

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.

A lethal danger!

This photograph was shot just a few minutes (09:50 am) back today (15.09.06). It is a broken base portion of a high voltage electric pole by the boundary wall of Jessore Government Girls' School. It is also in front of the Jessore Municipality Office. It seems that it may collapse any time causing casualties.

I request the authorities concerned to replace this dilapidated and broken pole with a new one to avoid accidents.

Md. Munibur Rahman
Lecturer in English
Jessore Govt. Mohila College,
Jessore

Magician of football

Zinedine Zidane, born in Marseilles, France, of Algerian parents is one of the greatest players in the history of football. Throughout his career he showed unbelievable quality which made him one of the greatest players of the world. He played for lots of world famous clubs and won many trophies for them.

The best player after Pele and Maradona, Zidane played his first professional First Division game for Cannes in 1991 and quickly rose through the professional ranks. He scored two goals in the World Cup finals of 1998, helping France defeat Brazil to claim its first World Cup.

Shoab M. Siddiq
Elephant Road, Dhaka

Political chaos

Political intolerance has escalated to such an incredible height in Bangladesh that it is now threatening the essence of democratic frame of the country. There is more than one reason for one to lose one's heart at the deteriorating political situation. Recent police brutalities have overshadowed their own past records in this regard. The way police treated the political leaders of the opposition 14-party alliance with unprecedented baton charges was just a medieval act. They beat opposition leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury so brutally that he is now undergoing treatment outside the country. And he has said that police beat him with a view to killing or crippling him as they hit the head and the lower parts of the body. The way police unleashed the barbaric attack on him was a horrific sight he might have died at that time. The point has been made clear by the attack on other leaders that included the attack on Mohammed Nasim who, as medical report has revealed, has got one of his hands damaged and that he had a mild stroke at the time the brutal attack was launched on him. Asaduzzaman Nur was also treated the same way.

We, the common people of this land, urge the politicians on either side of the divide to use the reasoning faculty of mind. They should practice tolerance and use commonsense for the greater interest of the nation— otherwise, as it is evident now, we will drift towards greater uncertainty.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Why so much of news?

Every new TV channel comes to operate with a promise to entertain us. But they all end up showing many advertisements and news. It seems they believe if they don't show news, people won't watch their channels. All the channels show more and more news only. But they never think whether viewers really want to watch news all the time.

When I stay at home I move from one Bangla channel to another just to see a good drama or any good entertainment programme but unfortunately by the end of the day I end up memorising all news items showed by the channels. My question is why don't they minimise the news frequency? Why don't they realise that they all have become mainly a news channel that

shows few entertainment programmes in between news and advertisements? Of course, we all want news but there should be a limit to it.

Z. Islam
Shantinagar, Dhaka - 1217

Mother Teresa

This refers to an article on Mother Teresa published in The Daily Star on September 6, 2006. As far as I know, Mother Teresa came from Europe much before the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and all along lived in Kolkata. Most people know that she provided commendable services to the destitute, hungry and poor people. You must be aware that there were large-scale communal riots in Kolkata itself in 1946, 1950 and in 1964. Thousands of women and children became widows and orphans. But Mother Teresa kept herself away from all such issues.

Many years back when the Mother was alive a newsman asked her whether she would like to go to the moon. The pious Mother said if there were hungry and poor children in the moon then surely she would. Then after a couple of years there was a large-scale massacre of Muslims in Bosnia by the Serb army. Tens of thousands were killed. Thousands of children died due to hunger and extreme cold of the Balkans. The Mother was then alive and well, but she did nothing for them; she did not even utter a single word of sympathy for the victims.

An old timer
One-mail

Problems of Bangladesh

I am an expatriate working in Bangladesh for the last 7 months. Ever since I arrived in Bangladesh, I have been observing the tremendous problems the common man faces in his normal routine every day. Some of the issues facing him are the poor infrastructure, lack of a good public transport system, poor water and hygiene, massive traffic problems, poor wages, insecurity, poor medical facilities and corruption.

But is enough being done to set things right? Is there enough pressure on the government to correct these problems or even address them? Is there any movement to rid ourselves of these irritants in your daily life? Or are the people wallowing in Self Apathy hoping that some messiah will come and turn Bangladesh into a paradise?

Every other day a hartal is called. What purpose do these hartals serve? Is the daily wage earner taking home his wage for the day to feed his children and family? Is the rickshaw-puller who makes his money by carrying people daily, assured of his regular income on these days? Is the country earning enough in terms of foreign exchange on the days of the hartals? The country loses crores due to a hartal.

Except feeding the ego of political leaders, these hartals do no good to the common man. It is high time the people realised this and stopped participating in these hartals.

The country is faced with a drought situation. But has the government thought about programmes like rainwater harvesting? That would save crores of BDT of both WASA and the general public, apart from replenishing the ground water levels in the country. Has the government thought about innovative methods of harvesting Solar Energy or Wind Energy at least in the coastal areas?

