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## Our man Mashrafe!



Is he lucky? No, never! Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, the Bangladeshi player with whom 150 million people may take pride, has been sold at \$600,000 and he brought priceless pride for Bangladesh. This is it. The luxurious and expensive cricket auction of Indian Premier League 2009 ends and Mashrafe stuns millions of cricket fans round the world. Is \$600,000

unbelievable price for Mashrafe? I disagree, why we should forget that we have some world-class cricketers. The world knows them but is reluctant to acknowledge. Bangladesh, a country of countless miseries, has gifted many hidden talents like Mashrafe. His price shows the dawn of Bangladeshi cricket. Now we of course will be getting due evaluation from cricket

experts.

We sincerely thank Saurav Ganguly for magnifying the jewel. And Mashrafe goes to say, "Kolkata is next door and I know how people there admire Bangladeshi cricketers. The auction is now over and the challenge for me is now to go out and prove my worth."

Mohammad Shahidul Islam  
A National Tourism Worker

### Functioning parliament

The two former and one late & the incumbent speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad never thought that the House could be turned into a temporary court for running smoothly the sessions & the special committee meetings.

All the Members have taken oath to serve the parliament of the Republic. It is the major function of the two Chief Whips to maintain discipline among the lawmakers.

Golam Ashraf  
Gulshan, Dhaka

### Critical phase

How can we relate sociology, politics, religion, economics? I am puzzled right at this time. In Bangladesh we can see bad coins replacing good ones. This law of economics is operating nearly in every area of our national life.

In 1947, our partition took place on the basis of emotion, rather than political expediency with millions killed and uprooted, although Moulana Azad protested this abnormal partition.

In 1971 we won, but afterwards we couldn't identify the friends and the enemies!  
Dr Azizul Karim  
GP, Australia

### Indian HC's comments

The BNP has officially refuted the Indian High Commissioner for his, what the party has termed as, undiplomatic remarks on BNP's statements on Indo-Bangla relationship. The Indian High Commissioner might have gone a bit out of diplomatic norms because he has been accredited to Bangladesh to represent his country to maintain and further develop relationship with this country. We do not support the way he has remarked on the remarks of the BNP over the expected signing of some agreements between the two countries. But we feel the BNP, which came to power twice and ruled this country for over a decade, should now return to sense and speak things of merit.

The days of lies, propaganda, bluffing people, accusing opponents of being unpatriotic are now over. People are conscious and do not believe what they say because all their past remarks have been proved false.

The BNP, in fact, is becoming a laughing stock in the outside world which is causing damage to Bangladesh's image because it is the second biggest political party here. It should be more responsible in dealing with state affairs, speak more positively and refrain from making remarks which have no basis at all.  
The BNP leadership should

always keep in mind that they are not talking about their arch enemy, the AL, they are talking about an issue which involves a foreign country.

Feeding Bangladeshis with cheap foods may be possible but feeding foreigners with BNP's home-made stuff will not succeed!  
Shafiqul Islam, NY

### PM in traffic jam

In your paper I saw the photograph of the Prime Minister convoy stuck in the Farm gate traffic jam which made me very happy because this is definitely a change that we the ordinary citizen welcome. We do want to see our VVIPs going about in the city without making a nuisance of stopping the traffic for hours till they cross as has been practised so long. Prime Minister Hasina had promised 'changes' in her manifesto and she surely showed that with her cabinet choice. Then one of the first parliamentary decisions has been the trial of the war criminals.

So far so good, and we are rooting for her all the way to make changes so that the nation can move forward and we can stand up with our heads high as a progressive and developing nation. We want to see Sheikh Hasina as the people's prime minister not in a pedestal to be worshipped. We believe she can deliver what she has promised as she guides her team of cabinet and the leadership with the belief of the spirit of liberation war and our dream to establish "Sonar Bangla."  
Akku Chowdhury  
Dhaka

### Rangpur University

This is a matter of great satisfaction that Rangpur University is now a reality. Although, from its very outset, the university has been facing various obstacles.

The new administration of the country is reasonably thinking from its own point of view to delay the progress which might obviously have some merits.

However, I'd like to strongly propose to name the university after Begum Rokeya as "Begum Rokeya University."

