

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 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Two-faced

**Kudos to OC Keraniganj PS**

Once again the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Keraniganj PS and his under-command have done an admirable job by arresting a notorious local criminal called Badsha, who was given a life sentence for committing a murder. Few weeks ago the members of the same PS arrested another local godfather in an operation in which the OC himself suffered a bullet injury on his hand. This time he also suffered an injury on his leg while exchanging fires with the followers of Badsha who tried to snatch him away from the police. OC Keraniganj PS, Mr. Mustafizur Rahman Khan, and his team deserve to be congratulated for these acts of courage and devotion to duty. Dear Mr. Khan, we feel

proud to have officers like you in our police force. We hope other officers in the police will feel inspired by the examples you have set.

**Brig Gen (Retd) Ashraf Dhaka**

**The police behind the mirror**

A large number of incidents really forced people to believe there are some police officers who are up to something else rather than being the guardians of the good citizens and the lifesavers of the people. But the reality is even more horrifying!

They are collecting money from the street vendors regularly and if you do not believe me, come and see what's happening at Mohammadpur. They were asking for 10

taka from an old vendor who probably had an amount of vegetables worth Tk 100. One of the vendors was beaten badly for not paying the amount asked for.

If you have a place where there is no vandalism and no miscreants you are sure to find the police acting as the miscreants or I should rather say playing the role of the miscreants so properly and accurately that make the real ones feel shy.

Can't we get rid of such police officials? They were about to pick a boy for not knowing his father's name. Is that a crime? I wish someone would come as some knight in the shining armour to help us out from such dreadful life. We want to see the police as friends not the friends of the miscreants.

**Badal Hasib, Mohammadpur**

him, for something that will go into my memory bank to be a continuous source of pleasure. **Al, On e-mail**

**Education system: infested by corruption**

The corruption and illegal transactions in our education system will come to light if we go to the concerned offices for necessary help and guideline. Despite my little knowledge of short life span I came to know and experienced some of the corruption existing in our education system. For instance I, along with some other bright students, had to give bribe to the teachers concerned for practical marks. Since then I have begun to doubt how educational institutions, with such morally corrupt personnel who give us the lesson of giving and taking bribe at the very first stage of our life, would impart training of moral education to make us men of characters. Such of my impression deepened when I, for the second time, had to give bribe in the name of tips while taking delivery of my SSC certificate from my school.

It may be added that, some immoral and greedy personnel are corrupting many educational institutions regarding monetary affairs. There exist many such instances as I stated and that are being overlooked due to critical circumstances. It is difficult to state them elaborately. So what is needed now is to find out the corruption in every level to cure the system from such germs and to promote the standard of education. The education system needs to be thoroughly revised to suit the life style and culture of the people of the country. And the teachers, who are considered to be the builders of men and society should stand model for all.

**Md. Arif Sadeq**

*Dept. of English, DU*

**Guaranteed Express Post**

Guaranteed Express Post (GEP) was introduced by the postal department a few years ago with the assurance to get one's letter delivered to the addressee of a district town within twenty four hours. Initially the system worked well. But after about a year the performance became horrible. Now GEP letters reach a district town three/four days after its posting even in GPO Dhaka. Even ordinary posts reach a district town within two days. So why should people pay extra money for GEP. I tried GEP two three times during the last few months and the result was same. Last time I sent a letter by GEP was on 22<sup>nd</sup> July in GPO Dhaka and destination of the letter was Sylhet town, which is a divisional town. But the letter was delivered to its addressee in Sylhet on 26<sup>th</sup> July which I came to know over phone.

So in the fitness of things Guaranteed Express Post should be renamed as "Guaranteed Delayed Post." Will the postal department rise from its slumber and stop cheating people? Will the ministry concerned do something in this regard before the postal department loses its credibility completely? **Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury** *New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka*

**A better copyright office**

Copyright offices in the developed countries have been operating for a long time, establishing a tradition of protecting various types of intellectual properties and upholding the values of the respective nation. But in Bangladesh the situation is not satisfactory and it is due to the serious irregularities and lack of farsightedness in programmes, policies and implementations. Believe it or not we have a Copyright Office, fully managed and controlled by the government of Bangladesh: (A) without any office building of its own; (B) having no organised library and archives; (C) hardly having classifiers, indexers and cataloguers; (D) having no facility of using computer technology, modern audio visual and other allied disciplines; (E) above all it does not have any minimum acceptable tools of running a Copyright Office, say any bibliographic collections.

