

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 200 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Democracy in jeopardy

A dangerous political turmoil is brewing in Bangladesh over the caretaker government (CTG) issue. There was a general consensus among all political parties including the ruling Awami League (AL) on CTG. Our apex court in its verdict also recommended CTG for the next two terms of general elections. But the ruling AL-led government suddenly and unnecessarily amended the constitution annulling the CTG system. BNP-led opposition parties have been vehemently opposing this unexpected government move and demanding the restoration of the CTG system. As a result, a dangerous confrontation between the two political camps is looming large. If this situation worsens further, the repetition of the 'one-eleven'-like situation may become inevitable. Taking advantage of the volatile situation, an undemocratic and unconstitutional 'third force' may try to grab power. In consideration of the above, it appears that democracy in Bangladesh is in serious jeopardy.

Md Mohsin Ali

Senior Assistant Secretary (Retd.)

Nutan Courtpara

Kushtia

Don't forget Bangla New Year

Every country celebrates the New Year in its own manner and customs. The tradition of welcoming the New Year is an age-old practice. The English New Year is particularly celebrated by urban people and the Bangla New Year is celebrated by all the people of the country, irrespective of religion or social status. In Dhaka, people celebrate the English New Year by arranging parties for their friends, families and acquaintances. But the young people sometimes create chaos while celebrating the occasion. So the law enforcers must remain alert so that no unwanted incident happens. But the Bangla New Year celebration is quite different and I love to watch people thronging the fairs wearing colourful dresses. As a child, I used to wait eagerly for the Bangla New Year because it would bring lots of sweets and yummy foods. I request everyone not to forget our culture of modesty while celebrating the coming New Year. Happy New Year to all.

Mohammed Sohel Hara

Shahjadpur, Dhaka

US and democracy in Asia and Africa

A few years back, I read in the newspaper speech of a leader of a radical political party. It said that the day was not far away when they would be reaching the policymaking level at Washington. Today seeing the lack of US support for nascent democracies worldwide, I find that his prediction was correct. In the backdrop of US reluctance to support the democratic struggles in North Africa, smaller powers such as France and UK had to step in. Here in Bangladesh, we see that US policies are only strengthening the hands of the terrorists, war criminals and fundamentalists.

Anonymous

Primary school without headmaster

The government, especially with Nurul Islam Nahid as the Education Minister, is undeniably sincere and endeavouring to better the education at the primary level. It claims that it is making all out efforts to offer better teaching and learning and to bring the dropout rate to almost zero. But many government primary schools are reportedly running without headmasters. So how the above goal could be achieved remains a big question. As a retired official settled in village, I am rather dismayed to see that Auliab Government Primary School with enrolment of 500 students under Dohar Upzilla, Dhaka has been running without a headmaster for more than nine months. The previous headmaster was transferred to a place of his choice, but no new headmaster was appointed in his place. The school now has four teachers, of whom three are women, and two of them are currently on maternity leave, each for six months. Now think of the plight of the students! The School Managing Committee met the local education officers on many occasions to arrange the appointment of a headmaster. It also finally met the high officials at the directorate, but to no effect. The local education officers do not seem to pay any attention to solve the problem.

The parents of the students then requested me to bring this to the notice of the higher authorities through your esteemed daily. The class V terminal examinees suffered badly, and that was proved in their examination results which were published on 27th December. The newspapers also reported that many schools run short of headmasters and teachers, especially on the periphery. The authorities concerned must address the issue forthwith.

Mizanur Rahman

Auliab, Dohar, Dhaka



A great loss to the nation

May Abdur Razzak's soul rest in peace. In a country where there are few good political leaders, the death of Razzak is a great loss to the nation.

It is very unfortunate that a nation of 160 million people has a very few good leaders. Political scientists would perhaps say that bad politicians have driven good politicians out of politics. Maybe Abdur Razzak's case would prove this point. His death is being mourned by all sections of the society and this is the proof that he was widely respected, though in recent years he was neglected by the party high-ups.

Anyway, we can only pray that good sense will prevail and that



the nation will get good people and good politicians in the coming years.

S A Choudhury

Dhaka

More production houses needed

Bangladeshi filmmakers have to go abroad to do the post-production work for their films because there is no such facilities in the country. We do not have the equipment; neither do we have technicians in Bangladesh to do the work. There are some production houses in the country, which are not enough for making quality films. As a result, our filmmakers are going to India, Thailand, and Singapore to complete their films' post-production work. Now it is time we established a number of good quality film production houses in the country.

