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**Internship honorarium**

The increasing number of business graduates in the last couple of years have necessitated more internship opportunities from associated organisations. And some organisations are taking advantage of this surplus supply of internship candidates. There are some big companies in the country that grant internship to business students without the courtesy to pay any honorarium as a recognition for the services the interns render to the organisations. Companies argue that interns don't come to much help and internship opportunity is just a favour they're doing to the business students. But the fact is that these companies get their jobs, assignments and even some research works are done by the interns. Without them, these companies would have had hired personnel with salary. This would have cost them quite a lot. Some companies don't pay interns any honorarium, let alone the minimum wage, to uphold a mean organisational culture.

I think this practice should be stopped.  
**Md. Naved Ferdous Iqbal**  
BBA, The University of Asia Pacific

**Abductions in Chittagong**

From the recent press reports it has become clear that Chittagong has always been an abductors' paradise. Groups of notorious people have been engaged in this despicable business over the years before the eyes of law enforcing agencies.

With the last kidnapping of a Chittagong businessman, the people of the city has woken up to this total lack of efficiency of the law enforcement agencies and said enough is enough.

The government too has woken up from its sleep. It has taken action against three high-level police officials. This kind of action against non-performing officials has been overdue for long. The government's inaction or delay in taking actions has made its officials going into a dead slow pace. This has resulted in losing of people's faith in the government. The long-term effect of such things will be extremely bad for the country. Just the very next day action against police officials was taken, we came to know that the two students who were kidnapped have been rescued. Probably somebody got the message and took actions.

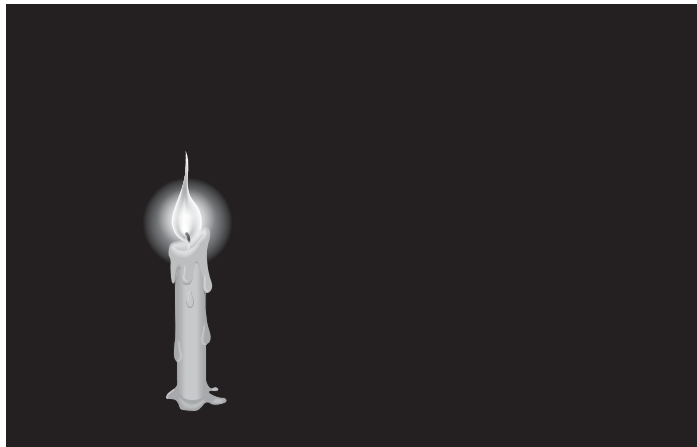
I would like to highlight another news - the share of the abductors' booty reaches some police officials too. It is simply outrageous. The government should investigate into such matter to find its worthiness and punish the officials. Otherwise lawlessness will continue to be a way of life here.

**Amerul Haq**  
On e-mail

**Promotions and...**

The news regarding the promotion of officers to the posts of Joint and Additional Secretaries shows that we are far from implementing a sense of justice in handling the bureaucracy that has been politicised from the day one of our independence. What struck me as

**Power minister clarifies electricity debacle**



Dhaka nights!

Please refer to your editorial titled "Rampant Power Failure" published in The Daily Star on August 30, 2003. I believe the editorial is the outcome of the previous news items titled "Drive denial led to blackouts at new market" and "Power outages stop Kawran Bazar dead in tracks" published in the paper recently.

Blackouts at Dhaka New Market was caused by a fire destroying a cable and panel board. The responsibility of maintenance of this cable and the panel board lies with Dhaka City Corporation. DESA is in no way responsible for this power failure and the delay in restoring it. It may be mentioned here that DESA is yet to receive taka 25 lac as electricity bills from this area. Though we are not aware of the arrangement between the shop owners and the City Corporation, one must consider the fact that the consumers, domestic or commercial, have their responsibility to clear their bills on a regular basis. It is expected that the defaulters should not be in a position to draw sympathy from any quarters.

You have accused us for not spelling out a cut-out date for restoring normalcy in electricity distribution in certain parts, disrupted by Ulan-Dhamondi underground cable fault. Completion of this work was subject to proper identification and arrival of foreign experts from abroad. Moreover, the job is a highly technical and cumbersome one. Don't you think that spelling out a cut out date in this scenario on mere assumptions would have been unwise and misleading? You may note that the cable fault led to 60 MW of load shedding covering a sizeable area of Dhaka.

