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**"No" vote**

In preparation for the general elections on December 29, if we take a very good look at Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party nominated candidates, it may be noted that many convicts and corrupt businessmen, bureaucrats are still on the poll race. Although Awami League has introduced many new faces, BNP is still in favour of controversial personalities. Both the parties have controversial alliances too. There are independent candidates but it appears that they do not have flow of cash and power. To judge the value of democracy, to save the nation from endless miseries, we must not vote the corrupt candidates. And if we find no honest candidates we must cast "No" votes.  
Rubab Abdullah (Shukla)  
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

**Farewell to Bush**

Public shoe beating is the worst insult and ridicule to which a person can be subjected to! This is how it is viewed not only in Asia, but I am sure in most of the world. The live TV pictures of Bush being at the receiving end of flying Iraqi shoes is really surprising, though not unexpected; given his deeds against Iraq! It is the expression of the suffering of Iraqis under the killing and destruction let loose by Bush. Given the circumstances, it is probably an appropriate farewell gift from Iraq; a pair of flying size 10 shoes! I do not remember of having heard or seen anywhere near this sort of insulting or demeaning situation that the head of any state had to face, in the last fifty years or so; as long back as I can recollect Bush brought bombs on Iraq; and ended up being bombed by Iraqi shoes; not an inappropriate response. It reminds me of the famous lines of the poem:  
Sceptre and crown  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made,  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.  
Given Bushes shallowness; one wonders if he can fathom the significance of the flying Iraqi shoes. Lest we forget; it was a symbolic response of all

the pent up misery and fury that represented the flying shoes from a brave Iraqi who dared to call, "a spade a spade"! Hats off to him.  
Bush watcher  
Dhaka

**No room for terrorism in Islam**

In Islam, there is no provision to kill innocent people for any reason whatsoever. Islam is a religion of peace. Even in the war-field, Muslims are not permitted to kill enemy soldiers unjustly. Moreover, Islam instructed Muslims not to kill women and children even during a real war!  
Islam never supports terrorism. In fact, there is no room for terrorism or terrorists in Islam. In my opinion, time has come when Muslims of the world should unitedly commission religious as well as moral instruments to fight against terrorism!  
Professor M Zahidul Haque  
Chairman  
Department of Agricultural Extension & Information System  
SAU, Dhaka

**BNP's attitude**

For the last few days BNP chairperson and her hand-picked Secretary-General are issuing statements to the press to the effect that BNP would accept the election results if the elections were free and fair! They are talking of conspiracies regarding the national polls. We do not understand why they are raising this issue now? After all CTG is helping the Election Commission to hold the polls in a free and fair manner and they are not stakeholders in this election.  
Are they preparing the ground beforehand so that they can reject the results if those are not in their favour by bringing in imaginary allegations of rigging? Why the CTG or for that matter, the Election Commission should help any political party to resort to rigging and spoil everything and gain nothing but bad name. We don't find any logic to think so.  
Abul Mohsin  
Siddheswari Circular Road  
Dhaka

**BSF**

BSF is killing Bangladeshis on the border areas day after day. But except from a few corners, nobody is protesting it. The caretaker government has taken no action against it. Also the sector commanders' forum is silent in this issue. We are a free nation. But the action of BSF made it questionable. We expect that the sector commanders' forum will take initiatives for trial of BSF.  
Dr. Md. Maksudullah  
SSMC, Mitford Hospital  
Dhaka

**Bushflex**

The very recent shoe-assault by the gutsy and spirited Iraqi journalist has become a hotcake all over the world. People all over Iraq are in some sort of festive and winning mood having caught George W. Bush, the American President, on their own soil.  
However, none has taken notice of the smart and instant action reflex of the American President- George W. Bush that saved him from the onslaught shoe abuse in Iraq. Critics all over consider this U.S president to be foolish and not aware of his surroundings. However, President Bush gave a sound reply to all those who criticize him of not being aware of his surroundings though a quick reflex showing he is well conscious and alert of what is happening around him. I believe an English terminology can come up as "Bushflex" describing conscious mind with quick reflex. Cricket players can take a video footage of this clip and take lessons of how to turn away from quick time bouncers.  
Planners, economists as well as politicians all over the world in their crisis can consider following Bushflex to solve their multi-dimensional problems in the smartest manner.  
Zahid A. Choudhury  
Dhaka

