

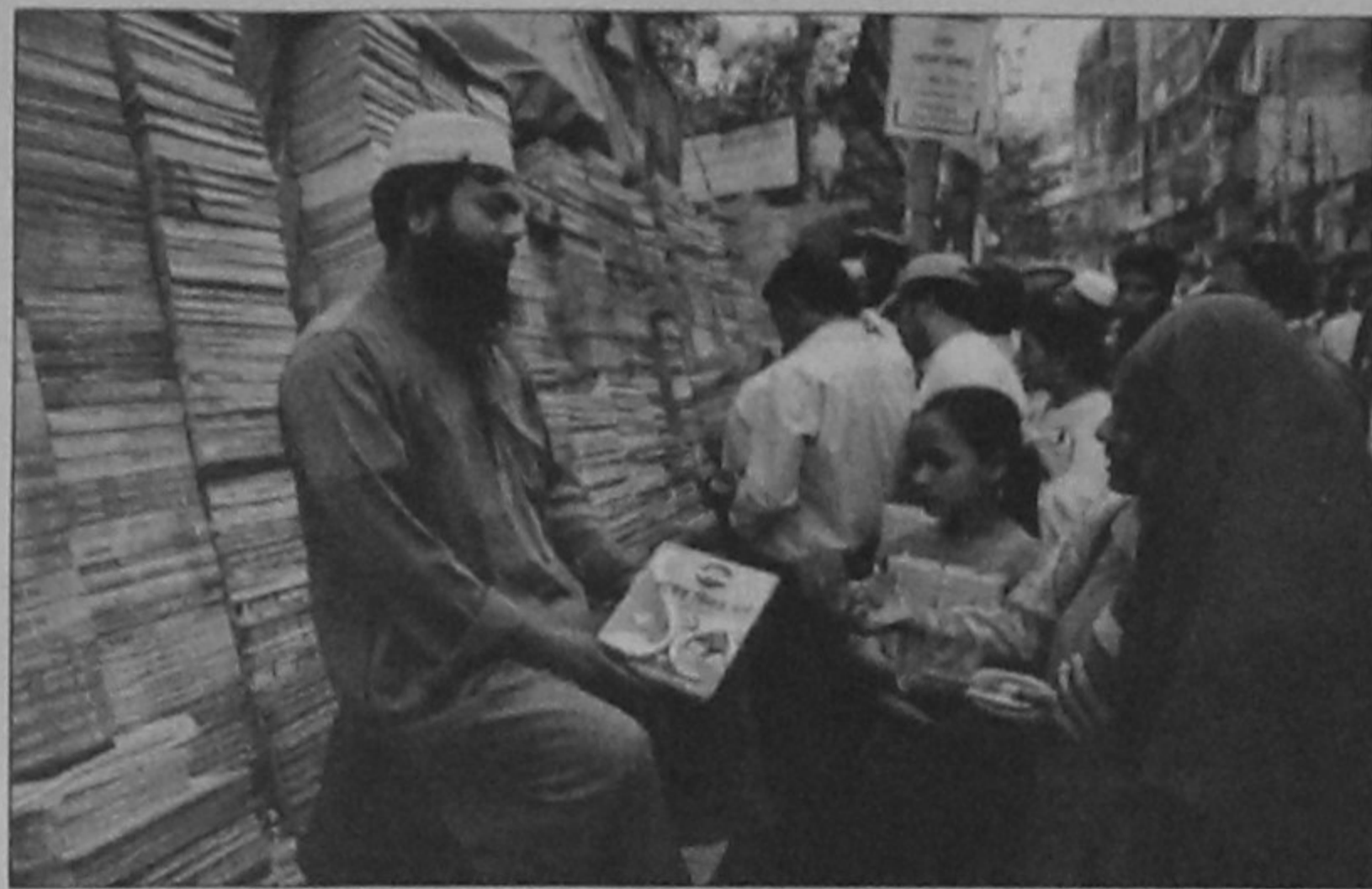
Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

## Textbook crisis

I can still vividly recall the day when I enrolled myself in class VI after finishing my primary education. I dreamt about new school, new environment and new textbooks. I eagerly waited to buy new textbooks as soon as possible. A certain curiosity to see what new contents, pictures and graphs were in the new textbooks was one of the main reasons to buy them quickly. I could not even sleep on the day before buying new textbooks. What I am saying till now is nothing but the true feeling of a school boy/girl like me.

