

## Donate blood

Every year, more than 4 millions lives are saved worldwide, thanks to voluntary blood donation by people. In our country as well, there are many generous people who donate blood regularly. Despite that, many of us do not actually know the importance of donating blood and some even fear that blood donation might be harmful for health. In fact every physically fit 18+ adult can donate blood at least twice a year. At the time of donation, only 350ml of blood is taken. An average person has 5-6 litres of blood in the body. In terms of volume the loss is corrected in 24-48 hours by the body. The red cell count is corrected in about 56 days. So the health of the donor will not suffer because of the blood donation. A few days ago, my friend's sister died because of non-availability of blood. Her blood group was AB- but we were unable to collect enough blood for her despite our sincere efforts. Moreover, the blood

which we got from the blood bank was date expired in most cases. I think the government needs to monitor these unauthorised and authorised blood banks because they do not help people when it is needed most. There is a disease called thalassemia and in some cases this disorder is treated with blood transfusion.

The person who carries an acute form of thalassemia requires periodical blood transfusions and hence the patients who are suffering from this disease know the value of blood donation for saving human lives. I know people of Bangladesh are very sympathetic towards the welfare of fellow citizens because people who are living in this land are like our own brothers and sisters. We should vow not to let our brothers and sisters die for want of blood till we have the last drop of it left in our body!

Our collective efforts, awareness and generous blood donation could save many lives and bring smiles to millions. So, let us donate blood in order to bring smile to a patient and a family as a whole.

Nazmus Saquib  
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### Preferential governance?

Theoretically, we all want democratic general elections. But the reality is different (in Dhaka). The incoming, elected regime is attracted towards some sectors; and neglect many sectors which need BMR of BMRE. This pattern is not changing. The motivation is not public service.

The new super AL+ plus regime is still groping for its long term bearing after the first 100 days. Too many external diversions, at home and abroad. Our public institutions are breaking down. During the current global recession, it is not easy to make things look bright.

And, why this hurry for mega projects? Easily explained: our political culture has no respect for continuity of projects, when a regime changes, don't leave 'it' to others!

Re-tenders and re-tendering are the standard practice, causing delays and system losses, decade after decade. Too many ten-per-cent-walls around? Recognition of loyalty begs for monetary compensation.

This is an entrenched weakness in dynasty rules (anywhere in the world). Dhaka had been under the grips of two political parties for decades. The non-political caretaker government tried for two years to bring about a change in the philosophy of approach. The system has to be cleaned by the politicians themselves.

The reports on BDR tragedy are awaited eagerly by the whole world. It is a sensitive issue. The other issue is also sensitive ('71 war criminals).

Global changes are occurring fast, hence the local regimes have fewer options. When the mighty USA could change, why not micro Bangladesh?

What is happening in Pakistan? Bangladesh is also not immune to the activities of the religious extremist groups.

A background point has to be remembered: external cartels could hire and employ such terrorists. Saddam fought for the Americans in Iran several years: then note what happened to him. The Russians in Afghanistan had to withdraw who were the organisers and the fighters?

Routine political administration is out of date.  
A Mawaz, Dhaka

### The godfather issue

The AL government has passed over 100 days in power with some successes and failures. Though 100 days is not enough to evaluate any government's success or failure, it is considered very crucial, as good beginning is half the battle. With a view to bringing about a positive trend in the governance, PM Sheikh Hasina formed a new government with the leaders having a clean image. However, some of them have failed to hold up their image. But the thing that pinches the common people of our country most is the godfather issue. During the last rule of the AL govt, the people experienced large-scale extortion, snatching and robbery, which finally accelerated the defeat of the AL in 2001 election. This time also the AL cadres have appeared before the countrymen. The people have already started feeling the presence of the men like Hazari and Shamim Osman as they have already attracted media cover-

### Look into it

The office of the Registrar of Joint Stock is an important place. But here people have to remain standing in a queue for submitting their papers and documents for hours together. If a person has to deposit money, he has to go to a certain branch of a bank which is located in another building. But sometimes the counter official disappears, although there is always a big queue of people before the counter.

