

Foreign loan and electricity

In our childhood we learnt that Africa was the Dark Continent in the world.

Is there any country in Europe, America, Asia or Africa today where there is electricity supply for one hour and no electricity supply for the next one hour? And this is going on round the year!

Is our country the darkest and the poorest country in the world today?

What have we done in the last thirty-eight years of our independence?

We had several democratic governments, military govt, civil and caretaker govt, and what not. Every govt. has been blaming each other for corruption, inefficiency, lapses and omissions and each claims to be the best of all. The rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer day by day. The governments coming to power take more and more of foreign loans and claim credit, efficiency and success.

In fact, we have taken a colossal amount of foreign loans. But where has all the money gone? Would our govt. kindly let us know the break-up of total amount of foreign loans used for different economic development works in our country?

If we have money in our public

exchequer, we may go ahead with construction of Padma bridge and Dhaka underground train service. But if not, we should not seek foreign loan for construction of Padma bridge and underground train service. There is no such emergency and urgency that we must go for these two projects now or never.

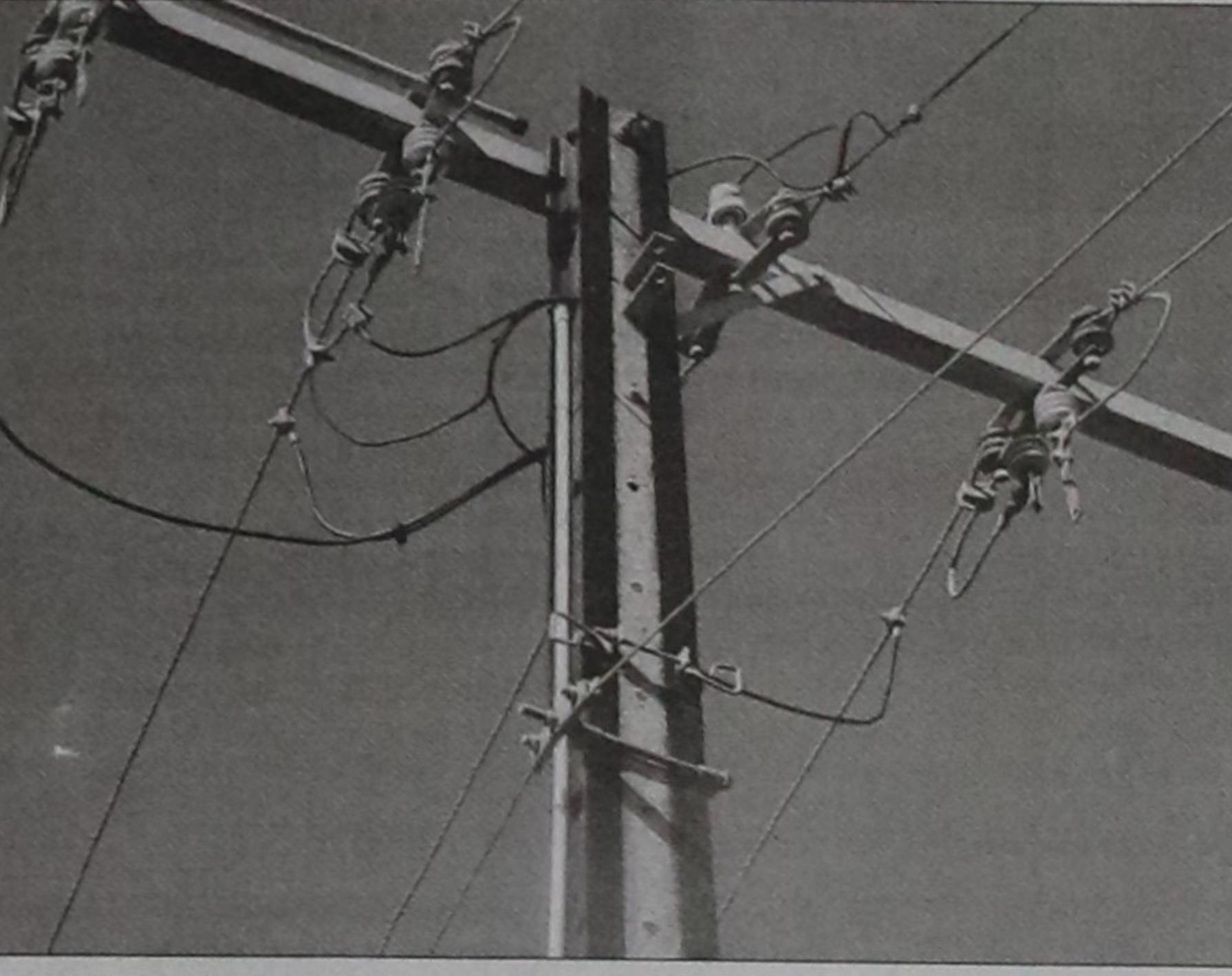
We may wait till such time the world economic recession eases and we may delay these two projects by twenty years to see the rising sea water level, which may affect one fifth of the territory of Bangladesh.