The slapping of shoes in the face of the President George W. Bush has totally tarnished the dignity/image/position of the president of USA, usually

considered one of the most powerful positions in the world. The event which has dragged the prestige of the US President to the lowest of the low only to remind the world that there should be a limit to everything.  
In the event while President Bush's heart bleeds, on the contrary the world rejoices in celebrations, especially the Muslim states. Today the world salutes that journalist who has fulfilled the dream and desire of the entire humanity. The Journalist becomes a legend whose name will go down in history. And perhaps the Iraqi TV Journalist Muntadar - Al-Zadi should be considered to get a Nobel prize for projecting the hatred for the President of USA and his spoon fed stooge allies.  
A note of caution for future is that however powerful a President of particular nation might be - he is not above people's power. A lesson also for the framers of foreign policy /National Security and Defence planning of US while applying the Scorch - Earth US policy around the world, especially in the Muslim States.  
A note of caution --- America should shake hands with the Muslim world before it is too late to repent and regret.  
Shakibullah Yunus  
Dhaka

**Honesty is the prime concern**  
Political parties launched a new way of campaign emphasizing what the candidates should refrain from rather than what initiatives they have taken or what manifestos they have submitted to the nation. One candidate says, "If I am involved in corruption, I take bribe, you should not cast vote for me. But if I don't do that, why do you not cast your vote for me?"  
The persons engaged to canvass using mike shout that their candidates did not commit crime, they did not take bribe and that's why they should be voted. May be, General people as well as many politicians in our country are unaware or partially aware of the manifestos or commitments submitted to the nation by the political parties. As the country observed the dual-entity of the politicians one of which is to commit and another is to violate the commitment so the nation is looking for honest candidates rather than looking at the manifestos submitted by the parties. The leading parties already announced their manifestos. There are little consensus among the parties about their individual commitments about solving the unemployment problem in our country. AL has submitted well-defined and organized manifestos mentioning time-line. But analysts have already expressed suspects about accomplishment of the commitments.  
BNP also submitted their manifestos which is not so well-defined or specific. The country is going to face another turmoil if the manifestos are not accomplished and there is no option for accountability. In a democratic country, the government is asked about progress according to their manifestos in press conferences for example 'meet the press' in USA after a certain interval. But in Bangladesh, the government is hardly asked about accomplishments of their commitments or manifestos. Now the most important task of the present government, on which the whole nation is looking for is the upcoming election. The country wants to see a free and fair election which will be a quintessence of election as committed by the CA.  
Subir Das  
Dept. of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering  
BUET, Dhaka

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**Election manifesto**



NOOR ALAM / DRIKNEWS



FIROZ GAZI / DRIKNEWS

For the coming general election, the political parties are announcing their election manifestos. In the meantime, the big two political parties i.e. AL & BNP have already unveiled their respective charter. AL has selected the slogan "Charter for Change" and the BNP "Save Country, Save People". It is not a surprise that the election manifestos of both AL & BNP are full of promises having 23 pledges from AL & 36 from BNP. The promises include all aspects and expectations of the people, from eradication of corruption to ensuring job for at least one youth from each family.  
After creation of our beloved country Bangladesh 37 years ago, both AL & BNP got people's mandate to govern / serve the country. Probably the people did not forget what they did in the past. However, both the parties (any one of the two will form the next government) are now again going to the people with renewed promises. Renowned economists of the country already expressed their reservations about the election promises of these political parties as there is no clear indications where from and how they will generate funds / resources for achieving the goals. Adding 5000-7000 MW power to the national

grid, setting up nuclear power plant, construction of Padma Bridge and a deep sea port, building an underground rail system or elevated monorail in the capital etc. will require massive investment and vast amount of resources.  
When some one promises something, there should also be another clause telling what the promising parties will do in case they fail to fulfil the promises against which the people will vote them. Each party can also add one more promise, that if it is voted to power but fails to fulfil 60% of its election promises within first three years of its tenure then the government will resign and handover power to the opposition for the remaining two years. This system will enable the people to decide easily the fate of the parties during the next general election. However, to evaluate the performance / achievement of the party in power, there should be an independent body and that is the crux of the matter.  
Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque  
Khalishpur, Khulna

