

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The tragedy was one that caught the world's attention with the haunting and often poignant pictures of the dead and injured flooding our television screens and newspapers.

past few months bringing the country to a standstill and gradually crippling the nation financially. Not to say draining the people of morale and instilling fear at the state of lawlessness. The upcoming elections have turned into a farce and I would say a source of embarrassment as the rest of the world looks on while The Awami League openly manipulate the situation to ensure the elections go their way. The opposition party in the meantime carry on with the pointless 'oborodh's and strikes which are harming the country and have had no real impact on the government's position.

I asked the driver of a family friend whether he supports any of the political parties and he nodded vigorously saying that he was a BNP supporter. I was interested in finding out his reason for supporting the BNP and asked him why and his answer took me aback. He said that he liked the symbol of the sheaf of wheat more than he liked the Awami League's election symbol, the boat. I also asked a cook in someone's household the same question and he claimed to be a staunch Awami Leaguer. When I asked him the same question as to why he was, he smiled and shrugged saying he just was and had been for a long time. In hindsight both their simple answers made perfect sense and put things in perspective for me. Politics in our country has very little to do with party manifestos or what position a particular political party takes on health, education, domestic and foreign policies etc. We live in a time of street politics and armchair politics and are caught in the middle of two feuding parties with personal agendas and grievances that should have no place in the political arena.

If we are hoping for a better year for our country maybe 2014 will bring with it a new independent political party, one that actually has the nation's interests at heart and values its people. Or maybe we can hope that the current political parties will put aside their personal differences and work together for the welfare of the nation. I know its wishful thinking but as I said the New Year is a time for reflection and also a time where we can hope for better things to come. So I hope for a year of political calm, economic growth, happiness and prosperity for my country. With that I wish you all a very happy 2014!