Nobody has the right to hoodwink the school kids by creating an artificial crisis of textbooks. But regrettably we have been witnessing the same crime being perpetrated in this country for a long time. We often see textbook crisis at the very beginning of the academic session. It is created by a section of corrupt publishers in collusion with some dishonest government officials with a view to earning a windfall profit by selling guidebooks.

The reason behind this crisis is that the government awarded tenders for publishing textbooks to the top guidebooks producers. The NCTB divided its distribution of the textbooks into three phases according to the importance of the books the 14 most important ones are in the first phase, 38 in the second phase, and in the 3rd phase



There are 24 textbooks.

Although the deadlines for releasing books of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd phases has already elapsed, there is still scarcity of the books.

For this reason the education ministry formed a taskforce comprising personnel of Rab and NCTB to solve the crisis by February 5. The taskforce gave the ultimatum to publishers to release textbooks. But they failed to comply with its directive on the lame excuse that binding cost had increased but the government did not increase it, so they could not find workers to bind it on time.

It has been proved that it is an artificial crisis of textbooks created by some unscrupulous publishers in collusion with some dishonest

government officials when a huge number of books were seized by Rab from Bangla Bazar. According to Notebook Prohibition Act-1980, "No note books or such type of books of up to class vii can be printed and marketed. Besides, no textbook of above class viii can be printed and marketed without permission of the NCTB." But it is a matter of great regret that it is only in paper. The law is not properly enforced.

So my appeal to the government is: take punitive action against those unscrupulous publishers and dishonest government officials to stop this practice.

**Suman Saha**  
MBA student  
University of Dhaka

### Road accidents

We are facing the serious problem of road accidents because of the large number of vehicles and the negligence of drivers and people. Bangladesh has one of the highest fatality rates in road accidents, over 100 deaths per 10,000 motor vehicles. About 70 percent of road accident fatalities occur in rural areas including rural sections of national highways.

The national road accidents statistics in Bangladesh revealed a serious threat to the children. The incidence of overall child involvement in road accident fatalities in Bangladesh is found to be very high.

To avoid road accidents in Bangladesh, all the citizens and drivers have to be conscious. The government should make strict rules and punish them if they break the rules. Designating a single central agency with the authority to address road safety, development of a demonstration project for improving road safety, establishment of roadside trauma centres, establishment of highway police, modernizing the licensing process to enhance

skills of the drivers, strict control of overloading of heavy vehicles, modernization of vehicle fitness testing and inspections, better enforcement of regulations and establishment of advanced drivers' training institutes are immediately required.

**Mohammad Rajja**  
Gonosshasthya Samaj Vittik  
Medical College  
Savar, Dhaka

### Reserved seats

It is high time the current ruling party acknowledges the contribution of some really dedicated workers who have sacrificed their personal lives for the sake of the party. It was seen in 1996 when the AL came to power, those women were totally neglected and that had caused enormous harm to their political careers and amongst those were women who had dedicated their youth to the party. The party should look into the applications with utmost care and then decide whom to nominate.

When a party comes to power they tend to forget the veterans which causes immense frustration to those

frontline warriors, especially when they see the opportunists taking their places. My request to the AL high command is: judge every application on merit, rather than any undue request. Please do not give nominations to the opportunists.

**Awel-wisher**  
One-mail

### Visa office

I am unhappy to learn that the Indian High Commission's visa office is going to be shifted to Road 7 of Banani residential area. It was situated in Gulshan but they were compelled to close it because the people of that location would not bear the noise, commotion etc.

But how could the Indian High Commission decide to shift it to another residential area?

People of Banani R/A will not accept it. I hope the government will look into the matter and make sure that people of Banani residential area do not become victims of an unbearable situation and do not have to pass their days in great agony.

**Resident**  
Banani, Dhaka

### Good news

The main opposition BNP has returned to the JS. It is very good news for parliamentary democracy. I congratulate the main opposition leaders and BNP parliament members.

We think three front seats of parliament are not enough for the BNP. It is true they have very few seats in the present parliament, but they still have big popular support. More than 32% voters voted for them in the last parliamentary election.