removing Special Power Act, setting up metro rail, monorail, in Dhaka city and blah, blah, if elected to power is nothing but eyewash. None of the major parties are saying that they would decentralise power and divert all developments toward rural Bangladesh, empower union councils, develop upazilas etc. What we need is development of other towns and cities and make Dhaka less attractive for rural people to migrate here. We need super highways to connect all metropolitan cities, remove all industries from the capital. We don't need metro rail or monorail. Enough has been discussed on these projects.  
What we need is a disciplined and strict traffic rules, more roads and bypasses. We want police to work independently and it should not become a tool in the hands of party in power for suppressing the opposition and dissidents. We don't want to see interference by political parties in educational institutes and universities. We don't want to see hartals for hartal's sake. Political parties have failed to reflect the wishes of the mass in their election manifestos. What we see are bogus election manifestos.  
Ziauddin Ahmed  
Gulshan, Dhaka

Election manifestos announced by major political parties appear to be a kind of bluff once again for soliciting voters. Making big promises like

**Begum Zia's campaign**

Begum Khaleda Zia, an ex-Prime Minister and chief of BNP has started her election campaign after performing Ziarat at the Mazar of a Holy Shrine at Sylhet. In her very first call to the nation she warned the people that the country "is in deep crisis" and it is only she and her party the jatiyotabadi and so-called Islamist forces can solve these crisis. She also reminded the people that "a deep conspiracy is being hatched to install a "tabedar sharker" meaning a puppet government in the country and again only she and her 4-party can accomplish their unfinished tasks if voted to power again.  
If we analyse her speech we find that "there is none but she and her BNP who can deliver goods to the people and run the country. There is no one else who even has the right to ask for peoples' votes". She smells conspiracy everywhere and in everything, believes Bangladesh is her personal property and the people of this country are her subjects. It seems she has not learnt anything from one-eleven. Her confinement in jail for corruption charges were nothing but part of conspiracies etc. too. She is trying to befool the people by talking about Islamic Forces.  
She has totally forgotten what she and her party men did during her last reign. I request Begum Khaleda Zia, please come to sense, preach peace and unity and not hatred  
Shafiq Islam  
One-mail

2006-2007) is suffering from kidney disease. Both of her kidneys have been badly damaged. She needs proper treatment right now.  
I request each and every reader of The Daily Star to contribute whatever one can to save her life.  
Anyone, inside and outside Bangladesh is welcome to help her. The account number is given below:  
Md. Solaiman  
Savings Account  
No:002199335  
Swift code: JANBDDHTKD  
Janata Bank Ltd.  
Mohammadpur Corporate Branch, Dhaka  
A group has been dedicated to her in facebook. Anyone can go to the link: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=50977652760> and get more information.  
We waste our money in different ways doing various things. Let us save some amount and save a life.  
Minhaj Ahmed  
Uttara, Dhaka

and asked them about their case. They explained him that the immigration officer wanted to open their visa packet. This gentleman then explained that rude man that he is not eligible to see the paper inside the packet and my brother-in-law/sister is not allowed to open it.  
It would be appreciated if our immigration, customs and airport authorities could work sincerely, be friendly and do not harass the passengers without knowing the rules.  
Dr. Farid Majumder  
Darmstadt, Germany

owe to our country and those being ruthlessly killed by BSF every now and then to stand against all kinds of external threat as well. They should be brave not merely against the war criminals inside our country but with regard to anything that threatens our independence from external danger.  
Ali Mohammad  
Wari, Dhaka

