Kuwait



TANVIR AHMED / DRIKNEWS

We strongly condemn the tyranny unleashed by the Kuwait authorities on the workers of Bangladesh who have been deprived of their legitimate remunerations and other benefits by the employers there. They simply gave vent to their anguish and agonies suffered at the hands of the employers in Kuwait for long and certainly did not deserve to be treated like beasts who have been beaten mercilessly by the Kuwait police in captivity. These workers have been subjected to inhuman torture by their employers right under the nose of the Kuwait authorities and perhaps at their behest. It is, therefore, everybody's right to protest against injustice which actually the Bangladeshi workers did. Any protest against injustice is called "Jehad"

in Islam. It is highly unfortunate that instead of addressing their legitimate grievances, the authorities there maltreated and sent them back home without any payment even. Most of them could not bring their personal belongings even. Our Prophet (SM) had instructed, "Pay the wages of labour before drying up of his sweat", whereas the wages of these workers were either not paid or paid partially in violation of contract. In Islam honouring of any lawful contract by both the parties is binding on each other. There were reports that the maids hired in that country from various countries including Bangladesh were treated like slaves and even were subject to sexual abuse! So what kind of Islamic law is pursued in that country?

The Bangladesh government and particularly the diplomatic staff should be held responsible for the tragedy and their failure to tackle the situation. The diplomatic staff engaged and paid by the countrymen totally failed in their duties to handle the situation.

The allegation against them is the same everywhere, whether it is in Malaysia or in the Middle East; they do not provide any help to the Bangladeshi expatriates. These workers are keeping the economy of the country running and the country is totally dependent on the foreign exchange earned by these workers. Even the salaries of those diplomats are paid from the hard earnings of those unfortunate workers. Our hearts bleed when we see how shabbily and rudely those workers are treated by the customs and civil aviation personnel at our airports upon arrival. The government should provide a special VIP enclosure at our airports for those great sons of the soil.

We therefore demand that those workers holding legitimate employment visas be allowed to go back to their jobs and paid their contractual wages commensurate with the global inflation and are provided with usual benefits. Those who lost their jobs should be given adequate compensation. Our foreign affairs adviser should shoulder the responsibility of taking up the issue with the government of Kuwait. Our diplomats from those countries must be called back home for their utter failure in handling the situation.

Mohammad Ataul Hoque
On e-mail

Use of chemicals in foods
Whenever I see pictures and read about the use of deadly chemicals on fruits by the growers and vendors to ripen and make their produce look attractive, taste better and to boost their production, I shudder. How can the government look away and not take appropriate, strong and quick steps to stem this diabolical practice of poisoning fruits and vegetables and cheating the public to buy them? This is a horrendous case of systematic destruction of society. The authorities have the knowledge of how bad is the effect on the consumers and how serious this despicable act is, but, they are not doing enough to save the consumers and protect them from the evil of these people who have no conscience and behave without compunction. They are horrible elements whose only aim in life is to extract maximum profit even if society has to suffer and pay an enormous price. This is destroying the vitality and vibrancy of the society affecting the younger generation more, in a way, which is irreversible. These elements are slowly and sneakily destroying us. We have to do something and not let it go on unpunished and unchecked. These sinister people are holding us hostage, doling out their goods and forcing us to eat because we have no choice as apparently every item you buy is affected, though the sellers will vouch their merchandise is clean and pure.

IT education
Information Technology is not only an integral component of modern civilization but also a vehicle that helps our dreams come true. The whole world is now a village owing to the effective use of IT. The development of every sector in the world is based on IT. In the age of IT excellence, we cannot afford to lag behind because IT has the potential to promote economic growth and can facilitate the integration of Bangladesh into the global economy. I believe, like all of you, that proper use of IT can contribute actively to our national development.

The govt. has taken some steps to spread IT across the country. Through the use of IT we can combat poverty and can develop our rural areas. Many people in rural and urban areas are facing problems due to lack of proper information about their essential activities and requirements of life. That's why I hope that the govt. will take necessary steps to ensure effective use of IT.