But we tried our best to reduce the problem to a minimum level. By way of diverting and bypassing, we have restricted the load shedding to about 10 MW only. Is it not an achievement? Don't you feel that bringing down the total load shedding hours from 1042 hrs in 2000/1 FY to 767 hours in 2002/3 FY deserves some appreciation?

You might agree with me that the present management is trying hard to remain much more transparent than before. I personally share all the information and statistics with the journalists interested in producing objective and authentic report. My door would always be open to your reporters too.

**Iqbal Hassan Mahmood**  
State Minister  
Power Division

cates issued to them by an Awami League Government that ensured that not a single candidate who was not from their party or related to the top brass of the Awami League was recruited. There were many genuine freedom fighters, who were left leaning and were not given the chance to seek a job with the 1973 Batch.

Second, the batch was recruited on the basis of just an oral examination that was conducted in as farcical a manner as one can imagine.

Third, no educational qualification was set for the recruitment process and that explains why many of them also got left out from the promotion process under discus-

herself called this batch as Tofael Bahini in 1996?

The BNP's problem in handling the promotions has been its failure in dealing with the 1973 batch politically, for this batch is the only one in Bangladesh's history that was recruited under the US system of spoils to serve a political party for purposes that were strictly political. If anyone was left in doubt on the above, the batch removed that doubt by acting in 1996 as an extension of the AL in the bureaucracy and literally lifting the earth from under the feet of the BNP to bring it down. Why do we forget the so-called *Janater Moncho* of 1996 and the contributions of the 1973 batch

be rescheduled for the convenient of Hindu students.  
**Rifat Mahub**  
Dhaka University

**Job eludes graduates of some private universities**

With reference to the write up of Mr. Jahangir Alam, published as "Job eludes graduates of some private universities" in the DS of 25<sup>th</sup> August. I read it with deep attention and in some cases I agreed with his views. But some of his points were biased and unrealistic. May be Mr. Alam failed to read deeply the several reports of DS staff correspondent, Mr. Mustak Hussain. To get the real picture, I think, he should have gone through the reports again. The reports were truly praiseworthy.

You mentioned "with a modern curriculum, modern facilities and proper guidance, even average students are able to do well." But you did not explain your point. I would like to explain you that - most of the private universities do not have proper campuses. However, one of the seminal commitments of all the established private universities was to build up their own campus within three to five years of their recognition. But none of the private universities fulfilled that.

Allegedly most of the private universities have only one computer laboratory consisting two /three rooms and these labs are smaller, in some cases, than some of the famous coaching centres in Farmgate. Mr. Alam failed to perceive the fact that these institutions hire part time teachers of autonomous universities.

In the 27 August Star Weekend Magazine, Professor Shawkat Hussain (of DU) wrote in his column "Nothing if Not Serious" that if anyone visits Dhanmondi/ Satmasjid Rd or Gulshan/ Banani, he must be amazed looking at the signboards of private universities. Because that reminds you of the coaching centres, situated within few steps and the professor is worried about finding out suitable names for private universities. He suggested a name "North-North-West University".

**Md. Zillur Rahaman**  
MSS Economics, BB Hall, DU

**"Want to join legal profession!"**

So stated the advertisement for the British School of Law (no doubt it was set up by a group of sycophantic anglophiles) on Wednesday, 27th August 2003. What strikes one about the above statement is the poor grammar of the person who drafted the advertisement. For starters it's missing the all-important article "the" and then of course there is the inappropriate use of the exclamation mark. And this is an institution which claims to offer "UK courses". And then it boasts of an "Affluent Library". What had heard before the word "affluent" being used in connection with a library? The British School of Law did just that. My best guess is that they had originally thought of "rich library" and used a thesaurus to arrive at "affluent". I checked the thesaurus myself and thank God that they had not opted for "Well-to-do Library".

And its not just the British School of Law, there are many other institutions with the same problem. In most of these institutions the teachers will not be able to string two words of English together without making a grammatical error. One might think that I am going a bit too far in bashing an advertisement, but if you go to the High Court nowadays poor standard of English is all too obvious. Let alone pronunciation, many lawyers will have problems constructing a whole sentence in English. One thing is sure, the British School of Law shall be a healthy breeder of such lawyers.

**EAS**  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

**The US on hartal and gas export**

My writing is on the comment of the newly appointed US Ambassador, Harry K Thomas, to Bangladesh. He spoke on various issues relating to Bangladesh at his first meeting with the press. I appreciate his strong disapproving of the "politics of hartal" saying, "all parties must find ways to work together. In modern age, hartal is disruptive to economy and people and we encourage both parties to work together."