It is indeed very much relevant to have such nomenclature - glorifying the name of the pioneer thinker who had worked throughout her life for the emancipation of the women by spreading education and social reform.

The great visionary reformer dedicated her life for a dignified future of the women of the subcontinent in early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Should we not, after so many decades, name a university after her?  
M.Z. Ali  
One e-mail

### Disappointed

Though it's too early to comment on the activities of the AL government, I am not happy to see the proceedings actually. Particularly, the picture that was published in the front page of The Daily Prothom Alo was so disheartening for me. I voted for the AL for a change but what I saw is something that makes me confused about the future of Bangladesh. A few days ago, you commented in your writing about the theme (digital Bangladesh) of the AL's election manifesto. You rightly said that before making Bangladesh digitally developed, the AL should make itself digitally equipped. I am so much disheartened to see such a picture that makes me feel shy to my friends and relatives whom I suggested to vote for the change. But the AL has failed to get rid of the allegation that is said brought by their rivals, which is that it is the "factory of hooligans." Now I think I have to believe in this allegation.

Why have the central leaders failed to bring discipline in the party wings? I think Sheikh Hasina should immediately investigate the matter, before it's too late.

Anis  
Eidgah Bazar, Pahartali  
Chittagong

### Indian FM's visit

Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee paid a brief visit to Dhaka recently and signed some agreements and called on the Prime Minister. These were expected.

The unexpected was his skipping of the opposition leader, Begum Khaleda Zia. It is yet to be known what exactly prompted Mr. Mukherjee to meet the army chief and not the leader of the opposition. But, surely one can see some

ambivalence in it.

Democracy is back triumphantly again in Bangladesh, the world has seen it and so has India. Democracy has served India well since its independence, it will serve Bangladesh in the same manner, given the opportunity.  
AK Shamsuddin  
Mississauga, Canada

### Deprived enclave people

The world, despite having 194 independent states, has turned into a global village with the blessings of information technology. Every nation enjoys the facilities and services of an invention by a particular nation. In this era of modern nation state, the citizens are ensured all kinds of rights and facilities and even modern amenities for the ultimate advancement of the nation. In this modern age, more than hundred thousand Bangladeshi citizens living in the 33 enclaves in four Lalmonirhat Upazilas are deprived of fundamental rights and facilities; free movement, proper education, healthcare facilities, employment opportunities and communication, security of life and property and administrative facilities, due to the isolation of enclaves from the mainland by two kilometres.

Whereas the countries manifold bigger than Bangladesh can properly ensure the citizens' due rights, we are reasonably optimistic about our government's ability and efficiency to do so.

We urge the pledge-bound government to discuss the issue with the Indian government and make necessary arrangements to ensure the basic rights of the enclave people.

Alamin Al Azad  
Public Administration  
University of Dhaka

### Dead turtles

A revealing news item published in The Daily Star of February 10 stated that hundreds of dead turtles were found ashore along the coastal lines from Cox's Bazar to St Martin's Island. The report is very alarming for our ecology. We came to know that the fishermen killed the turtles entangled in their fine fishing nets indiscriminately. They did not prefer to release them. Some fishermen told that it was a very hazardous task to release the turtles into water. Actually, the ignorant fishermen are not aware of the repercussion of their insensible act. They are ruining the biodiversity and polluting the environment immensely. The experts warn of an impending environmental disaster as the aftermath of the large scale deaths of the turtles in the Bay of Bengal. The authorities should take some effective measures to motivate the illiterate fishermen, so that they stop such insensible acts.

The civil society, NGOs and local government bodies can play a pivotal role in this regard. They should make the fishermen aware of the environmental hazards created by their act.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen  
Lecturer in English  
Leading University, Sylhet

### Nation must know...

It is just a month that the AL government has come to power after a landslide victory in the last general election. Recently, General Moeen U Ahemd has launched his book titled "Shantir Swapney" where he explained how martial law was averted during 1/11 changeover. The speculation which was in the air prior to that change is now found to be true as Mr. Moeen wrote in his book that it sounded like a veiled threat to him when envoys of some powerful countries told him that they would request the UN to withdraw Bangladeshi peacekeepers if the army cooperated in holding the elections on January 22, 2007 without participation of all the parties.

This is a proof that the vital internal matters of our country are being controlled by outside forces.

