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**Iran & nuclear issue**

Obama, the president-elect of the US said on November 07, 2008 that Iran must be prevented from developing nuclear weapons.

Iran has been claiming that it is developing nuclear technology for generating electricity. So, the world community should confirm about Iran's nuclear status to avoid another conflict like the Iraq war, which was based on a non-existent cause. The Iraq war is one of the main causes of current recession in the US, which badly affected the world economy as well.

In this context, from the first black and African-American president of the US, people of Africa and Asia demand a change in the civilian nuclear technology transfer policy of the US. This will make it possible to transfer such technology to the developing nations for their overall improvement.

Saif Tinku  
Baridhara, Dhaka

**Hasina's return**

Sheikh Hasina's returning home may have created a lot of enthusiasm, zeal and excitement among her supporters, but the way thousands of supporters blocked the roads with processions during office hours just to welcome the leader was unacceptable, to say the least. It caused harassment to common people going to workplaces in the morning. There were even minors, who could not be voters, showing extra enthusiasm, making a chaotic environment all around.

That day, all the people I met criticised the way of welcoming a leader. And all of them had the belief that the state of emergency should better be in full force.

Md. Wahajhat Anwar  
Officer  
Dhaka Bank Ltd  
Dhanmondi Branch  
Dhaka

**Voter turnout in US elections**

On the basis of population the US is the third largest country of the world. Also, it is the second largest country practising democracy. But voter turnout in US elections is one of the poorest among the advanced industrial nations of the world. A little over 50 percent of the voting-age population take part in US presidential elections. There was plenty of euphoria in the recently held US election as many claimed a record voter turnout. This exuberance was primarily based on the observation that voters in many locations had to stand in long queues for hours, primarily arising out of shortage of polling centres. The arithmetic of voter turnout has indeed been a dismal one, not significantly different from those of the previous years. Based on a number of reliable sources available on the Internet, it appears that the voter turnout in the present election was around 122,457,990 out of a voting-age population of 231,229,580.

This produces 52.95 percent voter turnout indicating that nearly half the voting-age population (47.05 percent) abstained from voting. The president-elect Barack Obama secured 52.95 percent while his main opponent John McCain got 46.1 percent of the popular vote. The turnout of voting-age population was 53.5 percent in the previous election of 2004. It was only 49.1 percent in 1996. However, the voter turnout was comparatively better in 1960 (63.1 percent) when John F. Kennedy was elected. Since then it has declined considerably. It averaged around 62 percent in the 1960s. In the 1970s it was around 54 percent. During the last three decades it remains on an average of 52 percent. On the contrary, in many countries of continental Europe such as Germany and Sweden voter turnout remains high (over 80 percent). The US government does not waste any opportunity to behave as the moral mentor of the world preaching the virtues of democracy, sometimes using the barrels of the gun as it did in Iraq.

**Politicians fail miserably**

As general citizens we have seen different types of regimes after liberation which our leaders offered us in the name of democracy. We were governed severely, less severely, technocratic way, bureaucratic way and autocratic way.

We are just fed-up with talk of our political leaders, hartals, gherao, oborodh etc. which brings no good for the country. The country stepped backward in the field of economy, agriculture, education and almost in every sphere of possible growth. We cannot exonerate our leaders for their self-centred attitude.

Now we are going to hold election. We categorically want to hear from our

respected leaders what they are going to do for the country and the people. We want to know their specific agenda which they will follow if they are elected. We want their promise that they will never get involved in such activities which bring miseries to common people. We want to know how they will settle fundamental issues, ensure economic growth, do good for farmers, as well how they will resolve our energy crisis etc.

Our humble appeal to all politicians: please do some good for the sake of the country and general people.

Md. Nizamuddin  
Mirpur-1, Dhaka



MUNEEB WASHF ORIKNEWS

**Dress codes**

Nowadays non-Islamic acts are encouraged strongly in society. Most "modern" people in our country don't have proper faith and young people who are growing up now are encouraged to practise western dress codes. This is termed as being "modern" & "smart" but none realizes that this is bringing obscenity to society. I don't know what good can come out of it. We should wear nice dresses, but these should be modest.