**Md Sakibur Rahman Khan**  
Monoshwar Road  
Zigatola, Dhaka

### RJ Neerob

Radio Jockey (RJ) Neerob is the most popular radio jockey in the industry today. Due to his sheer talent and spontaneous way of talking, he has achieved mass popularity in fm radio fraternity. RJ Humayun Kabir Neerob popularly known as RJ Neerob, is the RJ of private fm radio station radio today fm 89.6.

He is the present craze of the youngsters. His popular programme 'Raat vor Gaan' which has been going on air for the past three years is the most popular programme of Radio Today. Not only as a RJ, Neerob is also hosting a university campus based magazine programme 'Campus e Campus' on Ekushey television, and also doing acting in a drama serial, besides hosting and producing programmes for radio. He has also written a book titled 'RJ hoye otha'.

RJ Neerob has massive fan following because he knows how to get the attention from the listeners. His unique style of speaking and sharing his thoughts with his listeners in a lively and convincing manner has made him the most sought after RJ of the present generation. Recently, this RJ has got the MEJAB (Media Journalists Association of Bangladesh) Award as the best RJ. I'm sure many more awards are waiting for him in the days to come. Wishing all the best to this RJ and hope he keeps us entertaining in the coming days.

**Nazmus Saquib**  
Dept. of English  
Stamford University  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

### Change we need

Change was the prime slogan on the occasion of the 44th US Presidential election and in our motherland it was "Din Badoler Sanad" which appealed to the new voters and also helped to establish democracy. Barack Obama has become 44th president by dint of the popular word 'change'. On the other hand, Sheikh Hasina has become the 13th Prime Minister of Bangladesh through the election held on 29th December 2008.

However, the government has to be fair in every respect. We still do not have a reliable PSC. When will the PSC be strong and effective enough?

**Rahman**  
Utara, Dhaka

### Amor Ekushey

Amor Ekushey is the noblest event in the history of Bengal. The Language Movement gave us the spirit of liberation. The language martyrs did not sacrifice their valuable lives for us to submit to a hopeless vision of our future.

We must keep the spirit alive.

**AKM Anisul Haque**  
Department of English  
Metropolitan University  
Sylhet

### Caution!

The Awami League was a left-of-centre party during the war of liberation. Recently, it was elected as the 13th government party with a view to changing Bangladesh and making it a digital country. Will it be possible for the AL to implement its plan? Internal fights is a major problem of the party.

So, our respectable prime minister should take some essential measures to control the internal disputes. She should start with the BCL.

**Luvdhak**  
Student  
University of Dhaka

### Neglected veterinarians

It is very surprising to see that there was no post for the veterinarians in the 28th BCS. In the 29th BCS also there is no post for the veterinarians. But we know that there is no way to neglect the veterinarians if we want to make a digital Bangladesh.

To make a digital Bangladesh, the present govt. has to take pragmatic steps in a sector like livestock. It is well established that many diseases are transmitted from animals to humans like avian influenza, FMD, rabies, TB, brucellosis, kala-ajar etc. We know that "prevention is better than cure".

At first we have to prevent and control those diseases which are fatal for human beings. The qualified veterinarians are needed for this purpose.

I believe, the present govt. will take immediate steps for accommodating veterinarians in the administration.

**Bhasker Chandra**  
One-mail

### Nationalism issue

We congratulate Dr Anwar Hossain for having the Ekushey Podak this year. I thank him especially for bringing up a very important and interesting topic in Aajker Sangbadpatra episode moderated by Mr. Motiur Rahman Choudhury.

He has very correctly mentioned about "unmesh" of Jatiyatabad during pre-independence period of India followed by Pakistan and finally by Bangladesh. He has mentioned about language based Jatiyotabad and religion based Jatiyotabad. He has very rightly pointed out that Bangladesh was born on the basis of language based Jatiyotabad; whereas Pakistan was born out of religion based Jatiyotabad.

The above analogy about "Jatiyabad" by Dr Anwar has a very significant impact on our social, political and cultural arena. In fact our two main stream political parties are following the path of "Jatiyotabad" on those two concepts. Bangladesh was born on the language based "Jatiyotabad", which ironically changed to religion based "Jatiyotabad" after August 15, 1975.

Now the question is: How to resolve this deep and big ideological difference between the two mainstream political parties?