Our greatest need and demand of time is to increase and improve our electricity generation and supply and to mitigate the untold sufferings of the people caused by frequent load shedding. If we fail to do so we would be totally crippled.

So, if necessary we may divert Padma bridge and underground train foreign loans to meet our urgent and immediate requirements of electricity in the interest of public service. This is the doctrine of necessity.

OH Kabir

Dhaka



Threat of obscurantism

It's undeniable that the so-called religious political parties are an ominous threat to the future of democracy in Bangladesh. These parties cannot be good for politics; neither can they ever be good for a religion. They are inauspicious for our general political milieu because they constantly endeavour to exploit people's religious sentiments in order to achieve their filthy political ambitions. Similarly, they are destructive for the religion, as they often do not hesitate to compromise the fundamental values of religion.

Moreover, they are extremely dangerous for a liberal democracy because they ultimately aim to subvert the democratic system to replace it with an authoritarian dictatorship. For instance, in 1971 when the Jamaat-e-Islami and other identical parties supported the brutal Pakistani offensive against innocent Bangladeshis, they didn't care about the luminous lessons of compassion, kindness and benevolence that our religion teaches us. Neither did they care about a safer democratic environment that we would enjoy in a sovereign state after liberating it from the savage Pakistani aggressors.

They only cared about their nasty political self-interest and didn't hesitate to trample the shining emblem of humanity that religion inspires us to uphold. They correctly realized that they could only thrive under the corrupt Pakistani regime that had become an ardent supporter of religious fundamentalism and an apt epitome of barbaric totalitarianism.

History suggests that such parties often produce the detrimental seeds of evil and secretly give birth to religious terrorism and anarchy. These parties are aware of the fact that they can never attain state power by democratic means. As a result, they are always keen to formulate effective alternative strategies. Like a shrewd chameleon they are capable of changing colour in accordance with the need of time. I think these parties collectively exist as a 'Trojan Horse' in our political arena as they often have numerous clandestine agendas, which generally remain hidden under the facade of their visible roles.

Kh. Asef Safa Kabir
Muhammadpur, Dhaka

Saving the rivers

It is a matter of great pleasure that you have invited the readers, at large, to lend their hands, so that together we can win a war against those so-called powerful, rich and ruthless river-gobblers across the country.

Golam Ashraf
Gulshan, Dhaka

Power and party politics

Some parliament bosses have spent millions of taka for buying costly dress, hundreds and thousands of taka for lawn mowing of parliament house area, traded appointments, took medical bills without approval of the competent authorities, made personal visits abroad as official ones, took away foods from parliament cafeteria to their homes, all these facts were unearthed by the parliamentary committee. Today, 20 May, yet there was another front-page headline in the DS "Trio took Tk 40 lakh in additional fuel bill. While the press people approached them for their opinion, they denied their involvement in such activities and termed the investigation itself as "uddesha pronodito", meaning politically motivated and directed to harm them personally. They further claimed that making the committee's findings public has discredited the chairs on which they were sitting.

A foreign agency has revealed truths of siphoning of money by some relatives of top leaders to foreign banks from Bangladesh. The government has found hard evidences.

It is reported that actions are underway to bring the money back home. The leaders of the political party concerned have told the countrymen that all these are being done to tarnish the image of a 'great' family in Bangladesh and the acts of the present government are ill motivated, designed to cover up the failures of the present government.