Md. Edayhiya Miah
Palerchok, Ashuganj bazar
Bishnunath, Sylhet

Emergency and election

It is clear, at least after the recent mayoral elections, that the caretaker government intends to hold the general election without lifting the state of emergency. This intention, till now, is opposed quite strongly by both 14-party and 4-party alliances. Yet, the persistence of the caretaker government with this particular agenda is creating confusion among the politically conscious citizens regarding the motive behind it. Legally, holding elections under the state of emergency is unheard of. In theory, the state of emergency refers to a situation where a citizen's basic civil and political rights are curtailed and the fundamental rights of people are re-established only when the emergency is withdrawn. Therefore, the coexistence of emergency and election is in essence contradictory. However, if the government intends to legalize such exercise through finding small loopholes in our legal framework then one cannot stop them from doing so. But, as citizens we still want to know the logic behind the caretaker government's persistence with this particular agenda.

But, after this man, the whole process has virtually stopped. This should not be aborted as the malevolence continues even today without the authorities taking adequate steps to check it and ensure safe produces in the market. The time is now to develop a system and devise methods and a mechanism to put an end to this highly pernicious practice and rein in the culprits who are destroying this nation and have instilled fear in us of eating agro-products

for political stability. If the government has a practical reason which is fuelling their desire to hold elections while maintaining the state of emergency, then they need to discuss their point with the political parties and civil society and create a socio-political consensus regarding this issue. Otherwise, all the elections conducted by this caretaker government will be questioned by political quarters, and this will not be good for us in the long run.

Ashikur Rahman
Research student
London School of Economics
UK

Polls under emergency

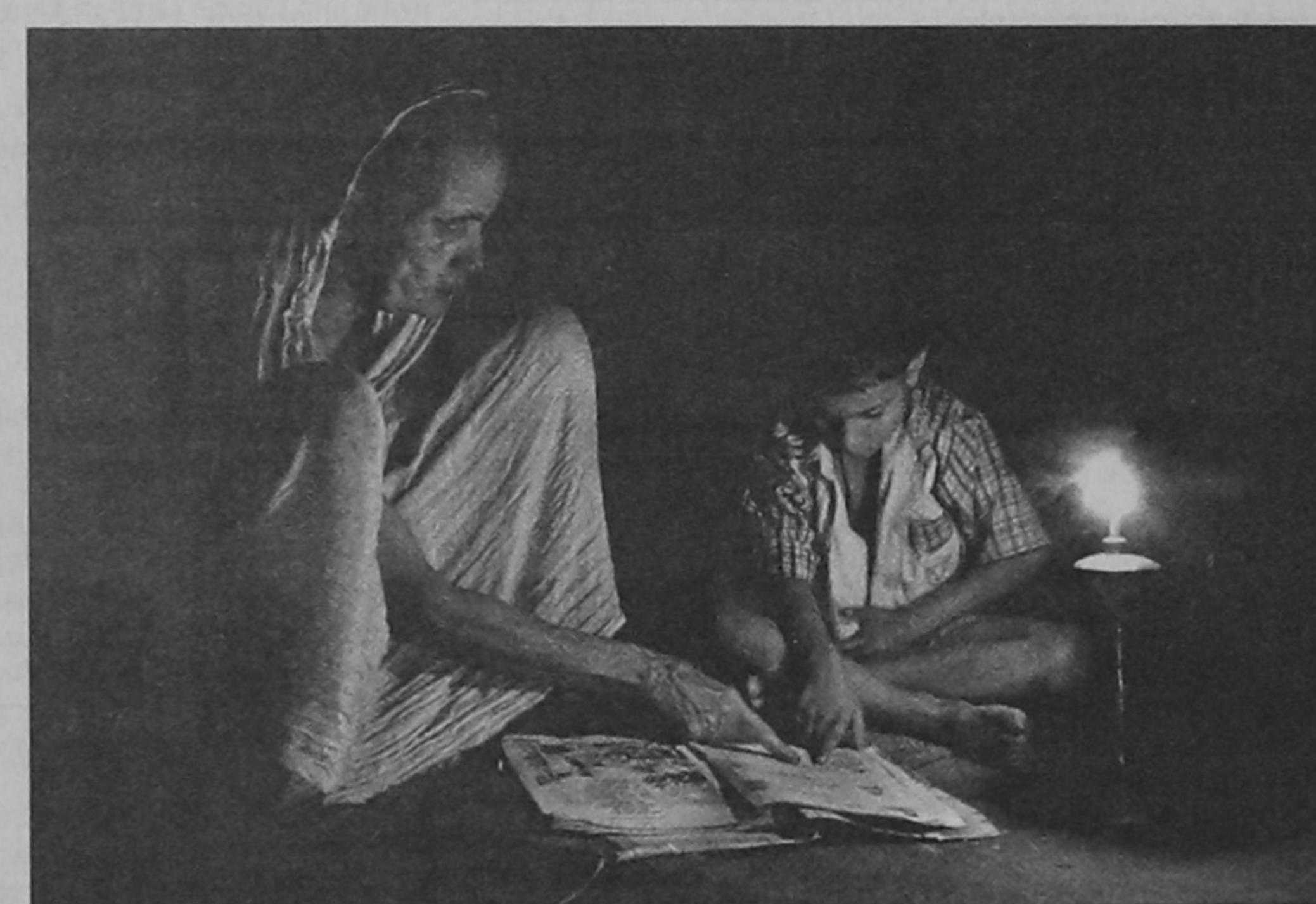
From the news reports published in the dailies we have come to learn that the EC has claimed that emergency would ensure extra security.