It is hard to find the media propagating proper religious practices and education.  
M.Noor  
Uttara, Dhaka

**Taxpayer's query**

As faithful citizens we are obliged to pay taxes as per laws of the government to enable the latter to carry out the duties entrusted on it. Paying taxes is actually a give-and-take matter. If a citizen finds that his or her basic rights are being well taken care of by the government, then he or she shall come forward to pay the taxes voluntarily or will not feel that the tax-payment is a penalty.

But for some obvious reasons, most of the taxpayers do take it as a burden and look for the ways and means to escape it. The end result is, the concerned department of government miserably fails to achieve the tax collection target. The taxpayers very reasonably expect that the government will fulfil its obligations that clearly indicate that the taxpayers should be compensated to some extent for

the money they are paying as taxes through proper healthcare, good transportation networks, improved law and order situation, maintaining high standard in public educational establishments and increasing seats for higher numbers of admission seekers, do away with harassments in getting passport, driving license, quick disposal of court cases and above all the availability of the items of basic needs at affordable costs.

But what is really happening? As for my self, I am serving in a multinational company and paying an income tax of more than taka two lakh a financial year. But I felt discouraged to ask for any assistance from the police when some miscreants broke the garage & stole some valuable parts of my personal car. My driver found those stolen items in a shop at Dholaikhal & I bought those at a cost of about Tk 80,000. This is one example of how we live in Bangladesh. In addition, when we see how the government employees are plundering the state funds/our tax money, our interest evaporates to come forward to pay taxes. The recent news of employing 122 workers to fix a single toilet-pan in a BTL (formerly BTB) office is another glaring example of the magnitude and mode of corruption by government bodies.

Only extension of tax return dates will not work to attract the taxpayers, their conviction that the tax money is properly used for the benefit of the citizens is the only motivating factor.  
Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque  
Khalishpur  
Khulna

**Secondary education**

In the name of quality education, teachers of secondary schools are getting training from TQI (Teaching Quality Improvement project). All the teachers including head teachers of secondary schools (around 15 thousand) will be trained by 2011. But everybody knows about the quality of the training.

There is another problem! Some classes are held in the secondary schools. Now teachers are taking TQI training during the class time. So the students are deprived, though some teachers are just passing their time in the TQI classes.

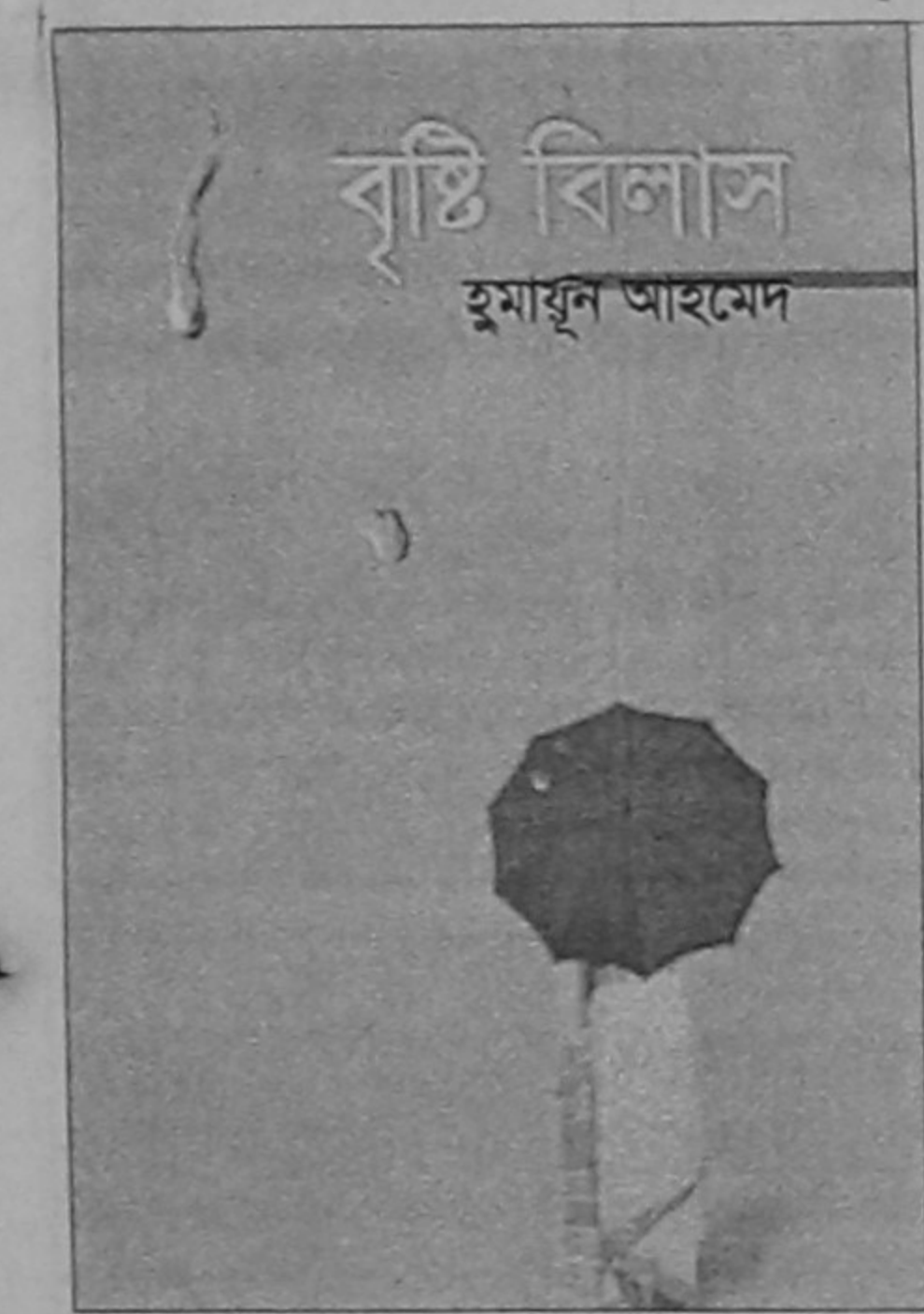
So, my suggestion is that the teachers receive training only when they do not have to attend classes.  
Mawduda Hasnin  
Rajshahi

