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# Bangladeshi-Americans should take part in American politics

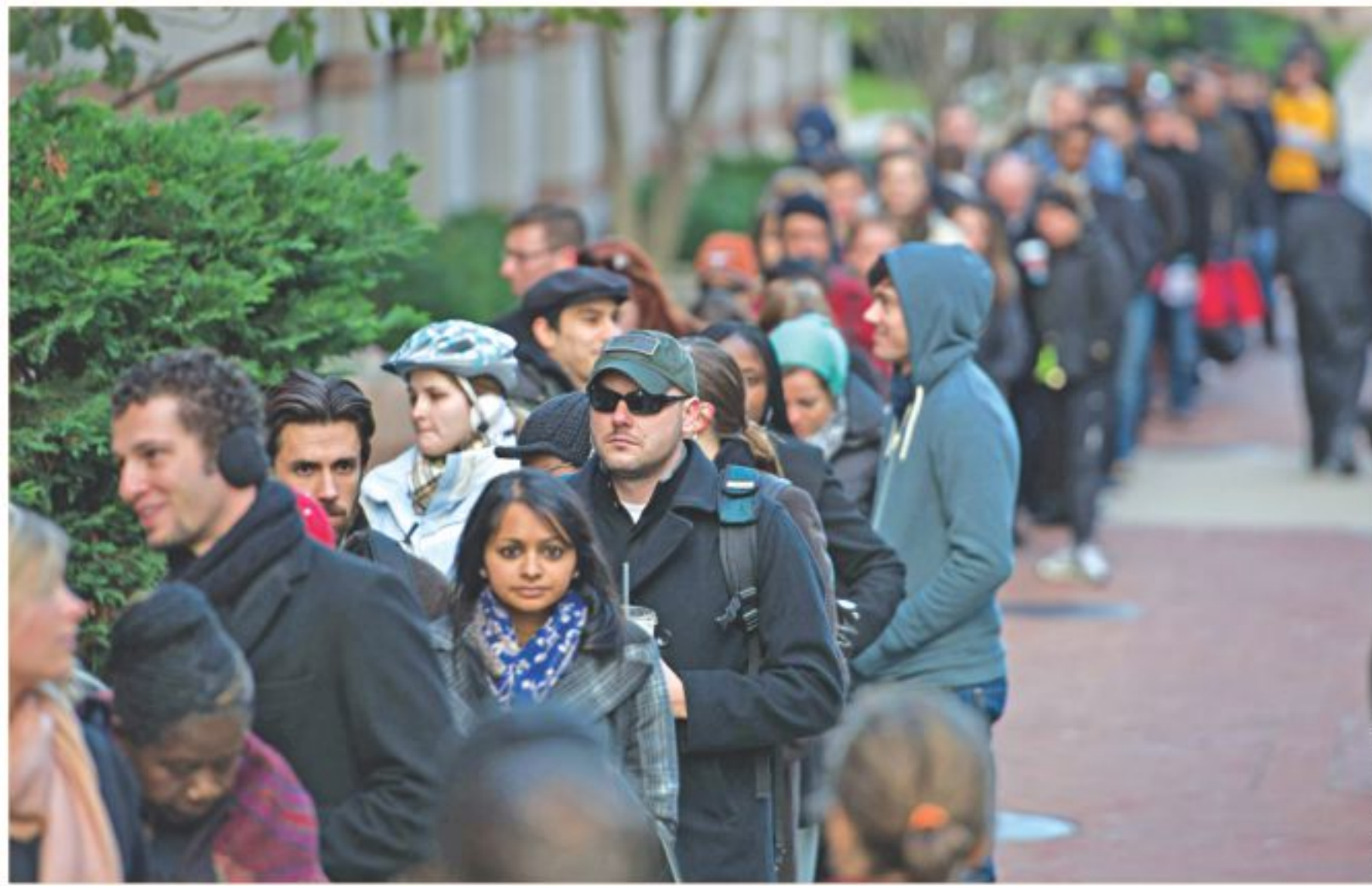


PHOTO: AFP

I would like to express my appreciation for your editorial entitled "President Obama's second term: What it means for Bangladesh". America's size and power make it the "most important bilateral partner" (as your editorial described it) for many countries around the world.

American politicians respond to the concerns of American citizens, and US-Bangladesh relations do not play a large role in American politics. But according to U.S. Census figures, there are 86,000 American citizens of Bangladeshi descent, as well as 11,000 citizens of mixed race with some Bangladeshi ancestry. Additionally, there are hundreds if not thousands of Americans living in Bangladesh now, and thousands more (including myself) who have had the privilege of travelling and spending time in Bangladesh.