We must come out of the grip of foreign control. But the new AL government has been eclipsed by the very recent visits of two powerful dignitaries from two powerful countries. The AL government has not yet even started organising our own affairs. That is why the visits of Mr. Boucher Mr. Pranab Mukherjee raised many questions in the minds of the people.

We are not getting our due share of Ganges water, right to use Tin Bigha corridor, South Talpatty etc. These issues need to be resolved before going for any new agreement. And the people must know all terms & conditions of every agreement.

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque  
Khalishpur, Khulna

### Save BTV

BTV and BTV world are the government televisions which people have easy access to all over the country. I didn't normally watch BTV due to its o "loyalty" to the ruling party or the government. I had a satellite connection with our television before the AL government came to power. After the grand achievement of the grand alliance, I have also disconnected satellite connection.

I hoped that our honourable prime minister Sheikh Hasina would deal with the

issue of BTV's neutrality. I thought that she understood the reality of BTV news and other programmes when she was in jail during the caretaker government's rule. People want a change, so they voted Hasina and her party to power. BTV was earlier called the box of beta and beti (son and mother) or generals and doctors.

We don't accept it. We want a neutral practice of BTV in their activities. We want all parties' coverage in news. After the independence of Bangladesh, the Awami league has been neglected in the government owned media. But they were not able to erase Bangabundu, Hasina and the Awami league from the hearts of people.

So, therefore, I humbly request the information ministry and the BTV authorities to make BTV a popular station for the people.  
Abbas Uddin  
College Avenue  
Barisal

### Old habits...

It seems old habits die hard, especially for our honourable ministers and lawmakers. Just a few weeks ago they were busy bragging about making parliament effective and now they are fighting about seat arrangements when the whole nation is falling apart. I am grateful to The Daily Star for exposing the horrendous state of our primary schools across Bangladesh but what do our politicians care about, when they can afford to send their kids to schools such as ISD, AISD, etc.

Let us talk about the state of nature in Bangladesh. Every day our hearts break when we hear about innocent animals being killed gruesomely, forests being cleared and rivers being polluted; yet our elitist, self-centered, arrogant & ignorant politicians are busy stealing money and lying. What happened to "CHANGE"?

The poor working-class

population break their backs to support their families and what do they get in return? Unpaid dues and having to walk barefoot during lunch breaks! Yet again, our politicians go missing when we need them to stand by our side.

What we need in this country is not "CHANGE" but "revolution" and it will only occur when the general citizens are awakened.  
Nabil Ahmad Siddiqui  
Dhaka Cantonment  
An A-Level candidate

### A Banani resident speaks

I have been living in Banani for the past nine years. Before that, I used to come here for a visit from time to time. The house is my grandparents' home. From the year 2000 till date, I have seen many changes in my locality, both good and bad, but never could fight the bad ones out. But now I am seeing things and finding no one to help me back my wishes.

On 8th February 2009, there was a meeting on Road No. 7, Block F, Banani, about not letting Indian visa office shift its office from Gulshan 1 to Road No. 7 Banani. While going through The Daily Star published on 9th February 2009, I could not agree to some of the mentioned arguments.

In one place it was written that people might have problems to get in and out of the neighbouring homes. I would say, while I stood for a visa myself, none of the people living in the flats close by used to go in and out when they felt it convenient. About the littering of the place, I never saw the place dirty at the end of the day.

My main reason behind using the statement is the field being at stake for kids to play. When I was a kid myself, the locality put locks on the doors so that we could not play. If it is so much important for kids to play, why did the authorities break our place to

play? Who gave them the right to do that?

Who thought about us kids then? I was only twelve years old. No one thought about us, kids. Doesn't this mean that kids in the past were unimportant? Does anyone have an answer to my question?

Chaos never took place. There is always the BDR and the police working their hearts out to keep peace and I read that the place becomes hell.

The protest was formed with a view to stopping destruction of the residential environment. Is Banani anymore a residential area? Who will answer this question? When a school was at the same place where the Indian Visa Centre is supposed to be, wasn't there bigger traffic? I won't say that the elders are wrong, but I just want to say that one should not brag about certain things.