Moreover, though surprising, it does not have any substantive appointed Registrar to run the office.

We have been trying to impress the government for the last few years to integrate and organise the various Intellectual Property Offices of Bangladesh (e.g. The Trade Mark Registry and the Patent and Design Office) with good laws both in Bengali and in English keeping pace with the minimum standard fixed by various international intellectual property organisations (e.g. World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and other offices).

We draw the kind attention of the authorities to look consider the ongoing status of the Copyright Office with priority so that the nation can get the real and effective benefits of such important national establishments.

**A.B.M. Shamsud Doulah,** *Chairman, Bangladesh Intellectual Property Law Society, Dhaka*

**Public opinion polls**

**The city sinking**

I am horrified, to say the least, at the reported attempt of the government to swallow the last piece of wet land in the capital city, thereby choking Dhaka (already a dying city) effectively of any outlet (of rain/flood water). I wonder sometimes -- are we living in some prehistoric age or are we a bunch of idiots who love to cut the branch of the tree they are sitting on. To them it doesn't matter if Dhaka sinks under water in the rainy season or under garbage otherwise (courtesy Mr Khoka).

I urge the environmentalists to stand up against this dangerous scheme of the government to eat up the Hatir jheel.

**Ahmad Kamal** *Abu Dhabi, UAE*



Wet and worried

I wonder if the Daily Star, perhaps in conjunction with other leading news entities or private research firms, could create something like a scorecard to measure the performance of Bangladesh's illustrious and rather large set of ministers. Who knows, maybe these ministers are actually doing some good works that are going unnoticed. As it would be hard to differentiate them on their parliamentary voting records alone, perhaps you could grade them on other areas such as their fight against corruption, how easy it is for citizens to do business with their respective ministries, how many days out of the year they actually attend to affairs of the state vs. political party activities vs. private matters, and so on. We would also like to know how they are spending their budgets, and if indeed there are any projects they have implemented that can be considered successful. In reality, how is the prime minister to fire any non-performing ministers -- what were the performance criteria to begin with?

Also, there is a lack of proper public opinion polls in Bangladesh -- consideration of such enhancement of retirement age, but may I ask, if these top officials are so useful, meritorious and extra-ordinary? If they are, then what actually they have done for changing the fate of this nation during this long period?

Every one is aware of the fact that our bureaucracy is corrupt except some few exceptions. And could anybody claim that all these top one's fall in to that 'exceptional' category? Definitely not. In that case why to extent the service of corrupt one's en mass! I don't find the logic in it. Rather let there be a high powered committee comprising of renowned personalities like Dr. Younus, Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury (VC BRAC University) and ex-Secretary Shah Abdul Hannan who will finalise the government proposal to extend service where it is needed for the national interest. And their decision will be based on the person's honesty, sincerity, past contribution and experience. This would remove the ongoing allegation against the government for giving mushroom contractual appointment.

**Saumitra Sarder Piklu** *Jagannath Hall, DU*

**Railway issues: Need serious thoughts**

It has been decided by the government, as reported in the media, that the inland container depot [ICD] at Kamalapur railway station will be shifted to Tongi. The reason, as reported, is that the ICD is carrying too many containers and the transportation of the export/import cargo is creating congestion in the city streets. If that be the case there is scope for reviewing the decision. After all, transportation facilities are developed for enhancement of traffic. It is difficult to understand why the ICD is to be shifted only because it is serving the very purpose it is expected to do. Incidentally this ICD was expanded only four years ago at a considerable cost. What is necessary is to remove the difficulties, if any, in the transportation of container and break-bulk cargo to and from the ICD. When the construction of the flyover at Khilgaon is completed the present congestion on the approach station again because the railway track is bifurcating the city. What we really needed was to build additional terminals in the city and provide over-bridges for the roads (not necessarily expensive flyovers everywhere). Unfortunately no serious thought has ever been given since the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 to develop this railway in the proper perspective. Rather, the railway system was interfered with, to its detriment, to meet other requirements. The rail track in Dhaka city was shifted for the second time to make room for the new international airport. Most of the important and aging railway bridges were used as power inter-connectors, gas pipeline carriers or roadways causing capacity reduction and maintenance problem. Interestingly, when Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge was being planned the question of providing a railway track was ignored. It was, however, decided at a much later stage to include a railway track on the bridge. But at that stage it could accommodate only a metre gauge track. Although a dual gauge (broad gauge and