Often immigrants to the U.S. have diluted political power because they do not participate in the American political system. Bangladeshi-Americans, and others who want to encourage good relations between America and Bangladesh, can vote, donate to political campaigns, volunteer for campaigns or political organizations, email or call politicians, and write to American newspapers. The 54,000 Bangladeshis in the U.S. who are not U.S. citizens can do all of these except vote and donate money. Several cities in the U.S. have large enough Bangladeshi-American communities to sustain informal networks or even organized groups of Bangladeshi-Americans; these groups in particular are well-equipped to educate and influence political leaders.

The Bangladeshi-American community, and other Americans with an interest in Bangladesh, can be a powerful voice for Bangladeshi concerns in American politics. The Daily Star should encourage its American readership to take part in the American political process.

Allan Massie  
Towson, MD  
USA

## The culture of not resigning

Every day one reads in the newspapers that someone high-up in public or private service resigns on being caught doing wrong or saying something inappropriate or even for the mistakes of their predecessors. So we see so many resignations in the democratic countries of the world all the time. Recently the chiefs of two venerable institutions as the BBC and CIA 'walked' voluntarily. Like in cricket, just one mistake by a batsman is sufficient for the umpire to raise his finger.

In Bangladesh, self-acclaimed as a model for democratic governance, what exactly is the measure of the 'Shame Index' before a public representative voluntarily resigns, since there seems to be no criteria set by the upper echelons in authority, to ease him/her out of office even to save their own face? How many 'emartis' (traditional sweets) must the somersaulting senior-most minister swallow before signing on the dotted line and sparing all of us from further indignity?

Sikander Ahmed  
Niketon, Gulshan-1  
Dhaka

## Need for correct interpretation of religious teachings

I commend the human rights society that urged that those guilty of the attack on the Bauls some months ago, at a major gathering, should be brought to justice. Those perpetuating this great Bengali tradition suffered one death, one injury and the rest utterly humiliated.

But why did the extremists dare to do such a thing? Surely it was because, some years previously, they had torn down the statues of the Bauls from a roundabout near the airport - and what happened? Nothing! How can I express the feelings of all minorities when the authorities allowed such action to go unpunished?

I remember what many of us felt, some years ago, when the new British High Commissioner, Anwar Chowdhury, on only his 18th day at work, suffered injuries from a bomb thrown at him in a famous mosque on his way to visit his Bangladeshi birthplace. It killed 3 other people. Yet no one was brought to justice until quite recently - for an attack that, mysteriously, was not headlines across the world.

If a country does not enforce the laws that under gird the constitutional rights of minorities, including foreigners, how can it have status in a world in which every nation is now a 'rainbow' nation! Moreover, when Bangladeshis emigrate to be minorities in other countries, they (rightly) insist on the enjoyment of their legal rights!

Every nation has the choice either to confront or to ignore the activities of a minority of Muslim extremist 'missionaries', who insist not only that those of other faiths must be humiliated, driven out or worse, but other Muslims who do not agree with them! And all in the name of some supposed religious 'purity' and their claim that their interpretation of 'sharia' is correct and everyone else's is wrong.

How important it is, in all faith communities, for members to spend time at the feet of their best scholars, to correct false teachings! May we hope that this newspaper can publish more articles from such scholars?

Angela Robinson  
Baridhara DOHS  
Dhaka

## Free movement of cattle across Bangladesh-India border

Beef is in high demand in Bangladesh. But its price is very low in India.

Due to religious sentiment, India can't export cattle. So the farmers of India are not getting fair price for their cattle. It will go in the interest of Indian traders if BSF allows free movement of cattle from India to Bangladesh. They will get higher price for their surplus cattle. Consumers of Bangladesh will also be benefitted as beef is now very dear here.

So I suggest that both BSF and BGB should develop an understanding that they will allow free movement of cattle between the two countries throughout the year. Loss of custom duty on both sides will be negligible but benefit to Bangladeshi consumers and Indian farmers will be immense.

Will the authorities concerned ponder over this?

Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury

## "Reinstate YouTube"

This refers to the letter dated November 9th 2012 of Aminur Rahim of New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka. I totally agree with him. It is absolutely not necessary to ban the whole website. This website is a great tool for all sorts of reasons. All that is probably required to do is just filter all the contents relating to that silly matter. In the Arab countries such as Dubai, YouTube is not banned at all. In fact all my friends there get to check everything on YouTube and post stuff from there on Facebook.