Rowshan Ali

Department of Film, Television and Digital Media
Green University of Bangladesh

Border killings must stop

Recently, the Border Security Force (BSF) of India killed four Bangladeshis in the border areas of Dinajpur, Kurigram and Meherpur districts. These incidents occurred just after a conference was held between deputy director general-level BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Shillong. At that conference, BSF again assured Bangladesh of stopping border killings.

Surprisingly, Dhaka has been raising this issue over and over again in every bilateral meeting and the Indian side has been assuring Bangladesh repeatedly of taking steps in this regard. But in reality the killing continues unabated. We remember that during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Dhaka visit in September last year, a joint statement made by Bangladesh and India, expressed confidence that the Coordinated Border Management Plan would enhance cooperation between the border guards of the two neighbours and stop 'loss of lives in the border areas.' But unfortunately, BSF turned a deaf ear to this joint statement, too.

However, we urge our government to go all-out to persuade the Indian government to take effective measures to stop border killings.

Mobarak Ali

RKM Mission Road
Gopibagh, Dhaka

Dynastic politics

After the death of the president of North Korea Kim Jong-il, his 20-year-old son Kim Jong-un has been given his father's post in this mysterious 'socialist' country. Is there no other person than this 'boy' to run the country? Actually, it is a system of monarchy in a so-called 'communist' state.

It is 21st century. But we are still watching this system of government in many parts of the world. In the Arab world, there are many kings and after their death their sons or brothers succeed them as kings or monarchs. But after the death of our beloved Prophet (pbuh), the four caliphs ruled the country, who were neither sons nor brothers of Muhammad (pbuh).

Like some other countries, monarchy prevails in our own country too. Yes, it is there in the guise of democracy. The leaders of our two major political parties have come to politics in the same way. No doubt, Tarique Rahman, son of Khaleda Zia, will be the next leader of the BNP, and Saeed Wazed Joy may also come to politics in the near future.

We would like to see democracy, not different types of monarchy in our country. A man or woman will become a leader by dint of his/her hard work and intelligence.

Rashid Harun

New Year's pledge



PHOTO: STAR

1st January is the beginning of the English New Year. A new year comes with abundant possibilities. We have celebrated the 40th anniversary of our glorious victory, but apparently we have failed to eradicate poverty and hunger and protect human rights. Let us promise to do our best for the betterment of the country. Let us build a country where there will be no hunger, poverty and injustice. Let this New Year be meaningful for all and bring peace and happiness to the people of Bangladesh.

Ratan Murmu
St. Joseph's Seminary
Ramma, Dhaka

BRAC's commendable initiative

BRAC has taken an admirable step by opening a training centre for creating skilled drivers. I think this was a piece of greatest news of last year. It has long been the demand of the general public. Anyway, it is never too late. Very few issues can be as serious as that of road safety in our country. I strongly believe BRAC will be successful in its endeavour to check frequency road accidents.

It has become our habit to blame the drivers for their reckless driving, ignoring their limitations. We never tried to find any way to address their limitations. It is now high time that the government and the private organisations took some steps to enhance the drivers' driving skills as well as educate them about the traffic rules.

Very recently, the driver in the Mirsarai tragedy has been penalised for reckless driving. Undoubtedly, this is good news. It would be great if we reward those drivers who always drive carefully and abide by the traffic rules.

Pradip Das
Lecturer
BHP, CRP

Human lives are not even so precious!

The other night, the death of a small dog got a prominent coverage on the local electronic media. It was reported that the ill-fated dog died as a result of consumption of unhygienic food imported from China. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) is considering of imposing a ban on import of that particular brand of food from China after necessary investigation into the case and the importing company has pledged to compensate the loss. How does this sound to the readers back at home?

Not to speak of the contaminated food the people are compelled to eat at an exorbitant price, but the life saving drugs are also contaminated. Not very long ago, a good number of children died by way of consuming life saving drugs, produced by a particular pharmaceutical company. Formal complaints were lodged with the law enforcing agency against that company. Afterwards, the files pertaining to that case of unnatural death implicating the owner of the company went missing and as a result the cold-blooded murderer walked away scot-free. Do human lives have any value in Bangladesh?

Saleh M Ayub
Houston, Texas



PHOTO: STAR

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Mixed bag of bold steps, grave failures."

Manzoor Ashraf

Things look pathetic for AL and Bangladesh.

Ronen Rahman

The only point missing is the inept way the government has handled the Tipaimukh Dam issue.

Amdem

A very good analysis of the bygone year. Thanks for the report. Political conflicts, heavy borrowing by the government, declining remittance inflows, share market debacle - these issues should have been discussed more elaborately.

Nasarullah

The people of Bangladesh voted Awami League to power with the hope that they would lead the country to a prestigious position where both the ruling and opposition parties would contribute