It's really a positive verbal support of the US in the reshaping of Bangladesh's political and economic climates into sound ones. I think US will extend its hand to Bangladesh's economic development and other sectors where it can intervene without being seen as interfering in domestic affairs.

But I disagree with Harry K Thomas about exporting gas. Commenting on the remarks of American Nobel Laureate economist Prof. Joseph Stiglitz who strongly opposed the idea of gas export, Ambassador Thomas said, "... I don't know if he has any experience of natural gas engineering... And with all due respect, I disagree with him." I want to ask him politely, does he have any experience of natural gas engineering? I don't know whether the Nobel Laureate had any experience of it or not.

If he does, he will be able to measure our natural gas and that

will be an appreciable move. Why not give us a detailed description about this disputed issue.

He avoided a direct reply when asked to spell out a single factor that has prompted Washington to put Bangladesh on the US list of terror-risk nations, saying, "I was not aware that Bangladesh is on the terror list. I don't believe it, I will have to check that."

He doesn't believe it, but then again, who does? It's a matter of surprise that he has to check that. People of Bangladesh think the US should comment frankly on Bangladesh. If he thinks that Bangladesh is not a terror-risk nation, then he should convince his government to declare it openly. We the people of Bangladesh will welcome this gesture.

**Shamsul Alam Monir**  
Dept. of Public Admin, DU

**Now his Excellencies!**

Professor Anwarullah Chowdhury has been appointed as the Bangladesh Ambassador to Bahrain. Earlier he was appointed as the vice-chancellor of Dhaka University. Last year after the shameful incident professor Anwarullah Chowdhury was dismissed from that post. And it is beyond doubt that due to his partisan character, incompetence and deliberate attempt to save the culprits, such unfortunate incidents took place, which will always remain a black chapter in the history of Dhaka University.

No action was taken against him. Rather he was rewarded with a lucrative and prestigious job of an ambassador. The person who defamed a significant post of the highest seat of learning is not entitled to be appointed for another responsible post. He always served petty and narrow interests instead of country's grater interest. His appointment will further marginalise good people and encourage incompetent people to perform more unpleasant tasks and do more harm to the society and the country.