It is a stupid video. And yes, people are being more stupid reacting to something they know nothing about. I love music. This is a great website to check out all the latest music and at times when an old tune pops up on radio or on TV that I don't know about, I could just put a key word of the song on YouTube search engine and I get all the different results. And that way I get to also check other tunes that I didn't know about and later eventually find out about the exact song that I was looking for.

I also urge the government 'to consider people's sufferings and only filter what requires filtering instead of banning the whole network.'

Shu Zi  
On e-mail



## Gone are the days

Gone are the days when former President Dwight D. Eisenhower launched bold government programs to cover a country 27 times the size of Germany with a network of interstate highways. Gone are the years when former President Lyndon B. Johnson declared war on poverty and enacted federal laws declaring that there could be no second- or third-class citizens, regardless of skin colour. And gone is the spirit of renewal after former President John F. Kennedy's visionary promise to send Americans to the moon within a decade, a program that would cost taxpayers billions.

That's when an ultimatum expires that is known as the "fiscal cliff," which Democrats and Republicans set for themselves, after the dramatic failure of their budget negotiations in the summer of 2011, so as not to drive the world's largest government budget against a wall. If both sides can't agree to a joint solution, budget cuts and tax increases will automatically take effect on December 31 that will massively reduce the deficit by \$900 billion.

President Obama has announced that he will veto any proposal that doesn't include higher taxes for the rich. Now the United States alone, one government alone owes that much money to the world! And of course the rest of the world, they owe their governments too, because they're all operating on deficit spending!

Ted Rudow III, MA  
Encina Ave

## Implement 'ten-second-pulse policy'

The BTRC has asked the four private mobile companies to introduce 'ten-second-pulse policy'. This policy stipulates that the user has to pay per ten seconds instead of the existing per minute which would be introduced by respective service providers. At present, in most of the cases, the user has to pay a full minute bill although he has spoken for a few seconds. Implementation of this policy will be advantageous for the users in reducing unwarranted cost. In response to the ruling of BTRC, Banglalink and Grameen phone has perfunctorily introduced the policy. Their policy has a number of conditions. Moreover, ten-second-pulse has been given for specific numbers or for specific durations and not generally. The BTRC must supervise their policies for the greater convenience of the customers.

Tashrif Billah  
Dept. of EEE  
BUET, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

## READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's *The Daily Star* news report headlined "PM cancels Pak tour"

### Farid Ahmed

PM has taken a bold and right decision.

### A Choudhury

I expected that the PM would do the right thing for the nation. I am very grateful to her for taking the right decision.

### Nadeem Omar

Hasina was invited to attend the D-8 Summit, not to talk about bilateral issues. So, what's the problem? Her father went to Pakistan soon after independence to represent the country at the OIC meeting and discussed the issues the Muslim world was facing.

### Mirza Zeehan

Why should we try to improve ties with a country that killed millions of our people? Pakistan's collapsing economy and volatile security situation offer no great opportunity for cooperation anyway.

### Shaheen

I do not like Awami League, but I support the decision taken by Sheikh Hasina.

### Kamal

Pakistan must offer apology for their barbaric acts in 1971. Since then they have not done anything good for Bangladesh.

### Jumana Sarwar

The D-8 summit is not a bilateral meeting between Bangladesh and Pakistan rather it involves six other nations. The USA actively worked against us in 1971. Should we boycott them too?

### Ajit Barua, Tokyo

It is a right decision that our PM has cancelled her visit to Pakistan. At first, let them realise what they did during our War of Independence. Why are they still hesitating to apologise to Bangladesh?

### Mayen Uddin Tazim

D-8 is an international forum for sharing bilateral issues among the member countries. But considering the security problem in Pakistan, the Prime Minister has taken a wise decision of not going to Pakistan.

### Jahid Patwary

Bangladeshi PM should not visit Pakistan until they apologise for their role in 1971.

### Shekhar Dev

Thanks to our PM for cancelling the scheduled tour. But I think Foreign Minister Dipu Moni should be present at the summit.

### M H Uddin

Security is the main concern in Pakistan but the government should think carefully before making any official announcement.

### Naharin

We should forget any bilateral relationship with Pakistan till it offers unconditional apology to Bangladesh.

### Niloufar Sarker

The issues that need to be settled with Pakistan are really very serious. Just visiting each other does not resolve them.

### SG

The moment I read about Pakistan's foreign minister's remark about 'forgetting past', I wished our PM would not go there. Thanks to our PM from the bottom of my heart. If there is only one stance of the government that I have been happy about in last four years, it would be this step.

### Mujibul Alam Khan

Hasina's message is very clear to Pakistan and the world as well. This is indeed a tremendous diplomatic achievement for Bangladesh which, in recent times, has been struggling to restore its global image. I thank Hasina and her government for tak-