If the elders remove all the offices from Road No. 11, Banani, I will also stand by their side. But now saying NO to the Indian Visa office to me is nothing but creating a bad reputation for Banani.  
Sunney Quazi Saad Billah  
One e-mail

### Congratulations, Akash Pradip

I read your novel 'After the Road Accident'. It is a masterpiece. Before I read your several articles in DS. From Gaza to Sri Lanka about many things you wrote. But this time you have written about the most burning issue of Bangladesh i.e. 'road accident'. I enjoyed the novel.

The sufferings of the hero touched my heart. I think you are the first person in Bangladesh who wrote a book as a mark of protest against road accidents. You said you wanted to sensitise the nation. I hope your mission will be successful.

I expect more novels from you.  
Rounak Saha Niloy  
Manikganj

## Children with asthma

There were nearly 200,000 hospitalisations and 750,000 emergency room visits for children due to asthma in 2004 worldwide. If you're unsure about the severity of your child's asthma, talk to your child's healthcare provider.

Uncontrolled asthma could cause some kids to miss days of school, interfere with daily activities, and even possibly lead to a visit to the emergency room. If left untreated, asthma could lead to more serious problems. Children with asthma should be able to better enjoy childhood. If your child is not as active as you think he or she should be, talk to your child's healthcare provider about your child's asthma symptoms and how to help prevent them in the first place.

Not all medications are right for



everyone. Fortunately, there are many options. Ask your child's healthcare provider if a controller medication might be right for your child.

Peter C. Rebeiro  
Indira Road, Dhaka

### City within a city

This may sound like a commercial. No, this is not a shopping mall, this is not an advertisement for a supermarket. This is the present picture of a residential place called Dhanmondi. Yes, this is the once Dhanmondi residential area now which can be termed as the capital of Dhaka. It may sound funny and sarcastic but the reality is as follows:

Once a calm, quiet, lush green residential area, it is now one of the busiest areas in Dhaka (2nd to Gulshan of course because of Gulshan's unique commercial use as office district). With its planned roads and plot/building layouts,

Dhanmondi certainly has the infrastructure which the capital city Dhaka lacks in many areas.

Apart from the residential apartments and few houses, Dhanmondi has schools, colleges, universities, offices, hospitals, clinics, shops, recreation centres (near bridge #8) drug stores, book stores, pastry shops, fast-food shops, kebab and grill houses, all over the so-called residential area. The sound and air pollution has probably crossed all international and local limits. The roads inside Dhanmondi are always clogged up with parked cars, standing rickshaws and all sorts of honking and bells at each and every crossing. The

abusive words exchanged between the drivers, rickshaw-pullers, pedestrians are common every day. Though Dhanmondi has all sorts of wanted and unwanted structures what is missing is the open space for the public and children. The mini city lacks playgrounds as it has only 02 sizeable grounds available (Abahani ground near the Shatmasjid Road and Dhanmondi Club ground near the Mirpur Road) but these are not open for the children to play day long due to cricket matches held by the BCB.

So, Dhanmondi is not what we think about it!  
Sohel Ahmed  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

## Information gap?

After a long wait Upazila Parishad Election was held on 22 January 2009. Nevertheless, the election couldn't elicit much praise compared to the national election. This is also a great achievement that we got an important tier of local gov-



ernment after 17 years.

Today I want to focus on the issue of Upazila Vice Chairman. I have been working on election observation and voter education for the last two years. From the part of my work, I looked after the Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance 2008.

In the 2nd section of the Ordinance, it is clearly written that Upazila Parishad will be formed with 1 chairman and 2 Vice Chairmen (one of them must be a woman). It means that 1 seat is reserved for woman and the other is a general seat which is open for both women and men. This is really unfortunate

that there was no woman candidate for the general vice chairman post.

What was the explanation of non-participation of women candidates for the general vice chairman seat in Upazila Parishad election? Lack of information may be the reason since 1 post is reserved for women, naturally the other is for man. Before and after the election if we look at the news items published by many newspapers we could see that some wrote, "Vice Chairman male candidates". Why are we thinking this way? Are we not well informed or the government

and the Election Commission could not disseminate the information properly? We, the general people, always depend on newspapers. We always try to equip ourselves with the information we get from newspapers. But this time we are a little bit disappointed.

We hope that the news agencies of the country will be more responsible to present the right information and also our government will be more careful about the dissemination of information; otherwise we may lose many opportunities.  
Sabina Parvin  
A development worker