letters

The People Speak

I was happy to see that *the Star* devoted a whole cover story on how hartals affect the ordinary citizen. We have gone past the stage when hartal can be considered an acceptable form of protest. When the means of protest becomes mindless vandalism and a reign of terror to make sure people don't come out on the streets then it can no longer be considered an acceptable form of protest. In the last spate of hartals people died and the loss of property has been immeasurable. Add to that the shameful attacks on minorities which were also part of the political strategies of those who called the hartal. It was just to instill more fear and spread it nationwide.

All this points to the fact that these people do not have the support of the general populace because the general populace has to go on making a living and feeding their families. We already know what hartals have done to this economy; your story highlighted the human misery these hartals have caused.

Andrea Gomez
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Jamaat Gaining?

The writer of the article "Jamaat gaining?", in *the Star*'s last issue, has rightfully indicated that Jamaat-e-Islami has become the main beneficiary of the current political situation of the country. In fact, since February they have been able to channel every single incident happening in this country to their benefit. The war crime trial issue, the main weakness of the party, has been thrown into question and within days it became a matter of secondary importance in people's mind, due to Jamaat created violence. Had I read this article in the second week of February I would have criticised the writer for asserting so confidently 'it is almost certain that a free and fair election will ensure BNP's return to power'. It is true that the pattern of Bangladeshi electoral victory has always been in favour of the opposition. But when BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) appeared confused about the Shahbag movement towards the beginning, I for one thought 'there goes the possibility of BNP winning the next election if it is carried out under a neutral system'. It seemed then that Awami League would be the ultimate gainer of the Shahbag movement. But now? Would a free and fair election really put BNP, a party that mocks our history, uses misnomers such as 'genocide', sides with war criminals, and terms nationalistic feeling as atheism, into power? Would BNP, the party under which terrorist organisations like Jama'tul Mujahideen Bangladesh thrived, really come back to power? I gave my vote for the trial of the war criminals. Can I trust the party that calls me an atheist for joining the Shahbag movement and demanding the trial of the war criminals with continuing this trial? No.

Sonia Khan
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

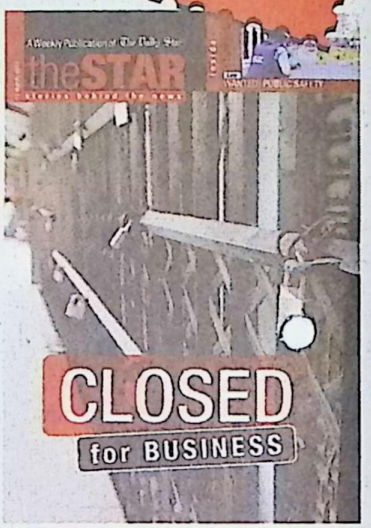




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Letters to the Editor, Star Diary and Write to Mita, with the writer's name and address, should be within 200 words. All articles should be within 1,200 words. A cover letter is not necessary, but every write-up should include the writer's name, phone number and email address (if any). While The Star welcomes unsolicited articles and photographs, it cannot accept the responsibility of their loss or damage. The Star does not return unsolicited articles and photos. Response time for unsolicited write-ups ranges from three weeks to two months. All articles submitted are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

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