**No committed leader!**

We got independence shedding blood of millions of people. But we did not get a leader after the long liberation war dedicated to the cause of the nation. It is the reason for which we, the citizens of Bangladesh, always face the problems like strike, vandalism.

Ours is a democratic country. But different parties which came to power ran the country in an autocratic way. They concentrated on their own welfare only. This created a reign of mal-governance, pervasive corruption & looting of public funds by the ruling party. Now we, the common people, are paying for their misdeeds.  
Tamanna Ferdous  
One-mail

**Tribute to Humayun Ahmed**



November 13 was the birthday of Humayun Ahmed. Like all the fans of the writer, I am also feeling happy. In the world of Bengali literature he is a prominent figure. 'Himu', 'Misir Ali', 'Shuvra', all have now become too familiar. In fact his novels have become part of our life. Pradip Das (Akash) Lecturer in English Bangladesh Health Professions Institute CRP, Savar

**BCS botched up**

The BCS exams were held at least a year ago, but it is a matter of great shame that the PSC still can not fix up who actually passed or failed. Some examinees decided to kill themselves if their demands were not met. But now we have come to know that others, who were selected later, also decided to kill themselves.

The PSC is now in trouble. If the PSC cannot manage everything successfully, it can do away with such BCS exams to save the lives of the brilliant students.  
A. Wadud Khan  
MA in Eng.  
Govt. Titumir College

**Poverty**

Poverty cannot be removed overnight. What we need is some good planning & implementation of those plans to mobilize manpower towards effective production.

We can increase our export of manpower, build up factories & mills, prioritise agriculture, encourage foreign investors, motivate our young entrepreneurs & so on. Our government must have a target where it wants to see our country after a specific period of time. Each individual should also try to be self-reliant. Then we might be able to send 'poverty' to the museum as dreamt by Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus. S.M. Shamim-Ur-Rashid Tushar Department of Business Administration Shahjalal University

Ironically, almost half its population mock at the institution of democracy by keeping a safe distance from it and declining to take part in the electoral process.  
Ahmed Sadiq  
One-mail

**Utilise natural resources**

We have to ensure equal development in all places. Though we know we have many shortcomings but we can change our condition by using the available wealth properly.

We have natural resources which must be used judiciously.  
Md. Shobuj Chowdhury  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University

**Myanmar's misadventure**

Our neighbouring country Myanmar made an expedition on the Bay of Bengal in search of oil and gas. As far as I know, according to international navigation laws no country can make such kind of exploration in the territory belonging to some other country.