**Hajj 2004 and some suggestions**

I would invite the kind attention of the Prime Minister for alleviating the sufferings of the Hajjis during their month long stay in the holy cities of Makkah Mukarrama and Madinatul Monwara. Every year thousands of pilgrims from Bangladesh perform Hajj and almost all the Hajjis, on

their return, express the sorry plight and unending sufferings due to the mismanagement of the Hajj Mission and about the dilapidated rented houses situated far from the Holy Kaba.

I would like to put forward my humble suggestions as follows:

There should not be any broker/agents without having a genuine licence from the ministry concerned.

Somehow it appears that the ministry often recommends agents who do not work properly and that should be stopped. Allegedly the agents hire some imams, and hundreds of such Maulvis collect innocent pilgrims and compel them to deposit the necessary fund in their bank account. But after reaching Jeddah and the holy city they do not take care so much, for which the Hajjis suffer a lot.

The pilgrims should be under government's management, there should be strict rules for the Hajj Missions in Jeddah, Makkah and Medina, to serve the Hajjis properly. The ministry concerned can send young, energetic, honest and brilliant Muslim students from Kamil Madrasa and the universities, only on the recommendations from the heads of departments. There should be one committee who will talk to the Hajjis during their stays in Dhaka and after their return and take action against those who make irregularities and causes sufferings to the Hajjis. **Syed Ziaul Hussain Shujon** *Hiala Shaheb Bari, Habigonj*

**DU library and some facts**

Thanks to Mr. Hasan Zahid Tusher for his reporting on the negligence of microfilms in DU central library and also thanks to Mr. Azizul Russel for his letter on that report (July 25). Mr. Russel also mentioned some problems of DU central library. Here I would like to add some more on this topic.

DU authority introduce new subjects or add new courses one after another but don't increase library facilities. Twenty to thirty years old (and more) books are the sole source of these new subjects/courses. As a student of Economics, I can say about the Economics Department where recently two new courses are included -- Macro and CGE Modeling in BBS fourth year and Advanced Topics in Econometrics in MSS. But reference books are not at all available in the library. Our teachers' personal collection is the main source for our study. However, some relevant books are available but the important pages are often missing.

Many readers go to the newspaper and journal section but its condition is very crucial -- most of the newspapers and journals are not preserved properly. Regrettably in the era of Information Technology (IT), the DU library has only two Internet computers, with internet facilities for fourteen, for twenty thousands students of arts and commerce faculty. It seems to me that the authority is fully careless about providing IT facilities for the welfare of general students. **Md. Zillur Rahaman** *Bangabandhu Hall, DU*

**'A rare and exceptional poem'**

The article in the issue of July 24, 2003, 'A rare and exceptional poem' by Omar Khasru, was a delight. The poem he quoted was indeed 'rare and exceptional.' Thank you, and

**"Dowry: A social crime"**



Dowry disease

I could not agree more with Rubab Abdullah that 'highly educated persons from respectable families' use pressure on career women as a form of dowry-hunting. In my school, we have had more than one instance of excellent young women teachers earnestly promising us that, after their marriage, they intend to continue teaching at our school and so they sign their contracts for the coming year(s). After marriage, however, they say they are under great pressure from their husband's family to accept a job at a school offering a higher salary and they are gone! -- even though it may be the middle of the term and their classes are upset and the management of the school has to quickly try and find a replacement, and the parents blame the school for changing the teachers and suspect the worst about us!

We have decided that, in future, before asking engaged young women to sign a contract, we must ask the fiancés to come in, to try and convey to the young men concerned what a 'contract' means, both in law and honour. Unfortunately, employment law (and indeed customary behaviour) in Bangladesh means that we cannot hold them to their contracts. It is worth a try but I am not sure that it will work, without a massive change of attitude. As your correspondent points out, about dowry, 'This evil custom cannot be abolished until the outlook of society changes' but, as he says, it does involve the middle and upper classes as well as the poor. If the bride is considered, primarily, as a source of financial advantage for her husband's family, and her wishes and happiness over-ridden, then how can this not poison the marriage relationship which is at the heart of the family -- and so of society? It's not doing much good to school life either and sets a bad example to the children....