**Khijir Ahmed**  
Baghbari, Sylhet

**The Daily Star: Pages should be lessened**

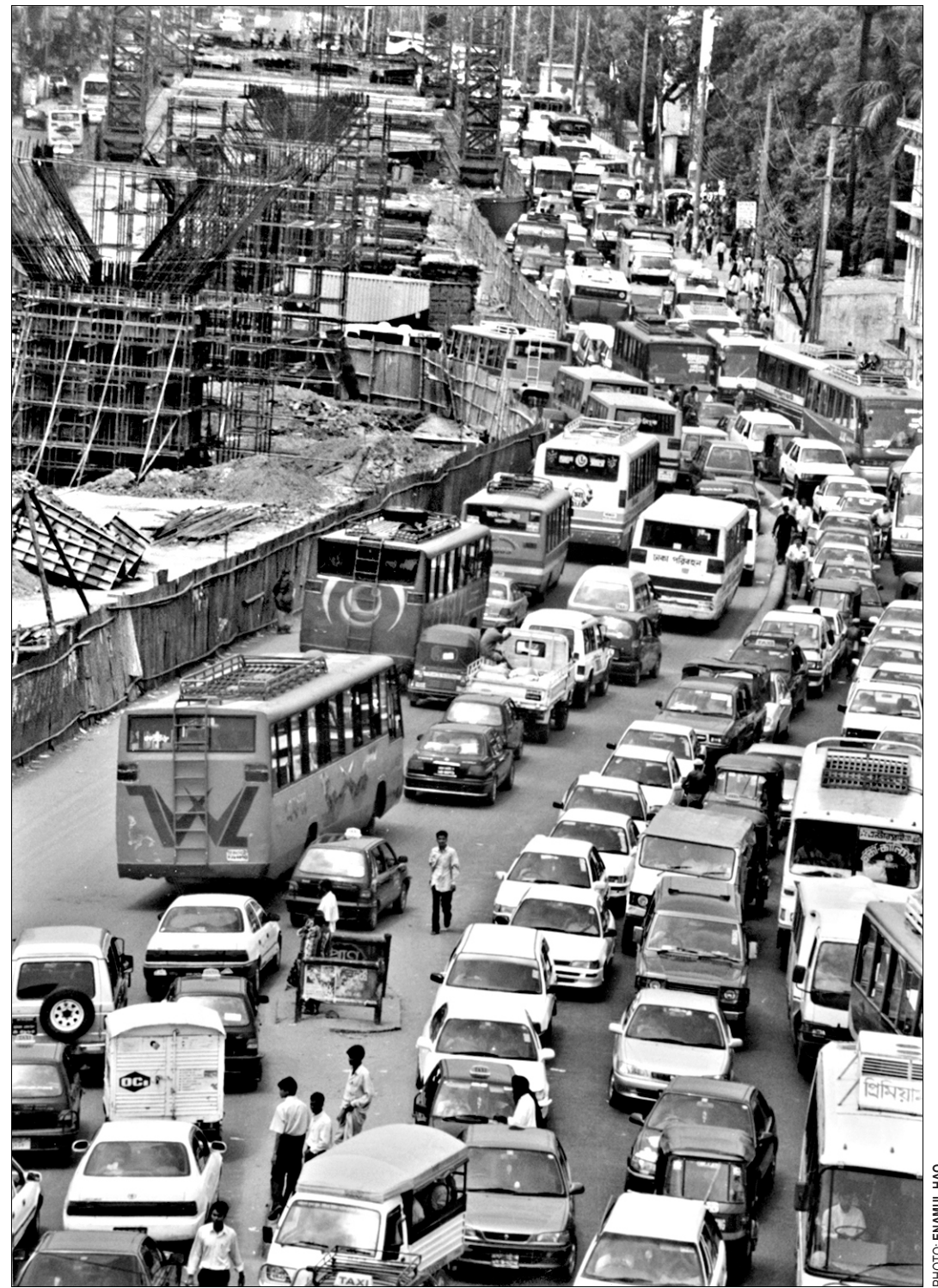
There is no doubt that Daily Star is a leading and an influential newspaper in the publication world of Bangladesh. It is well balanced in all its coverage. Its news, views and other information are also very timely and objective. But it has some flaws or exaggerations also. It contains the news of games and sports covering three pages daily. It is too much. One page holding the most important and interesting news of the arena of games and sports should be sufficient. Again, news of business also contains two pages making the volume of the paper bigger, which results in more cost for the newspaper. We believe if these extra pages are dropped from the newspaper, the newspaper will not lose its attraction and appeal at all. We know the real worth of a publication lies in quality, not in quantity.

**Feroz Ahmed**  
Dhaka University

**Losing faith on doctors, like that of police**

Living a healthy life and to get proper health service is one of the basic human rights. But the existing

**Can this problem be solved?**



I always take a Premium or Nirapad bus to go to Motijheel. The fare of these buses is cheaper and the journey is very comfortable. To reach Motijheel, these buses need to cross Mohakhali. This is where the problem lies. Crossing Mohakhali means crossing the biggest traffic jam in the country, I guess. This traffic jam is a result of the construction of the fly-over in Mohakhali. Sometimes, it even takes an hour to cross Mohakhali. It kills our precious times and that is greatly affecting our jobs. Can't the government do something about it?

The higher authorities must understand that we, the ordinary citizens, do not get the royal treatment like them when they go to their offices. Hope a positive step should be taken to solve this traffic jam of Mohakhali.

**Minhaj Ahmed**  
Uttara, Dhaka

condition shows that the majority of the people who live under the poverty level or live a middle class life are totally deprived of this right. Many people don't get proper medical service from the government hospitals, even though it is their right, because of the existing corruption and irresponsibility of the doctors. Nowadays it seems that there is no control over the doctors and private medical institutions.

The role of the doctors and nurses working at public hospitals are seriously questionable. Why do many patients visit India or other countries for treatment? The answer is quite easy. People in our country have began to lose their belief in the efficiency of our doctors who seem to be more interested in making money than giving proper services. Losing belief in doctors is similar to losing belief in our police department. A patient who does not have enough money is afraid of visiting a doctor (so called specialists) just like he is afraid of visiting a

police station for seeking help. Many doctors are said to have engaged in the trade of the clinics and diagnostic centres. They send their poor patients to these clinics or to the diagnostic centres for necessary or unnecessary tests which cost extra money. Excessive greed has brought the name of 'butcher' for them. Sometimes we come to know that drugs and apparatus of the public hospitals are sold out illegally. Many patients are deprived of their free medicine everyday. Stunned by an experience I have had during my visit to CMCH, I asked one of my journalist friends why they don't write about the corruption prevailing in the public hospitals. His answer was "those doctors are very verted, we, journalists, aren't allowed to enter the hospitals." His answer shocked me seriously.