The denials and counter charges are their answers. They want to tell the nation that all the above truths are "not true" and the above revelations are Uddesh Pronodito - only to discredit them and their party publicly. But they never try to realise that the people of Bangladesh are not that deaf and dumb anymore.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Marketing farm products

Agricultural products do not have a sound marketing system and that is why farmers do not get fair price of these products and also there is scope for the middlemen to exploit the situation. To ensure the fair price of the agricultural products and prevent malpractice by the middlemen my suggestions are:

Establish cooperative farming system in every village. Such cooperative farms must be registered with the central marketing administration and every registered farm should have a registration number. A standard packaging system should be introduced for different grades of agricultural products. At the time of marketing of such products, add the cost for wholesale marketing. At retail level, some percentage of costs has to be added with the wholesale price. Under the system, nobody will be jeopardized by procuring or selling farm products. At union level there should be sufficient number of godowns and cold storage facilities for preserving the products.

When the market price is below the production costs of the farm products, the products should be purchased by the Central Agriculture Marketing Division and sold when the prices go up.

Md. Nuruzzaman Munshi
Director, Finance
North-Power Generation
Company Ltd.

A Gani Road, Dhaka

BanglaTel

We have come to know from the print media that Banglalink and Amtel, the country's second and third largest mobile operators, are going to merge into a single company. In the modern business world, it is common on the part of different enterprises to take the initiative for amalgamation, take-over etc considering their business prospects. It has some merits as well as demerits. We do not know whether the subscribers will be benefited in this case of merger.

However, we wish them success.

Harun-or-Rashid
Sobhanbag, Dhaka

The future of ACC

This is in agreement with the views expressed by Mr Shafiqul Islam (2nd May, 2009) indicating the 'fall' of the ACC. He rightly observed that curtailing power of the ACC would turn it into a non-functional organisation. Or it could be an attempt to dismiss the corruption cases dug up and published in the media against the big political leaders of the ruling party. And by doing so they will all go unpunished.

S.A.Miah
Canada

Cars for MPs

This note I write in response to a letter by Ms. Urmila, Doha, Qatar (DS, 22-05-2009).

Buying cars for the MPs by the government is a very wrong decision. An MP should be allowed a first class air, train or steamer ticket to attend parliament in Dhaka and within Dhaka and only taxi fare to travel on duty in Dhaka should be given. From MPs' hostel min-buses or buses may be used to shuttle the MPs free to and from their hostel to the parliament house. Or, why not allow an MP a fixed travel allowance keeping in mind the actual distance from the MP's constituency to the parliament house? I consider such a privilege very wise and by doing so a huge public fund may be saved and misuse of car by the MP could be avoided.

Buying cars for the MPs is a very sinful luxury. No sensible government could allow it. But who says there is much sense and sensibility in the activities of the Bangladesh government? The other day the government sanctioned a car for every upazila chairman that will cost over Tk 30 lakh each, whereas a chairman's salary is about Tk 12,000 or so a month. Is there any iota of logic or common sense in allowing such a privilege?

I support the idea of allowing duty-free brand new car import by a Non Residential Bangladeshi (NRB) on condition that the car is imported for personal use when the NRB returns home for good and must not be sold out within three years. The importer NRB must have proper documents while importing the car proving that he/she has worked at least 3 years and earned money in a foreign country and that, he/she has bought the car from own income. This privilege must not be used for making money by any NRB.

We must, again, be very clear who is actually an NRB. An NRB does not mean a Bangladeshi origin foreign citizen with a foreign passport or people with dual citizenship. NRB means a Bangladeshi citizen, born and brought up in Bangladesh and carries a valid Bangladeshi passport but living and working in a foreign country with restricted residence permit.

Tayeb Husain
Lund, Sweden

Power failures

Load shedding has become a major problem in Bangladesh. Especially, students are suffering a lot due to regular load shedding. So, the government should address the issue on a priority basis.

Anamul Haque Loskor
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Metropolitan University
Sylhet

Creative education

Through the columns of your daily, I venture to voice my views about the creative education system.

Education is the backbone of a nation. To build a good nation a good education system in accordance with time is mandatory. As ours is a developing country every citizen has to be well educated.

The creative education system which has newly been introduced has some merits as well as demerits too. As a student, I think that it is an excellent system. To achieve the aim of this system the government has to take some steps first. Meanwhile, the guide or notebooks containing the answers of those creative questions have been published. The students are memorizing those and writing the same in their answer sheets. Yet the aim of this system is to bring out the creative ideas out of the students. Moreover, there are various types of teachers in our schools. If a teacher likes an answer, the other teacher may not be satisfied with it. For this reason, to get more marks in the exams the students resort to private coaching.

So, I think to achieve the main purpose of this system the problems mentioned above need to be solved first.