The religion based "Jatiyotabad" will never ever agree to embrace the ideology of birth of Bangladesh. How to solve the issue?

A big question before the new generation and new generation politicians. Will they follow politics of religion or follow the universal liberal democracy where religion is absolutely an individual property.

Thanks again to Dr Anwar Hossain and Mr. Motiur Rahman Choudhury for presenting such a thought provoking segment on "Amor Ekushey Prothom Prohorey". We learned and enjoyed this segment sitting thousands of miles away from our motherland.

**Areader**  
One-mail

### Pakistan sends a wrong signal

Mirza Zia Ispahani, Special Envoy of Pakistan visited Bangladesh to convey the message of greetings and goodwill from President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani. Unfortunately, the message he delivered gave a wrong signal to the people here.

Following his meeting with our Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni, Zia Ispahani made a few comments on war crime trial. He said, "We should not go into this right at this moment because there are so many other issues we would like to cooperate on with Bangladesh". His comment is not only insensitive but also offensive to the people of Bangladesh. Once again, yet another Pakistani diplomat visited Bangladesh to sing the same old song: 'Let bygones be bygones'. For the Pakistanis, it is easy to say - let's forget. But for the millions of people in Bangladesh who saw their loved ones killed, maimed, raped; the trauma is still real. The mother who saw her son brutally killed by the Pakistani soldiers will neither forget nor forgive. The father who saw her daughter taken away to be raped and killed by the Pakistani invaders will never pardon them. The brutalities of Pakistani soldiers in 1971 have permanently traumatized a generation.

A deep wound divides these two nations. The healing process can possibly start only after all these war criminals are brought to justice. But unfortunately, none of

the Pakistani governments since 1971 took any initiative in that direction. Even today, as evidenced by Zia Ispahani's comment, they do not want to acknowledge that in 1971 Pakistan committed grave crimes against the people in Bangladesh.

If Pakistan is genuinely interested to improve bilateral relationship with Bangladesh, then the first step for Pakistan would be to co-operate with us to bring the war criminals to justice. This is not only in the interest of Bangladesh, but theirs, too.

The Pakistani leadership must reflect why their country is now the most dangerous place in the world. Why has it become a haven for the terrorists from all over the world? Terrorism has brought Pakistan to the brink of becoming the first failed state in South Asia. Terrorism in today's Pakistan is actually the bloody legacy of its collective crimes against a fellow human race in 1971.

It was interesting to note that Zia Ispahani supported Bangladesh's proposal for a South Asian Task Force to fight terrorism in the region. He commented, "We will go for it".

How can a state be a part of anti-terrorism task force while it harbours terrorists? Killers of Bangabandhu - a notorious band of terrorists - are still sheltered in Pakistan. They not only killed Bangabandhu, but also pregnant women and children. A country which condones war criminals, shelters terrorists will be a strange member of a regional task force to fight terrorism!

Zia Ispahani told the

reporters that he did not have any discussion about the war crime issue with Dr. Dipu Moni. Trial of war criminals including Pakistani war criminals is a top priority issue for this government and the people of Bangladesh. It is beyond me, why our foreign minister skipped this important issue during her meeting with the Pakistani envoy. Was it too much to ask the Pakistani envoy for their co-operation to bring the Pakistani war criminals to justice?

Why didn't our foreign ministry ask the Pakistani envoy to extradite the killers of Bangabandhu to Bangladesh?

The whole nation has already rejected Pakistani envoy's insensitive and offensive comments about war crime trial. Our foreign ministry is yet to do that.

The foreign ministry should have cancelled all remaining appointments of the Pakistani envoy after he made these unacceptable comments. It seems they have also become new believers of 'let bygones be bygones' adage.

A couple of weeks ago, an Indian journalist termed Bangladesh as a 'Buffer State' in the presence of our Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni.

The Indian journalist from Kolkata obviously did not know what he was talking about; but our foreign minister certainly knew that Bangladesh is no buffer state for geographical reason alone. But she remained silent. Her silence on such sensitive issues is deafening!

**Dr. Manjur A. Chowdhury**  
An entomologist

## Fire hazard



Every week or month some fire accidents occur. Still no measures have been taken to protect the capital city. The small and big incidents of fire ought to serve as a wake-up call for our complacent authorities to check the city's haphazard growth and put in place an effective fire-fighting mechanism.