However, some private clinics provide better service in return of money. But most of the patients don't venture to go to private hospitals. Poor people cannot afford to go to private clinics either. As regards the diagnostic centres, they claim as much money as possible from the patients for different tests. Having been unaware of the real costs of a particular test, they (patients) have to pay what the diagnostic centre claims. Many doctors in our country (there are exceptions) receive ransom from diagnostic centres in return for sending patients to those centres. Even the fee of an MBBS doctor in our country is higher than the fee that an expert takes in our neighbouring country, India.

**Acitizen**  
On E-mail

**A right decision**

We are happy that the government did not send troops to Iraq. Defying United Nations, US and Britain attacked Iraq, which was an illegal, immoral act, solely done for their and Israel's interest. A historic land has turned into ruins and still people are losing their lives. The US and Britain said they came to liberate the people of Iraq. What sort of liberation is this, which has made the Iraqis more distressed than before?

Did the US and Britain intend to use Bangladeshi soldiers as 'human shields' so that their troops will remain unharmed?

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong



disgusting is the news that two officers of the 1981 batch were omitted from the list as they had served as Private Secretaries to two former AL ministers. I am, however, not so sure if it is correct that these two officers named in your report as having stood first and second in the 1981 BCS Exam exactly did achieve those positions. The BNP here is being seen as unfair and partial against the 1973 Batch. However, it need be said, tears in the eyes of the officers of the batch notwithstanding, that the 1973 batch was offered jobs on grossly unfair ground.

First, their claim as freedom fighters was on the basis of certi-

tion, as they were, academically, under-qualified.

Finally, throughout their careers, they have always been committed to the AL and when the AL came to power in 1996, they foolishly showed their hands not only in favour of the AL but overtly against the BNP. If one takes an objective view, the 1973 batch can then be described as a group recruited by the AL for political reasons, flouting all recruitment rules, and should have been removed with the departure of the first AL Government in 1975.

Why do we forget that former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

to making the *Moncho* successful?  
**Shahjahan Ahmed**  
Dhanmandi RA

**Exam date and religious festival**

I fully agree with the point raised by Mr. Sajol (Aug 29, 2003). Our third year exam will begin from October 2. The most important religious festival of Hindu religion, the *Durga puja*, is starting from the same date. The examination authority should consider the fact that no examination can be held during any important festival of any religion. So, the date of the examination is needed to

**Police harassment: When to say, "enough is enough?"**

It was August 27, a beautiful Wednesday evening. I was heading towards the Wonderland, Gulshan to have the wonderful experience of watching Mars along with my school-going little cousins. We did not want to miss the unique astrological encounter. Anyway, our car just got off the cantonment area past the railway track, where we sat waiting to make a left turn to get on the Uttara road. Suddenly a blue police jeep (License Number: Dhaka-148/Aaw) cut past our car, and made a left turn abruptly in such a way that it scratched the right front side and cracked the headlight of our car. The incident happened around 8.45 PM. Anyway it was not that big a deal; these things happen while driving on the streets of Dhaka. Still, I wanted to chat with the driver of the jeep. I waived my hand to signal the jeep to pull over. Surprisingly enough, they did. But contrary to being apologetic about hitting our car, they felt offended by the fact that we asked them to pull over. It was beyond their wildest dreams.

The person who was in the jeep with his family might hold high position in the Police Department. He had uniformed police escort. When our driver was showing the damage of our car, the police driver without listening or even seeing the damage approached our driver and slapped him. Meanwhile, the big boss did not remain idle, and he threatened me that he would send us to the Gulshan Police Station! For what allega-

tion? Is it an offence to show them how they wrecked our car? What kind of examples they are setting to our society with these kinds of irresponsible behaviours? All we wanted was an apology -- a simple but deep word -- "sorry".

Does the first letter of the word police stands for "Protecting" or "Pressing"? I am not

sure. But one thing I know for sure is that the existing dictatorship on the streets must change sooner or later. No one should be above the law, especially not our law enforcement forces!



Under such circumstances, shouldn't the government fix the fees of the doctors and charge of the diagnostic centres? The government seems to be satisfied only with imposing taxes on them. But mere taxation without control has made many doctors more desperate than ever. If the health service is not available to all like the education, how can a sick nation prosper? If the government doesn't take necessary measures to ensure the right of the people, and if the doctors-- who should be conscious of their social responsibilities-- don't pay heed to the voice of their conscience, we don't know what consequences will we bear after five years or so.

**A sufferer**  
On mail