Again, due to the rise of tension in Bangladesh-Myanmar border most of the tourists (i.e. both native and foreign) are not interested to visit Cox's Bazar, Bandarban as well as Saint Martin's Island.

Now, it is time for our diplomats to play their due role to defuse tension.

In short, this issue carries more importance than other internal issues.  
Aiman Bin Shaofiqul Hamid  
Dept. of English  
International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC)

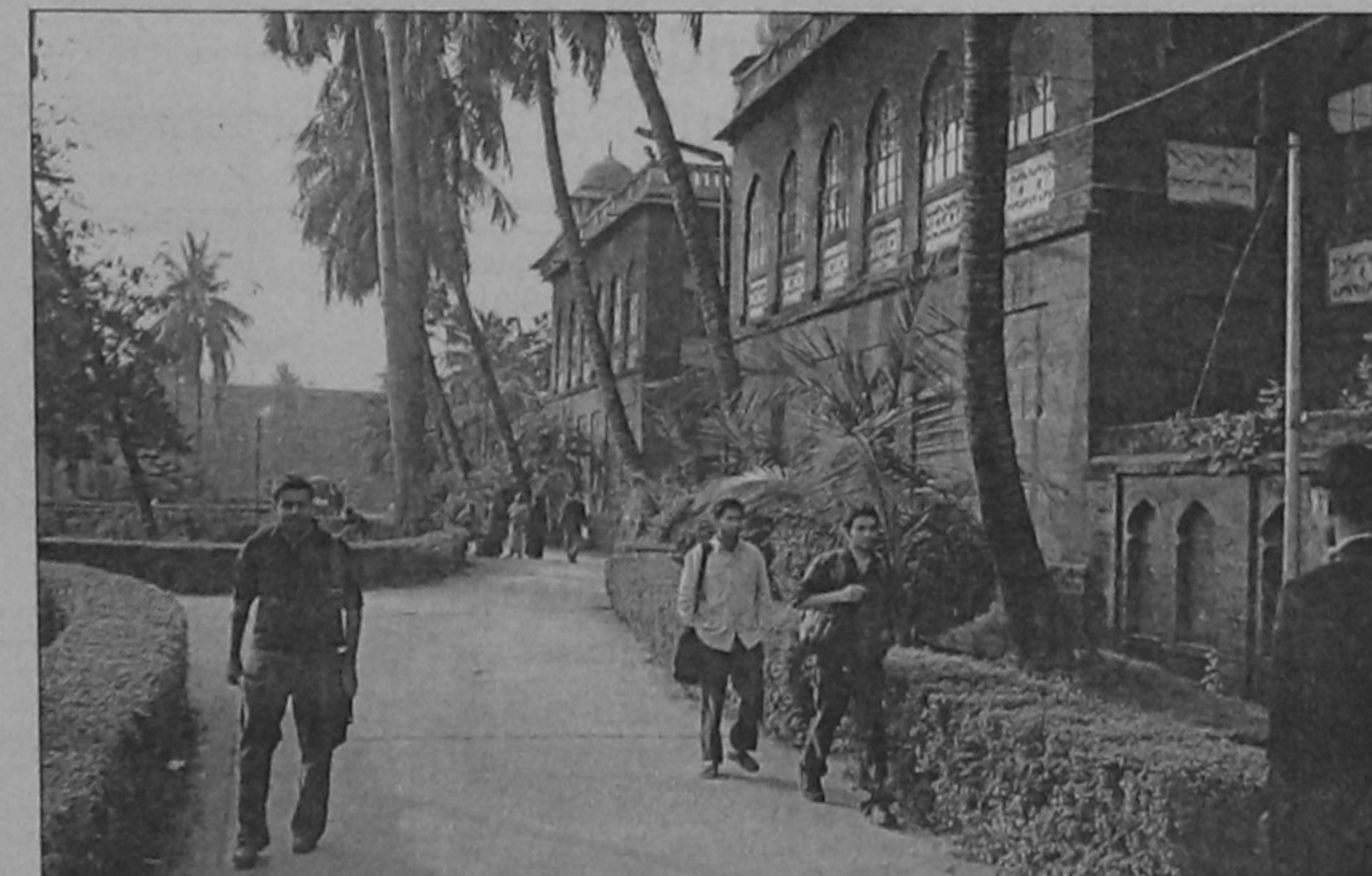
**Admission ordeal**

University is the highest academic place for students. Every student has a dream to study in a public University.