However, the claim can be questioned. Of course, the emergency might ensure extra security but this extra security could be used to install a rubber stamp parliament!

So, there is reason for us to be worried.

Mushfiq Wadud
Department of English
Stamford University Bangladesh

Powerless people



RAJANIKAT / DRIKNEWS

A new country was born in 1971 after a bloody war of nine months with a hope & dream that from then on the country would rise to the top step by step. It had been ruled by foreign invaders for 225 years - two hundred years by the British and 25 years by Pakistanis. It is very unfortunate for us to mention after long 37 years of independence that the hope has been shattered and the dream has become a nightmare. Today is August 5, 2008 and in the last 24 hours there was no electricity in my area (Pallabi) for 7 hours. That is, the electricity went off due to load shedding 7 times in 24 hours and each time for an hour. It may also be mentioned here that the electric supply during pick hours is not available.

No, I will not accept any explanation from you. I know you will come up with the same old rotten story like your predecessors.

Now I am sorry, cannot accept any negative reply from you. You are in the chair and it is your sacred responsibility to look after the country as well as the

citizens. Once you are in that position, you are the authority and you have to do it. No matter how hard it is, you have to do it. It is a basic right and prime need of the citizens. You tell me where shall I go?

Almost 80% of the country is not getting electricity, remaining 20% is not getting proper supply. What is wrong with your administration? Do you know the actual requirement of electricity of this country now? What will be the requirement after 10 or 20 years from now? What measures you have taken to develop this sector I do not want to know. All I want to know is, from when we will get smooth supply of electricity. Where is the problem? Are there still many red tapes in the ministry? Find them out, throw them away.

What are you waiting for? Do not give up the interest of the country. Drive away the evil forces.

Mohammad Nazakat Ali
Pallabi
Mirpur, Dhaka

Obama and "change"...

Much has been witnessed, much has been talked about in America and outside about the upcoming presidential elections. Senator Obama, the Democratic candidate, has by now charmed his people and others across the globe with his magical and magnetic prowess in terms of outward and the inward manifestations of the much talked about "change". It is that magic that the Americans are desperately looking for. It is indeed that hope of "change" in American policy that the people of the world are also looking for. We've seen, till date, that a black young, charismatic and flamboyant leader in Obama that has already captured the mandate of the Europeans (recent historic Europe tour) is striking gold to be the first non-white American president. We'll see in future that America is being ruled by a woman president --- democracy has reached its peak there. Now it all depends on the American people whether they will elect Obama or not.

Under the circumstances, however, the "change" in American policy, namely the foreign policy and those policies on its treatment of the environment, climate and other important issues that have a bearing on global welfare holds the questions tagged.

We hope that there will be some pragmatic and effective changes in the American policy.

Rafiqul Islam Rime

Agrabad, Chittagong

Set the priorities right

France is a developed country having the fifth largest economy in the world. Its land size is more or less equal to Bangladesh. But Bangladesh is one of the least developed countries having a huge population. The French are running about five hundred engineering colleges and seventy-eight universities. They are also very advanced in medical education.

After gaining political independence, Bangladesh could not establish even thirty-seven engineering colleges in the last thirty-seven years!

We need one engineering college in every district immediately to cater to the needs of industrial ventures.