**Principal of an English-medium school, Dhaka**



Family ties

**Why dictators**

People in this country have been bombarded with some very intelligent TV programmes about all the big, ruthless dictators e.g. Hitler, Stalin, Saddam. The programme researcher or the narrator goes to extraordinary length to find out more about the childhood of these dictators. According to these programmes, most of these dictators had poor relationship with people right from the early age e.g. they have been betrayed by people they

trusted, isolation, loneliness and so on. But one factor that is always given special attention to, is the relationship of these dictators with their fathers!

John Simpson (BBC reporter) presented lots of analysis on Saddam during the Iraq war and he revealed how ruthless Saddam was and why he doesn't trust anyone, his doubles, his bad relationship with his father, his misconceptions about the real world and so on. We were told

that, if US/UK invaded Iraq and if Saddam was really pushed to the corner (if the invading force threatened his rule), he will become very dangerous and will fight back with all sorts of nasty weapons. We were told that Saddam might use chemical/nuclear weapons and kill millions of Western and even Arab people.

Now, if most of these dictators had very bad relationship with their fathers and if they were beaten and abused by



their fathers, what I want to know is: What sort of relationship did Bush and Blair had with their fathers? Were they also abused and beaten by their fathers? How else do you explain their "dictatorial democratic" policies towards helpless people? I would love to watch some of those so-called "analysis" by BBC/CNN/Western-mouthpieces on these two men.

**Azad Miah** *Oldham, UK*

again, a market opportunity for innovative firms and the news agencies, such as your paper. Perhaps Bangladesh's rulers need more structured feedback from citizens than what they currently find only in the editorials and letters columns of leading newspapers. **Rafiq Ahmed** *Chicago, USA*

**JKobir** *Dhaka*

**Slow and steady**

Bangladesh, the newest Test babe, has been recently playing against Australia. Though we lost the first test, our bowlers' performance were promising. In the second Test our batsmen like Hannan, Omar and Shumon showed their ability to do well against world's best pace trio which includes Lee, McGrath and Gillespie. We have quality players but our prime lack is that we can't play on the field as a team. I think our team performance will get better in course of time. Bangladesh's newly appointed coach Dev Whatmore, who has vast experience, can do a lot about this problem along with the BCCI. My proposal is to give sufficient time to Dev -- not less than five years. Because the expected result can not come in a day. We should always remember that 'slow and steady wins the race'.

road of the ICD will be eased. As a matter of fact substantial portion of the export/import cargo handled at Kamalapur ICD is produced/consumed in Dhaka City itself. If the ICD is shifted outside the city the cargo will have to be transported to and from the city on trailers/trucks creating more congestion in the streets. It would, perhaps, be appropriate to create additional facilities outside the city and retain the ICD at Kamalapur to serve the city.

It is not for the first time that such a decision concerning railway has been taken without due consideration of the role the railway is supposed to play. In most of the cities of the world the main railway stations are at the city centres. But we decided in the 1960s to shift the railway station from Fulbaria to Kamalapur at considerable expense. Not surprisingly, it was found that the city extended itself towards and beyond the new station. Interestingly, some people are thinking loudly about shifting the

metre gauge combined) connection is being provided over the bridge, the broad gauge train operation will be highly restricted in respect of loading capacity. Fortunately, however, it is possible to enhance the loading capacity of the bridge with minor re-engineering and re-rating of the loading capacity. It is hoped that the government will give due consideration to the findings of study conducted in this connection.

Coming back to the question of Dhaka city and its railway linkage, the solution lies not in ridding the city of railway, but in establishing the right type of railway in the city. For instance, the initiative that was taken to establish an elevated mass rail transit system [EMRTS] in the city was a step in the right direction. Surprisingly, the project seems to have been stalled. Dhaka city badly needs some sort of rail based mass transit system. **Atikul H Khan** *Former Director General, Bangladesh Railway*