

Govt, opposition need to show maturity

The political situation in Bangladesh causes much pain and anxiety to the Bangladeshi diaspora living abroad. According to United Nations estimate, hartals account for 3 per cent annual loss to GDP.

The current government must find a middle path to solve the present political crisis. It must realign itself strategically to consider purposeful demands and anxieties of the Islamic parties and the people who support them as well as ensure that those who genuinely seek justice for crimes committed in 1971 are not silenced.

The way forward is to begin meaningful dialogue with the main opposition parties for the interest of democracy and peace. For too long the bickering and backstabbing, which have become a part of politics in Bangladesh politics, have hampered the nation's progress and economic growth. It is about time both the government and the opposition demonstrated sensible and mature politics in order to end the current crisis.

Azmol Hussain
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PHOTO: STAR

Country in grave danger

Once in a while the people of Chittagong have to brace themselves for a natural calamity. Cyclones and tidal bores hit the coastal region often. Sometimes the cyclones become weak and cross Chittagong, but when it strikes with its full ferocity, it wreaks havoc all around. Now the whole country is going through a man-made calamity. The signs are so ominous that people are in great anxiety.

We cannot stop cyclones or tidal bores from hitting us, but we can take control of the present situation. The solution is in the hands of the government. If the caretaker government system is reinstated, everything will calm down. The government's action will determine whether Bangladesh will become a prosperous country and go forward or it will be stuck in a rut without any future.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Have a rethink about erecting power plant near Sundarbans



PHOTO: STAR

Increasing electricity production was one of the important electoral pledges of the ruling government. Huge amount of electricity is needed for the development of different sectors. The government has taken some steps to increase electricity production. For this purpose, government took a decision to build a 1320 megawatt coal-based power plant at Rampal in Bagerhat near Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest.

According to newspaper reports, this project will be built only 14 km away from Sundarbans. Environmentalists and rights activists opined that this may destroy the ecological balance of the area in question. There is another question: When the National Thermal Power Company of India could not obtain permission to build a coal-based power plant on the Indian side of the mangrove forest, how could our government give them permission to do the same here? The project will obviously harm the Sundarbans. Government should rethink about the implementation of the project.

Hasan Khan
University of Dhaka

Good points of 'Insight'

I commend you for integrating the content of 'Star Insight' into the main newspaper. For years, reading it has made me feel 'This is the real Bangladesh!' There are amazing stories of the so-called 'poor' and 'ordinary' people who live outside the main towns and cities and may be sneered at as 'uneducated' but some of them are doing amazingly intelligent things to improve their circumstances and above all, cooperating together to do so.

'Insight' also introduces us to the dedicated individuals and NGO's who are helping to make a huge difference to their lives. We are so grateful to Shykh Sheraj and others who treat them with the respect they deserve and tirelessly serve them. They need the help of the media to publicise them because these are not the people who make a big noise!

You are right to help us to remember such people, especially in such times as these, when different elements are competing for the soul of the country, claiming "We are the real Bangladesh". Once again, Bangladesh has an identity crisis when principles that it thought had got sorted out at the time of the Liberation War, have to be fought for, all over again!

Thank you, Daily Star, for helping us to see the big picture!

Angela Robinson
On e-mail

East West University students set example

Recently, the East West University students have come forward to help the unprivileged students of our country. They do make time in between their classes and teach the children.

The school officially started its journey on 17th October 2012. The classes are held three days a week (Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday) at 10 a.m. The school has provided free books and other stuffs for education to those children who have potential but cannot attend school due to poverty. The school is also trying to teach children about our roots. The school has celebrated the Victory Day and International Mother Language Day for teaching the students the history of our country. Recently on Independence Day the students of the school visited the National museum to enrich their knowledge.

The number of students in the school is now fifty. The main targets of the school are: providing primary education to the poor children, creating a better future generation and involving the private university students in patriotic works.

The whole campus is proud of the students who are working hard for this cause.

Sheikh Irfan Hussain
On e-mail

Our politicians should show wisdom

Recently the World Bank (WB) said, referring to the studies of McKinsey/USAID, that the productivity of Bangladeshi workers is on par with Chinese workers in well-managed firms with their wages being five times lower than those of their Chinese counterparts.

If Bangladesh can play a proactive role in promoting the investors from China and other countries who are looking for more convenient locations for outsourcing their manufacturing, it would provide Bangladesh the potentiality to capture at least 15 million jobs in the next ten years.