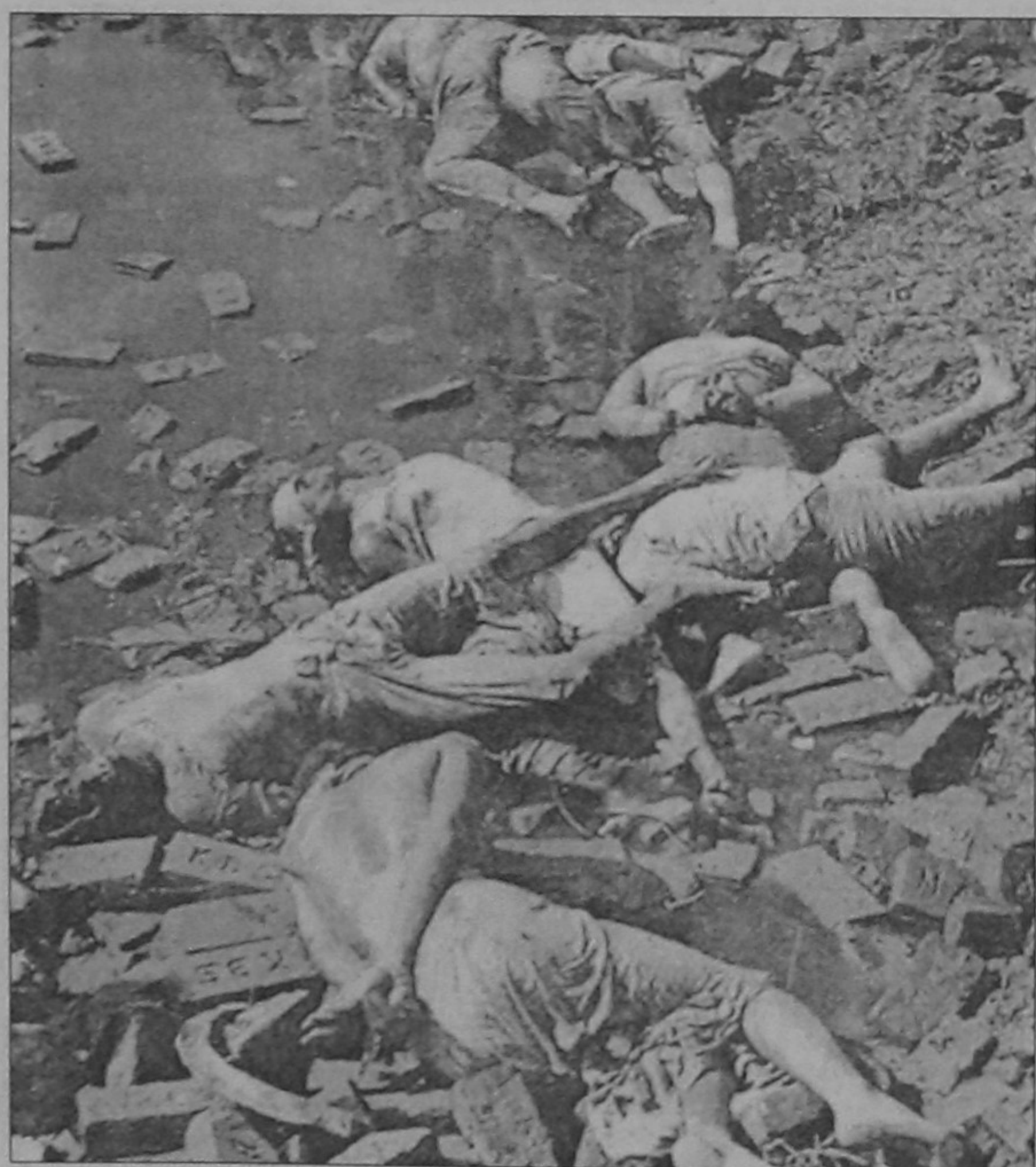
**Sector Commanders' Forum**

It is very heartening to note that the valiant Sector Commanders of our liberation war have united together in a forum to stand against the war criminals of 1971 who collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces to annihilate the Bengalis from our sacred soil through ruthless killing, arson, rape and whatnot?  
However, I would like to urge upon the forum not to limit its preview only within the issue of war criminals. They should rather include in its agenda anything that poses threat to our sovereignty both internally and externally. How happy we would have been had the forum taken up the issues of Myanmar's unilateral intrusion into our territorial waters for surveying gas reserves and also the brutal killing of three Bangladeshis including a woman and a child by a BSF jawan a few days back at our border through strong protests, processions and meetings. I think the Sector Commanders