Every year we can see the number of GPA-5 holders increasing rapidly.

Though they obtain the GPA-5, many of them will not get admission in a public university.

The matter deserves a closer look.  
Sheikh Md. Faysal  
Department of Business Administration  
Shahjalal University of Science & Technology  
Sylhet



**American scene**

Congratulations to President-elect Barack Obama and consolation to Senator McCain. Both of them deserve appreciation for the spirit they have shown in upholding and retaining the democratic norms and values one by winning the election and the other by graciously conceding defeat!

The systematic and peaceful way the American election was conducted and executed by the American people should act as a lesson for all the countries of the world, particularly the third world countries, which are struggling to set up a true democracy.

Interestingly, Barack Obama who has been elected as the 44th President of the United States of America is the third President from the State of Illinois, the first being Abraham Lincoln. It is sincerely hoped that President Obama will follow the philosophy of late President Abraham Lincoln "FOR THE PEOPLE, OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE".

I sincerely wish President Barack Obama grand success in overcoming the current financial crisis and in preventing nations from fighting against one another. Let peace see the rays of the morning sun. Let darkness be wiped out!  
Professor M Zahidul Haque  
Chairman  
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University  
Dhaka

**Points to ponder**

The Almighty is above any kind of controversy, question and criticism. Now the question is whether the judges shall also enjoy the same immunity of faith that they are above criticism or not accountable for their acts and deeds. No way one can question about any judicial matter.

Do you think the ordinary citizens have the right to scrutinize the judges as individual human beings like an ordinary citizen? If an ordinary citizen can be questioned for his or her conducts, why should a judge be exempted from that scrutiny? This is perhaps, against the principle of justice and fair play as indoctrinated in our great religion Islam. I am not an Islamic scholar. I would appreciate if a genuine and unbiased Islamic scholar in our country can throw light on this issue of judges being exempted from any criticism or discussion for his official acts and deeds.

My feeling expressed above is basically academic to learn about Islamic sanction about judges and justice. I do not remember how much time has been taken to resolve how many cases, but I would have been satisfied if the learned lawyer could tell the media whether the news item was "true or false" or "right or wrong"? We are looking for facts.  
Areader  
One-mail

**BJI's game plan**

You will agree that in the recent days the Jamaat [renamed themselves as BJI] was hyperactive. Their attitude showed that they were the prime power players of the 4-party alliance. Soon after the one/even, except the Jamaat, all other political parties went through humiliations. The BJI managed to hide themselves under the bed sheet. The CTG and the law enforcers could not find them! Their leaders claimed that they did not participate in the plundering during the BNP-Jamaat led government that ruled Bangladesh between 2001 and 2007. Now two of their 'gang or ring' leaders were sent to jail. They protested, as if either of the two 'Begums' [as mentioned in the Economist] were sent to jail!

I am not sure why the BNP still depends on the BJI. If the BJI wants to participate in the polls, the BNP high command should let them go and participate in the polls alone.

I think the BJI was partner of the BNP for the time being, and partnership sometimes needs to be re-evaluated! It would be wise for the BNP to re-think about their partnership with the BJI now. The BNP will commit political suicide if they again take BJI along with them in the next election.

The BNP should revitalize itself by participating in the election without a partnership with the BJI. The BJI shall create the image problem for the BNP since the coming election will be held just two days after 16 December.

Hope that the BNP chairperson shall be wise enough to re-think about the BJI.  
Jhorna Ayesha Nizam  
Dhaka

**Bay crisis**

There were some dismal and worrisome headlines published in your daily for a few days. On November 3: "Myanmar brings warships to explore Bangladesh waters." On November 4: "Myanmar defies warnings." On November 5: "Myanmar sends another warship" and on November 6: "Myanmar suspends exploration in Bay." These headlines clearly give us the true impression how volatile the situation really was. This news also gives us a warning sign that we are in danger of foreign invasion and our armed forces should be constantly ready to face any eventuality.