Fuad Hasan
B.L. Govt. High School
Sirajganj

Death of

Roh Moo-hyun

I was shocked to hear that former president of Korea Roh Moo-hyun had committed suicide. He ran short of money to maintain his family.

This man was so great in presidency, when he paid his visit to Professor Hwang who first cloned Snoopy, a dog, from cell. I was then a student of Seoul National University, he appeared there with no protocol. So, being a neighbourhood student of Professor Hwang, I could not understand when the president left after his visit, as I am accustomed to observing high protocol for highly placed people.

I pay my tributes to him following his tragic demise.

Lutfur Rahman
Seoul National University
Korea

Ahero

There are many charges often brought against the police. For example, they take bribe, they do not perform their duties, they indulge in gossiping, they are good for nothing etc. But recently, all these were proved to be wrong. Sergeant Akash Pradip

Lecturer and writer
BHPi, CRP, Chapain Savar, Dhaka

Save the canal

Save the canal

The Daily Star is desperately trying to plead the case for reclaiming all the illegally encroached canals and rivers, which is really very praiseworthy. Hats off to you! The present govt as well has taken a firm stand on this issue. For our own survival, there is no alternative to reclaiming these rivers and canals from the unscrupulous people whoever they might be. I would like to draw the kind attention of the authorities to a 200-year old canal. The canal in the photo is located just behind Saadat University College, Karatia, Tangail, one of the first five university colleges of the country. Just around 20 years back through this canal hundreds of boats used to ply to and from Karatia haat (village market), the biggest haat in the country which is only 1,000 yards from this location shown in the photo. This canal was a great source of water, fish, transportation, fresh air and what not. Some unscrupulous people have been encroaching on this canal from both sides. Please save the canal from the hands of the encroachers.

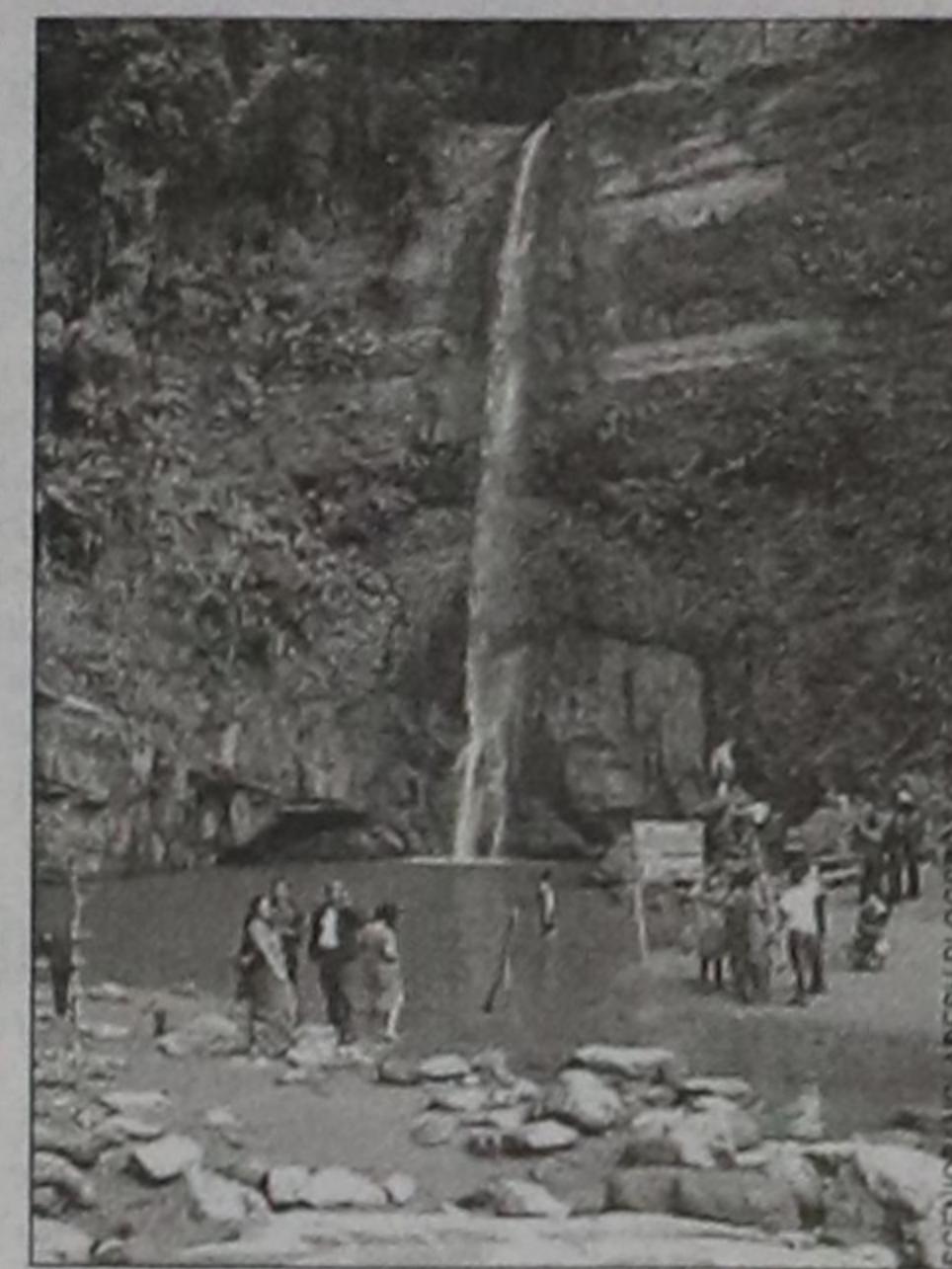
A senior citizen
College para, Karatia, Tangail