**Pretending to be choosers?**

Would someone kindly explain to us why we are holding this very expensive and dangerous election? The obvious answer is that Bangladesh is a democratic country and we have the power to choose who should run our country. Okay, so far so good. But, if democracy is about having the power to choose your leader, then why have we been stuck with Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina since 1991? Yes, it is possible for a leader to get elected multiple times but only if s/he is exceptionally good. Based on their 17-year performance record, do you think Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina are exceptionally good leaders? This year again Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina have decided that we have to choose between them. But how did the two ladies come to this conclusion? What selection process have they used to prove to us that they are the two most suitable candidates to run our country for the next five years?  
So I ask you that question again: why are we holding this election if the choice has already been made?  
Azad Miah  
Oldham  
UK

**Trial of war criminals**



It's undeniable that every history has to endure a few shameful scars, which never cease to disparage its supreme pride. As Bangladeshis we must always be ashamed of the fact that we failed to prosecute the collaborators who played a key role in the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani invaders in 1971. Perhaps, today I'm even more ashamed of our predecessors than these sordid traitors, since our forefathers failed to wash these scars off our glorified history. Today, after 37 years, we demonstrate on the streets for the 'elusive' trial of the war criminals (as if staging a trivial drama), we watch emotional discussions on TV channels where participants ardently demand for effective tribunals and our intrepid freedom fighters hold countless meetings to boycott the war criminals from elections. At the same time, we inevitably put up with the fact that some of these infamous collaborators have served as ministers and top bureaucrats in our government administration. Moreover, we get utterly surprised to see these war criminals 'indifferently' representing one of the notorious political parties (a party reluctant to acknowledge our war of independence) and our leading parties forming lucrative coalitions with these twofaced collaborators in order to win elections! This entire scenario

seems to me like a trite satire, characterized by a rather nasty sense of humour. The dauntless existence of these war criminals in our political milieu has turned the tragic tale of our liberation into a 'hysterical mockery' as we imprudently gave them the opportunity to laugh at our inability to ensure justice for our nation and for those who sacrificed their lives for our liberty selflessly. Our failure to punish these barefaced collaborators actually endorses the view once held by these traitors: 'the Bengalis are only good at talking, not at doing'. I really don't know how we should answer our next generations, who (quite logically) might not believe our luminous stories of freedom, when they'll see people who blatantly opposed it occupying the highest ranks in our socio-political system. Our political leaders have continued the perpetual blame-game regarding this issue for long and we incessantly put blames on several scapegoats. Now after 37 years it's quite natural for us to be sceptic about the prospect of 'the ultimate justice'. However, we must not forget that it's never too late to bring those to justice who remorselessly assaulted humanity in the name of God.  
Khandoker Asef Safa Kabir  
Lalmatia, Dhaka

**Harassment in ZIA**

Just few days ago my sister and her family went to ZIA to fly to USA with immigration visa. They have their USA visa on their passports and have got an immigration visa packet from the Dhaka US Embassy. This packet is addressed to the American immigration officials on arrival at the airport and nobody is allowed to open this document. This fact is known to every immigration officers in ZIA. Unfortunately, an immigration officer from ZIA indiscriminately pressed my brother-in-law and sister to open that immigration visa packet. He refused to let them go until they opened it and kept them waiting. In the meantime a gentleman came from the immigration booth