Myanmar has intentionally violated international laws and deployed four ships for exploring oil and gas in Bangladesh maritime territory, ignoring Bangladesh Navy warnings. The Bangladesh Navy also positioned three ships at the spot. What would have been case if the situation was just the opposite? Myanmar surely would not have waited for long. They surely would have struck back harshly. Why did our Navy keep quiet and did not retaliate at all? Despite repeated warnings from Bangladesh government against trespassing, the warships of Myanmar continued to roam around. This was indeed a worrying sign.

Myanmar may have suspended their illegal exploration in the Bay, but nobody knows what they will do in future. Our foreign policy on some countries should be more focused and stringent.  
Minhaj Ahmed  
Uttara, Dhaka

**Commuters' nightmare**

With gas prices ever on the rise, people living farther from the

workplace, and traffic conditions worsening by the week, the daily commute is increasingly having an impact on our wallets and our lifestyles -- as well as global climate change. From getting the best gas mileage to work-from-home jobs to reducing air travel and international travel (by holding teleconferences, for example), improving your commute means improving your quality of life.

Since 1960, the number of miles Americans travel each year has more than tripled. Meanwhile, fuel economy of passenger vehicles has decreased. Between 1993 and 2003, greenhouse gas emissions from transportation went up nearly 25 percent, according to a report by the US EPA. And despite the fact that nobody likes sitting in traffic, we are increasingly driving to work alone in our cars, all the while contributing to global warming and making ourselves miserable.

In fact, light-duty vehicles -- that's passenger cars, vans, minivans, SUVs, and pickup trucks -- account for 62 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S., says the EPA. Passenger cars alone are responsible for 35 percent of that, and are the largest contributor of any vehicle category, above even heavy-duty vehicles and aircraft. Consider now that for each gallon of gas a car burns, it emits about 20 pounds of carbon dioxide. Multiply that by a daily commute of 40 miles for a car that gets 24 miles per gallon, and you have a car that's spewing out more than 8,000 pounds of CO2 for its commute each year. Saving just a few gallons of gas each week can really add up.  
Farjana Afrin  
Mirpur  
Dhaka

**CTG slackening its grip?**



We do not want to believe the present caretaker government basically stood on the quick sands. The army stepped forward to save our country from a civil war or some happenings extremely deleterious for the country at that crucial time. The then caretaker government, the Election Commission and the militant political parties were obsessed with playing a highly destructive game. The people became helpless spectators having no direction as to what to do. At that crucial juncture the army came to their rescue and the present caretaker government came into being. So it will not be wrong to presume that this caretaker government stood basically on a hard ground backed by the strong custodian of our sovereignty. It performed a lot of good jobs for the country and the people and made some mistakes also during its tenure of eighteen or nineteen months. It is our bad luck that the evil forces prevalent in our country have become triumphant again to prevail the good jobs as bad and the mistakes as blunders. They restored their grip on the politics of the country and want all their criminal hands out of handcuffs.

May be so or something else, the hard ground under its feet seems to have retreated itself to a distance at the fag end and the caretaker government is taking tottering steps. This may hasten its exit and throw the country to the same or worse swoop again.  
Molla A. Latif  
Kapasia, Gazipur

**Obama and Latin America**

One would imagine that America's southern neighbours would have been electrified at the prospect of a black person running their northern neighbour. Guess what?

Only 29% thought a Barack "bio-fuel" Obama victory would be good for their country; 8% thought the other core would be better; and - wait for it! - 30% believed there would be no difference whatsoever, while full 31% were totally ignorant of the proceedings. That means a whopping 61% were indifferent to the so-called "epochal" election.

Being so close to Uncle Sam, these guys know that nothing changes for them; indeed, after

9/11, when Europe, Canada and even Iran were crying rivers, Latin Americans did not mount a single vigil; they felt that America deserved it. One more observation: a few years ago the first Amerindian president, Evo Morales, was elected Bolivia's president - the world did not even notice!

Why? For one thing, persecution of both slaves and natives was less intense in the Iberian colonies than the Anglo-Saxon one up above; secondly, Bolivia hurts nobody but itself, while America hurts everybody, including some of its own people.

As a Latin American leader once lamented: "So far from God, and so close to America".  
Iftikhar Sayeed  
Dhanmandi, Dhaka