Sylhet is known as the land of beauty. Obviously nature has given it a lot, hills, waters, trees etc., in this region. Some tourist spots are well known not only in Bangladesh but also all over the world like Jaflong and Madhobkunda. Some foreign tourists visit these spots occasionally. Now awareness regarding tourism, in our country is increasing gradually. Many inquisitive people come from different parts of the country to enjoy the scenes. But unfortunately after reaching Sylhet, they become disappointed. The authorities should be attentive to this issue.

If you arrive with a group and have your own vehicle, it's not a problem for you to reach the destination. But if you come with your family members, two or three people, obviously you have to gather very bitter experiences regarding transportation. Though you will be able to visit Jaflong by spending a full day, the journey will not be so striking to you. On the other hand, if someone thinks of going to Madhobkunda, it is simply an impossible proposition. If you can hire a microbus or such type of vehicle, then there is no problem, but going by public transport is almost impossible. In both the cases, from Sylhet or Moulvibazar, the sufferings will be the same. It is not possible for the tourists to return safely by evening. There is no scope of staying there at night also. Many of my friends have not gone to Madhobkunda finally after knowing all this.

We know Madhobkunda is the first and biggest waterfall of Bangladesh. I have personally visited the other two so-called waterfalls in Shuvolong of Rangamati and Himchhari of Cox's Bazar. Compared with those, it's stupendous and eye-catching. Bangladesh

Madhobkunda waterfall



Parjatan Corporation or the districts concerned have not taken any measure so that the tourists can easily visit the place. Rather, once there were some BRTC buses between Sylhet to Jaflong for carrying tourists. Huge number of passengers would avail that service but it has also been stopped for unknown reasons.

All over the world, it's a booming industry. Governments are paying special attention to exploring this sector and are trying to attract foreign tourists. Our government should be attentive to this sector. We have to develop transport and accommodation facilities in Madhobkunda.

We shouldn't neglect this resource.

Md. Abdul Hamid
Assistant Professor
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governance cannot cope with the varieties of changes we see this century. Come back to the right path but not through suicide bombers!

The political leaders do not accept change in the policies of their political parties. In India, the Muslim voters have very few options. In Bangladesh, more options should be available than voting for the parties of the decayed dynasty rulers. Why was the caretaker government necessary? Corruption.

When I talk to a stranger (while travelling), I do not need to know the religion of the person would judge him by this remarks and behaviour.

What has happened to social intercourse? Here in Bangladesh, political colours dominate our daily lives, officially and socially. Note it is being replaced with religious branding. Both politics and religion have become big business!

The future is bleak--lack of genuine crusaders.

CAli
Dhaka

Vandalism at NSU

Vandalism has become the commonest thing in Bangladesh. When the private university ordinance was passed in 1992, it was thought that private universities would remain free from campus violence. But that good-thinking has not come true. The recent vandalism at NSU and some other private universities caused much consternation to people. Eighty percent people of Bangladesh can't afford the costs of those universities.

But violence is not the answer to any dispute.

Mostafa Kamal Molla
Dept. of English
Hazi Muhsin Hall
DU

