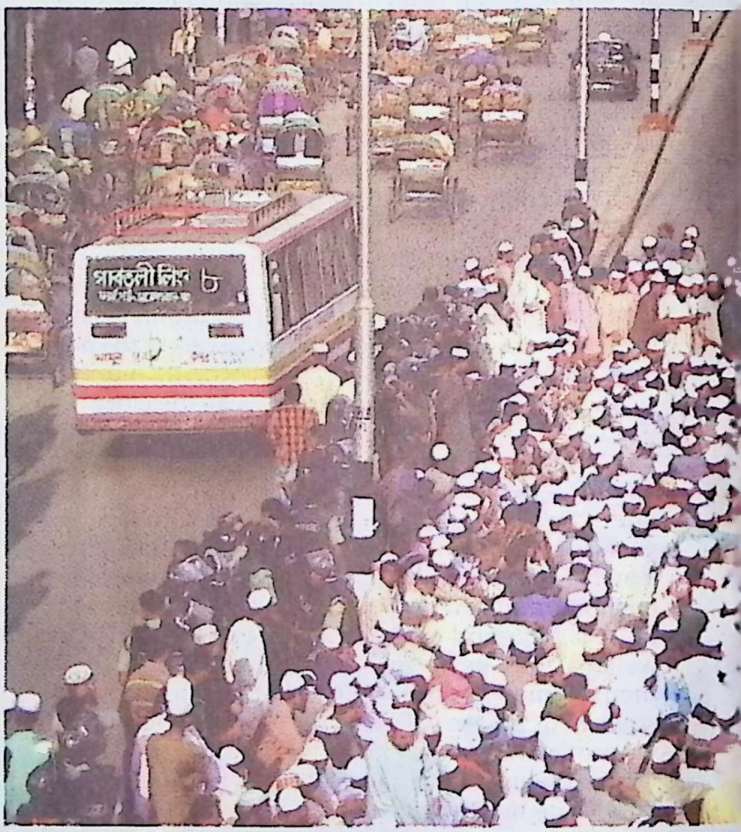
Freeing Bangladesh from Extremism

Terrorism has crossed transatlantic boundaries. The aggressive religious bigots now hold hostage international politics. The Left has always blamed the rise of the extremists, whether the RSS in India or the Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, on Western imperialism. Whoever may be pulling the strings, fanaticism has already perforated our borders and done much damage in the last few years. Whoever comes to power through this election, must tackle all extremist powers working within the country. To achieve that, the party in power itself must remove all communal elements from political activities.



Extremists call for the complete scrapping of a policy to give more rights to women.

HANA SHAMS AHMED

A Google search on The Daily Star's website for 'Sector Commander's Forum' (SCF) gives 87 results. Ever since its formation late last year, this group has been making media appearances (very well covered by the news reports, features and op-eds in DS) with two major demands -- a trial of the 1971 war criminals and the barring of the known war criminals from taking part in the upcoming national elections. Very reasonable demands. After all isn't it contradictory for a person who opposed the formation of the nation to sit in the parliament of that same nation?

Unfortunately demands from the SCF and other progressive, secular groups and members of the civil society have fallen on deaf ears. Now Jamaat's men fund the Rajshahi Islami Bank Medical College Hospital (IBMCH) where they organise free eye camps for 200 freedom fighters on our Victory Day. A vice-president of Jatiya Muktijoddha Parishad (JMP) also said that they receive 'donations' from Jamaat for the 'welfare' of freedom fighters. In its election manifesto the party has said that it would 'strengthen the liberation war ministry and the Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust and increase allowances for the freedom fighters' families'. I sometimes get exasperated trying to explain to my four-year-old son that it is not possible to erase crayon marks with an eraser. Now who is going to explain to Jamaat that it is not possible to erase the rape and murder they helped to mastermind 37 years ago with such insincere acts of philanthropy towards the comrades of those rape and murder victims.

The Pakistanis tried to obliterate Bangla because it was