Md. Ashraf Hossain

Bashabo

Dhaka

Not surprising...

He has said what he was supposed to say in line with his party's political culture. We were, in fact, expecting this reaction from the BNP (Khaleda) before even the mayoral and municipal elections were held on 4 Aug. So we were not surprised at all. Khandaker Delwar Hossain has categorically said that the election was "patano nibrachon". He blamed existence of emergency rules and termed this election as CTG's game-fixing election, although all the election observers including the foreigners have expressed satisfaction about the turnout, peaceful atmosphere and enthusiasm among the voters and finally peaceful voting. The BNP's own grassroots level leaders have congratulated the winners in front of the TV cameras, some were seen sharing sweets together with their rivals after conceding defeat. This is a rare scene which the Bangladeshi people could see for the first time in 37 years.

We believe the critics should realize what was the ground reality, what the people of this country wanted. People want an extortion free, corruption free society where they can pursue their livelihoods freely and elect the political leaders of their choice.

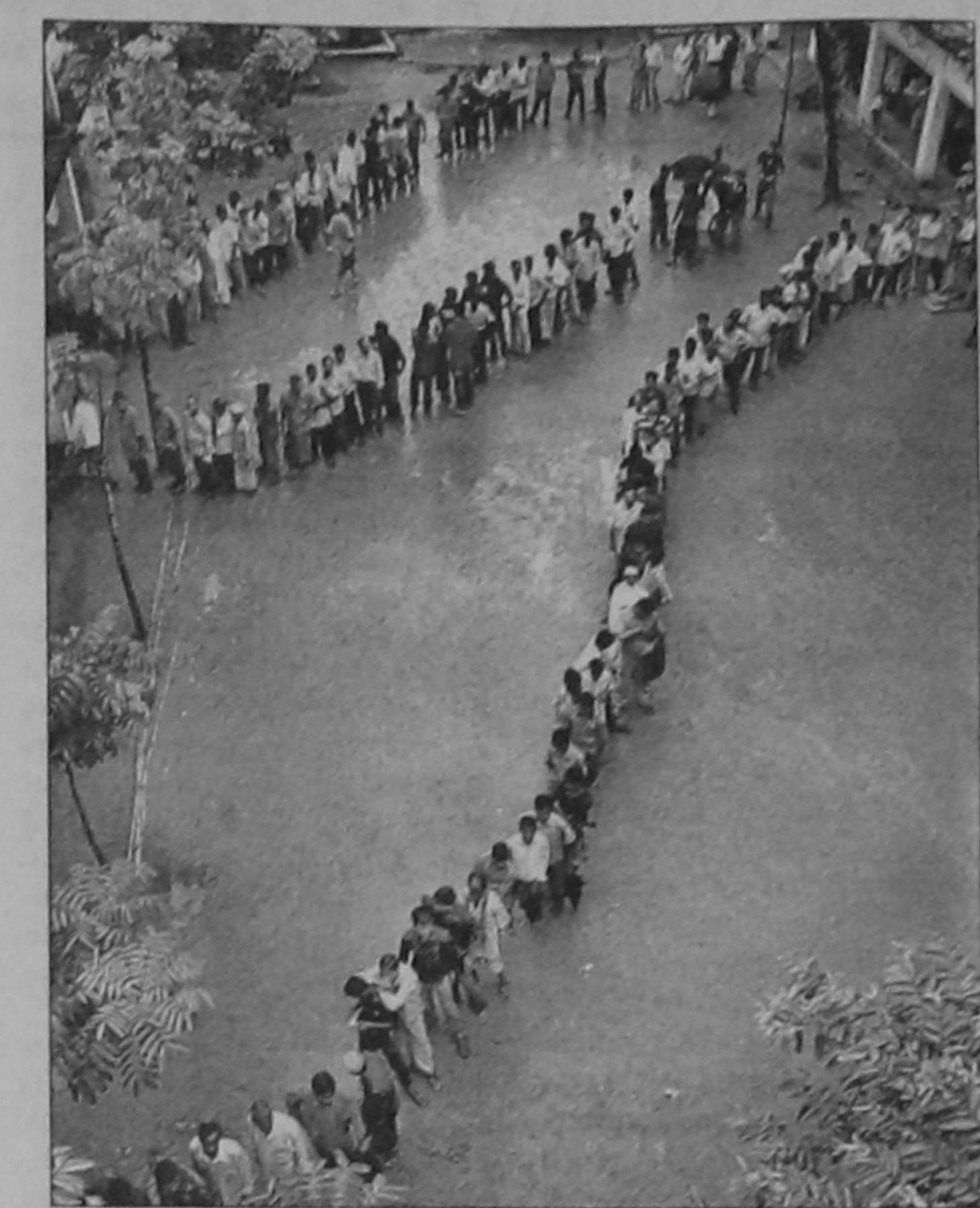
People have tested the politicians many times but they betrayed them, made them poor and insecure. Please do not misguide them.