As per instructions of the office, people have to submit their papers before 1:00pm. But how can they do it?  
Harun-or-Rashid  
Sobhanbag, Dhaka

### Accidents

Nowadays mishaps in the roads and highways are taking place on a regular basis.

The government should initiate some effective steps to bring the situation under control.

Nur Alam  
Rangpur

### Digital Bangladesh

There are many meanings attached to this phrase by various people trying to further their own motives and ideas. As a disinterested person, I feel that this phrase has only one core meaning and that is to provide cheap, reliable and the fastest available (according to international standards) wireless broadband service throughout the land along with the assurance of 24 hours non-failing supply of electricity. If these two simple steps are guaranteed, many businesses and well-to-do people will relocate from the crowded city areas and move to the countryside enriching the land as a whole. The government can also then carry out de-centralisation of most of its work.

The details of various software programme development and what activities of the companies or government need to be computerised are of secondary importance and have very little to do with this concept of 'digital Bangladesh' except to confuse and muddle the issue.

So, I urge the authorities to concentrate on these two concrete goals to achieve the dream of 'digital Bangladesh', as is often repeated by politicians and media.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed  
London, UK

### Secularism

According to Oxford dictionary the term "secularism" means the belief that religion should not be involved in the organisation of society, education, etc.

In our country, most of the common people usually consider secularism as being "Anti-Islam" which is nothing but the result of their ignorance.

From the socio-political history of England, we come to know about the supremacy of orthodox Anglican Church over the common people. Moreover, the Church of England was the all in all in those days. But during the time of renaissance, and the times that followed, a new movement called "secularism" arose to curtail the powers of the church. At that time the people demanded that the church refrain from interfering in political and other affairs of the state.

Again, there would not be any influence of religion in case of the administration of the state.

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### Crossfire

We express our grave concern over the killing of two students of polytechnic in a so-called "Rab encounter". As reported, they were picked up by Rab personnel from their college hostel and held incommunicado somewhere. It has made headline once again, and a wave of fresh criticism of the latest killing in "crossfire" is coming from all sections of society.

It's beyond the comprehension of common people that after being arrested, how they countered the law enforcers, or were going to be such a threat that Rab had to resort to a measure like "firing back to protect themselves". Believe me or not, this excuse is not as believable to us as lullabies to the children. In a democracy, it cannot continue year after year.

It is true we should give applause to Rab for some heroic operations, especially those storming of militant hideouts. But now it is cause for concern of any conscious citizen that it might persist and be allowed in the name of "encounter" and "crossfire".

Certainly, when in the opposition the AL was critical of these types of extra judicial killings by law enforcement agencies and putting an end to such killings was in their election manifesto. Look the gamekeeper is now the poacher!

To put it mildly, we smell a rat in those so-called "crossfire" or "encounters". Monosyllabic description of the actions is too preposterous and does not care for a grain of credibility. Speculation has reached such a pitch, that it needs a clarification from the government.

The culture of impunity for any law enforcement agency is incompatible with the idea of democracy.

Roney

One-mail

To sum up, I would request people to define the term secularism rightly.

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### Move forward

With the democratic process starting from the 1990's, have we really achieved what we dreamt of? Probably those involved in politics have.

The general people's lifestyle has not changed, apart from the rich and the upper middle class people who have learned to spend money on luxury. The common people, especially the ones living in the rural areas and the poor living in the cities, can hardly say they are better off now.

Bangladesh is a country with great potential. But hope is quickly fading away into the mist of mismanagement and corruption for the investors (local as well as foreign) and the poor people.

Electricity which is the essential ingredient of development has let the country down in the past 38 years. Poles have been erected, wires have been installed but unfortunately the electricity did not make it to the wires, leaving millions of people and their future in the dark. None of the past governments cared about meeting the existing demand of power. Today we know how badly placed the power sector is, (apart from the powerful people in the government and the administration). But it should have been at the top of the government's priority list.

Unfortunately, the priority has been diverted to something else!

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