But the hard fact is, recently the WB has revised Bangladesh's growth forecast for fiscal 2012-13 down to 5.8 percent -- way below the government's target 7.2 percent, due mainly to the precarious political situation. Recently in a discussion organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), economists said that the present political unrest might not only compel Bangladesh to miss out on the emerging global opportunities, but also weaken the attained socio-economic achievements of the country.

Even the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and global rating agency Moody's have expressed concern about the political turmoil in the country and warned of a lower economic expansion this year. We think it is high time our political leaders showed some political wisdom.

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Hurting people's religious sentiment

is not freedom of speech

This refers to Mr. Neil Taylor's letter entitled 'Abusers of press freedom deserve punishment' in your April 19 issue.

The Daily Star was right in both counts in their editorials of April 5th and 13th. I too, wish to register my protest at Mr. Taylor's one-sided write up as the judge, jury and the executioner.

Free speech does not mean freedom to hurt the religious sentiment of people, and here, in this case, of over 150 million Muslims of Bangladesh alone (1.5 billion the world over). The unspeakable terms used by some bloggers against the Prophet and the Holy Book could come only from sick minds and from those who wanted to create chaos and religious hatred in a society otherwise known for its religious harmony.

It is good that the government could arrest four of these culprits so far and charges have been framed and bail denied - although by that time so much blood has been shed and property damaged. It is ridiculous to give even an inkling that newspapers are to be blamed for publishing such heinous activities of some bloggers as many people did not know of the bloggers' activities.

If newspapers like Amar Desh did not warn the public well in time, one would shudder to think what catastrophe could have happened if such abuse in the name of free speech would have carried on for some more time. My advice to Mr. Taylor, if I may, please try not to meddle in these affairs.

Ashley Cooper
On e-mail

Rewarding Jharna Begum

We are happy to learn from your staff correspondent's report on April 18, 2013 that a crest was awarded to Jharna Begum by the IG of Police for her outstanding act of



PHOTO: STAR

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Was there 2pc more?"

Ahsan Alam

Now we all can guess why Sheikh Hasina was protecting Abul and others.

Reaz Hassan

The rot in the government is being increasingly exposed by foreigners putting us all in great shame.

Andy

We, the citizens want to know the name of the missing individual with 2%. How come the opposition doesn't expose and bring up these issues to the front instead of calling hartal? This could be an effective weapon.

Telepathy

Well, we all can at least agree that there was something wrong in the Padma bridge fund allocation scheme.

Dev Saha

Are we congenitally insincere and corrupt? Whom can we trust really?

Mohammad Huq

Sheikh Hasina claimed that there was no transaction of money in the Padma bridge loan. So, how can there be any corruption or bribe? Abul Hossain was supposed to get 4 per cent because he is a patriot as announced by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in New York. This report clearly tells us how the Bangladesh government and its different institutions are working. The patriot was supposed to get the highest amount of money.

Niloufar Naseem Sarker

Why can't we wait till the SNC Lavalin case in the Canadian court is resolved? The case hinges on the accused official's diary containing a list of people to be bribed or are already bribed. Well, don't we need the paper trail of bank transactions of the bribed now? One is innocent until proven guilty beyond doubt. WB is not above politics. It's a well-known fact that U.S. has used WB funds to influence regional politics to gain their own end since its inception.

Ash C.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know whom this extra 2% was for!

Iftekhar Hassan

This is an excellent report for the people of Bangladesh to think, decide and vote.

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Ban Jamaat as terror outfit?"

Nizzy Niz

Yes. Ban them ASAP before they cause more destruction. Not just Jamaat, please ban all the religion-based political parties.

Trybestone

If Jamaat is to be banned for violence, then AL is to be banned for corruption.

Elpadrinobc

Ban Jamaat and give maximum punishment to these so-called astronauts. Bangladesh has no place for "moon" people.



PHOTO: STAR

bravery. Jharna Begum rescued a severely injured policeman who was lying helpless on the road, abandoned by his companions.

It is indeed good to learn that the Rajshahi mayor and the local ward commissioner have promised her a job with the Rajshahi City Corporation.

Also the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police gave her a house in appreciation of her outstanding brave act of rescue. I would request your correspondent to follow-up on the matter, say after six weeks, and report on what is being done officially to reward this brave young woman.

S. A. Mansoor, Dhaka