Capturing polling centres and snatching ballot boxes and winning elections with two-thirds majority will not be possible any more. Come to terms with the people. Forget your golden days of effortless money-making!

Shafiqul Islam

On e-mail

Elections



A HARIF / DRIKNEWS

The Election Commission very successfully organised free, fair, participatory, credible elections to the four city corporations and nine municipalities, where the people were able to cast their votes for their chosen candidates, whom they felt competent, honest and reliable.

The Election Commission with active support of the caretaker government is very much determined to hold a very creditable national election in December to hand over power to the elected representatives and uphold the democratic process and principles. The government is ready to do so, but the political parties would have to make avenues to make these electoral processes participatory and meaningful.

The government and the Election Commission are striving hard to make all the forthcoming elections, starting from upazila to parliament, free and fair, where the voters can play the most critical role and cast their votes in favour of the best candidates.

Nasar
On e-mail

has been trying its best to control this crisis by setting up some BDR shops in the city and by giving subsidies to the farmers. But despite all the efforts, the government failed to keep the prices low. The government should address the issue on the basis of a sound plan, taking into consideration the ground reality and the factors responsible for the price hike.

Quazi Ehsanur Rahman
Astudent

Letters

The letters column can be considered as the comic relief from the serious reports on current affairs like local polls, graft cases, corruption cases, arrest and bail, and violence or nightmare. Generally, most of the pages deal with merely happenings, while the letters column is covering a wide variety of themes as Mr. S.A. Mansoor points out. He is absolutely right as we readers are tired of observing the same type of reports every day. Many reports are being printed on contemporary national and international issues. Most of

them are very conventional which are already known to the readers. These dimensionless and casual reports are not capable of sharing views or ideas but merely repeat the information cycles.

On the contrary, the letters column covers a vast sphere of thoughts in limited space. It is enabling readers to share their views and ideas over new perception or the untouched side of a story. This page serves valuable food for thought to millions of nutrition seekers. The striking facet of this page is that it is offering freedom to readers to share and communicate with others.

It is also noticeable that some subjects like 'admission battle' or 'price hike' are being repeated but these cannot be ignored. They are important enough to be discussed, re-discussed and to be debated. But the passage is too tiny to express our thoughts.

So, please open and widen the window of fresh air to breathe or to help breathing.

Md. Hadiuzzaman
Dept. of English
SUST

Earthquake

An earthquake is the result of a sudden release of energy in the earth's crust that creates seismic waves. Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to earthquakes. Now we are facing many problems due to the vulnerability to earthquake. The causes of earthquake are as follows: most earthquakes are caused by the sudden slip of rock mass along geologic faults and fractures, the collisions between tectonic plates and increased pressure within the rock's crust that exceeds the strength of the rocks and the filling of reservoirs that may increase the stress in the Earth's crust.

The effects of earthquake include shaking and ground rupture; ground motion; landslides and avalanches; fire, soil liquefaction; tsunamis & coastal effects; serious pressure on buildings, bridges, dams & pipelines etc.

We can reduce the loss of life and property in earthquake by following some methods- a) By examining historical records and making geologic measurements to locate active faults zones. b) By making maps showing high-risk areas and by establishing building codes that regulate the placement and design of buildings in high-risk areas and finally by trying to predict when and where earthquakes will occur.

As our country is vulnerable to earthquake, we have to take the above measures as early as possible in an integrated manner.

Manir Hossain
Dept. of Environmental Science and Resource Management
MBSTU, Tangail

Economic crisis

Our nation has been suffering from inflation for quite a while now. The immediate past government didn't do anything about it. The inflation rate is rising every day, the prices of essentials like rice, oil, vegetables, etc. are skyrocketing.

So far the caretaker government