A number of localities in the city areas like Rampura, Old Dhaka, Azimpur, Kamalapur and Nakhal Para, including all vulnerable slum areas, face a serious threat of fire disaster due to the presence of narrow roads and lanes and traffic congestion. Most of the market places in various parts of the city form another vulnerable area. Narrow lanes apart, the absence of sufficient fire-fighting facilities in the

markets is bound to multiple the risk factor. Then, many of the shopping complexes, especially the old ones, hardly possess any fire-prevention mechanism.

As shopping complexes attract huge crowds every day, any incident of fire could trigger a stampede and lead to catastrophic consequences. It is also doubtful how many of the high-rises sprouting everywhere in the city adhere to strict fire-prevention norms.

Under the circumstances, the administration and other government authorities concerned would do well to realise the gravity of the situation and initiate remedial measures.

**Mohammad Shahidul Islam**  
A tourism worker

## Hatirjheel Project



Hatirjheel project is indeed a very good project initiated by the then caretaker government. Better late than never we came to know that the previous four-party alliance issued plots to different organisations without having looked into the issues of environmental degradation & the free flow of water through the canals which in fact caused the water deadlock during the rainy season as all outlets to these areas were filled up with sand, soil, & illegal structures.

The land so ideally located in the heart of Dhaka city could have been utilised in a better way if the authorities concerned thought deeply on the matter. On the other hand, we have seen how the government lands have been illegally occupied & leased out on the basis of political decisions, causing serious environmental degeneration. Thank God, these lands have been recovered partially and a master plan has been prepared to use the lands for

road, overpass, lake, sewerage canal & for a beauty spot for the city dwellers to breathe some fresh air. It will not only solve & ease the traffic congestion now persisting in the area but also pave the way for a better connection with Rampura, Gulshan & also ease the chronic traffic jam of Maghbazar intersection. According to the project, when completed the site will have a systematic water sewerage canal to flow water, 4 lane roads for connecting & shortening distance with Rampura, Gulshan & also have bridge/overpass & a lake with beautification all around.

We hope that with the joint efforts of the Army engineering core, BUET & Dhaka City Corporation this project will usher in a new era for the city dwellers & be a nice spot to visit.

**Syed Shahid Hossain**  
HR Bhaban  
Kakrail, Dhaka

### number-one priority.

"Children are being pulled from school, the sick are not being treated, and parents are forced to beg just for something to feed their children. As a result of poor harvests and increasing food costs, many parents have little choice but to watch their children suffer and die starving.

Karamoja is facing a food shortage for reasons beyond the drought that took Lochoro's crops. Armed warriors from different clans in the region have been stealing cattle, depriving families of livestock, which provides meat and commodities like milk and butter. And last year, floods destroyed crops in neighbouring districts that typically supply Karamoja with food. As a result, food prices in the region have almost doubled.

**Peter C. Rebelro**  
Indira Road, Dhaka

### Status of Bangla

After a bitter struggle we got the recognition of our state language-- 'Bangla'. Now this is recognised as an international mother language all over the world. Nonetheless, this is not getting due recognition in our own country. If we look at the media, the 'Radio Jockey' (RJ) is one of the most glaring examples.

In every speech, they use English words over and over again, rather than Bangla, which does not really represent our national identity. Moreover, using English while speaking Bangla does not express smartness. It is also boring to hear such English words along with Bangla. Broadly speaking, it is sensible that we should use English when it is essential or when the situation demands and vice versa.

**S.M. Rumen**  
Naya Bazar, West Nasirabad  
Pahartali, Chittagong

### Uganda's desperate mother

Lochoro, 38, a mother of five in Uganda's Karamoja region, struggles relentlessly to provide her children with something to eat.

"I have not cooked anything today. I don't even know what the kids are going to eat today," says Lochoro, the mother, according to World Vision staff member Rudo Kwaramba's report. She lives alone with her children because their father cannot afford to pay the culturally required bride price for taking his wife. Though he occasionally sends money, it is rare that he can afford to give them help. Women are the breadwinners in Karamoja, and she shoulders the responsibility of feeding her children.

In Uganda's Karamoja region, where inconsistent rains have caused crop loss for the third consecutive year, coping with hunger is now the