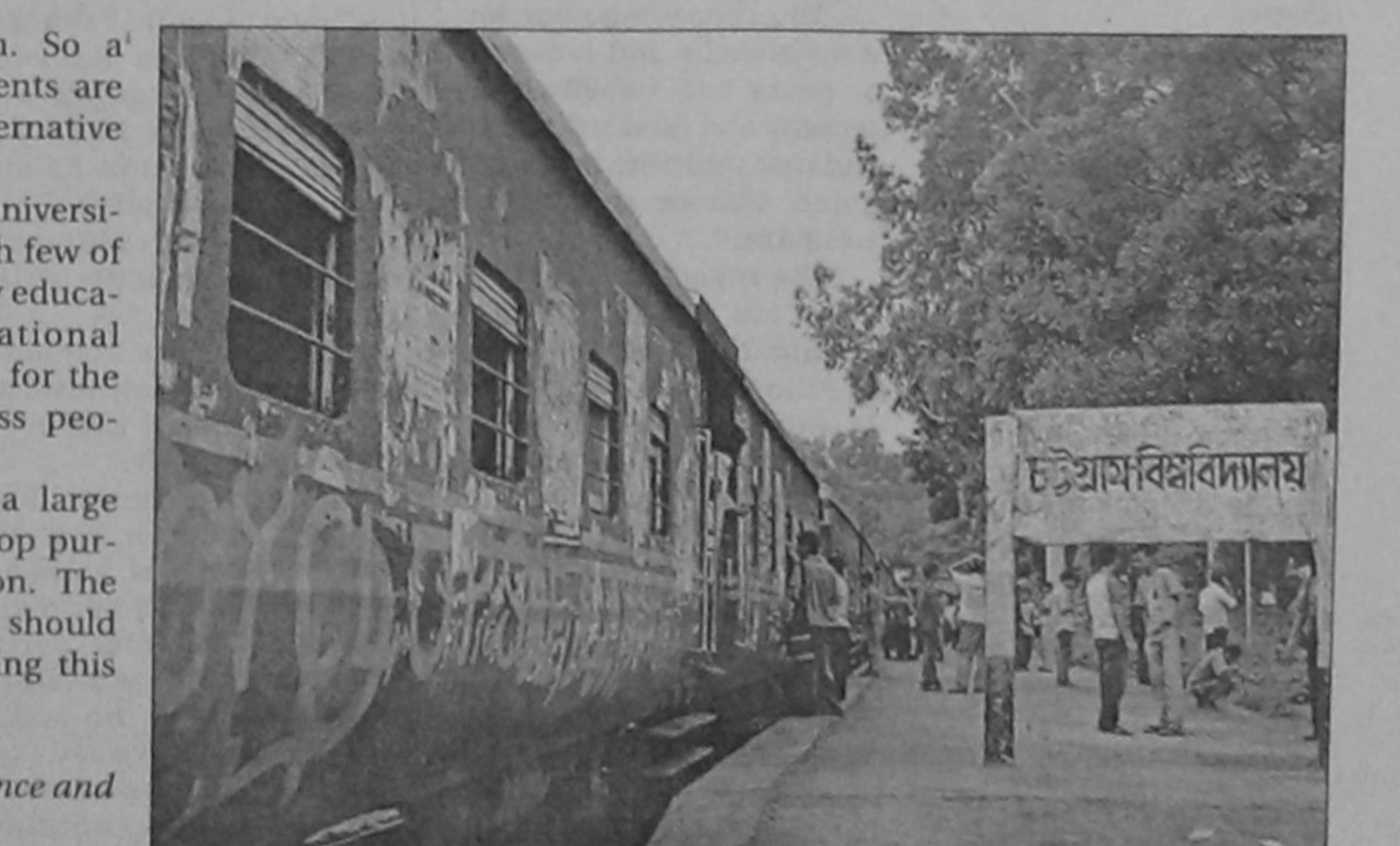
**Help Simi**

Simi a student of Dhaka university Marketing Department 13th batch (ses-

**Admission in public universities**

With the number of students increasing rapidly, admission in almost every public medical college and university is getting tougher.  
I have seen many promising students with stunning GPA in both SSC and HSC who later could not manage to get themselves admitted to any university. One can argue that they lack basic concepts and that's the reason behind their failure. But the number of seats the mentioned institutions offer are too few for them.  
In many cases, it has been observed, as many as 50 to 60 students compete for one seat. It indicates that not all meritorious students are able to pur-

sue higher education. So a good number of students are bound to hunt for alternative ways.  
Nowadays, private universities are on the rise with few of them providing quality education and the educational expenses are too high for the middle and lower-class people.  
Getting frustrated, a large number of students stop pursuing higher education. The authorities concerned should take initiatives regarding this matter.  
Sarwar Hussain  
Dept. of Computer Science and Engineering  
University of Chittagong



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