Bangladesh is truly blessed with abundant manpower and natural resources. This is truly SONAR BANGLA! But in order to turn this to reality, I would request all the people here in Bangladesh, hoping for a change in their daily lives, to stop having apathy towards themselves and do something about it.

Turab Ur Rahman

Resolve issues in

parliament



At the moment the dialogue between the government and the opposition has got stuck because of the committee problems. But, I think, these problems can be avoided if a lively debate on the reform to the caretaker government and the Election Commission is arranged in the

parliament. The MPs are the representatives of the people and their opinion reflects the views of the people in general. Hopefully, after a lively discussion in the parliament they would find out a solution to this problem. However, the most important thing is that both sides need to give

some concessions. The politicians need to realise that the people of the country do not want any more conflicts; they want the next general election to be held peacefully.

Mainul Quadery
West Bakalia, Chittagong

TNT Express, Banani, Dhaka

The defence issue

This refers to the above article by Mr Jahangir Kabir published in your daily on September 1, 2006.

In fact, there was a referendum some years back to abolish the Swiss army & better invest the billion dollars spent on that account for development work at home & overseas, but the Swiss were unable to determine how the 4,50,000+ people trained to fight & psychologically regimented could be reabsorbed or reintegrated in the civil society. So the army has been retained.

Security matters at times are exaggerated. One Indian Lt. General (forgotten the name) said that the possibility of a full-scale military confrontation in this region exists between India & Pakistan alone. The defence policy should be based on quality rather than quantity. We have some geographical advantage. We should consider downsizing the strength of the three forces. Raise enough reservists from students, teachers, doctors, engineers policemen, private organisations etc that would not only cut down costs but also allow the government to better invest the money for education and job creation.

We should learn to live in peace with neighbours & economic progress should be the best form of defence. Any form of terrorism from within or outside should be handled the European way as that doesn't regress or is not counterproductive. Apply force only where necessary & the judicial approach should be preferred.

There are a few other issues in that article like "a civil bureaucrat Eskander Mirza or Justice Sayem as the first MLA in erstwhile Pakistan & Bangladesh". That does not paint the backdrop or "behind the scene" truth. Let the people, or the people elected by the people, be the true guardians of our national interests.

Shafi A. Chowdhury
Banani, Dhaka

Men behind police

atrocities

Recent police atrocities have surpassed all the misdeeds of this law enforcing agency. The minister in charge of the all important ministry of home affairs sympathised with his parliament colleagues but also supported his forces' activities. But common people are rather bewildered at sudden rise of atrocities committed by the police force. Dr. Badruozza Choudhury almost diagnosed the disease. He hinted that 10,000 strong newly recruited police personnel who got their job not by dint of merit but their allegiance to the parties in power are the viruses to be blamed. But the eminent physician has made a numerical mistake. The alliance government in their tenure time recruited 26,459 officers and men in the police force from their political cadre, shortened their training period and put them in the field to size up their political opponents now and influence the next polls in 2007.

These half trained police-political cadres are trying to prove their worth. To ensure free polls these motivated men must be kept at bay.

A reader
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230

Opposition demand

I am very much against hartal but I must say the present BNP government is responsible for the recent sufferings of the people. This time the demand of the opposition was right.

Reform to the caretaker government is needed as the BNP government has arranged everything so that the next caretaker government cannot remain neutral.

Dr. Mahboob Hossain
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Uncalled for disrespect

In a recent article published in The Daily Star (September 14) Mr Munim Chowdhury expresses his indignation at Bangladeshi businessmen hiring Indian managers. Mr. Chowdhury believes that these Indians are intellectually "D grade" and are unnecessarily replacing Bangladeshi managers who are at least equally qualified.

It is entirely conceivable that Mr. Chowdhury is correct. But he should not have made the irrelevant, disrespectful statement: "India produced Hinduism for domestic consumption and non-violent Buddhism for export".

This statement is irrelevant because it has nothing to do with the rest of the article; it is also confusing since Mr. Chowdhury states that India exports both "A grade" and "D grade" managers.

Finally, the statement is ignorant because out of all religions Buddhism was the one that was never exported. Chinese scholars such as Fa Hien and Tsuan Zhang (popularly known as Huen Sang in South Asia) came to Universities at Taxila and Nalanda to import Buddhist wisdom to China, from where Buddhism spread all over East Asia. Tsuan Zhang literally carried 100,000 Buddhist sutras to Xian.

Dr. Chowdhury makes a similar statement about how Indian managers decided already in 1971 to move into Bangladesh and replace the Pakistanis. This is pure fiction. He is entitled to his opinions, but not to create "facts".

Sumit Mazumdar
Professor of Physics
University of Arizona, USA

Missing leadership traits!

Many thanks to the daily Prothom Alo for publishing an image on 11 September 2006 that speaks a thousand words. The Prime Minister who ought to be "the epitome of good against evil, light against darkness, engaged in that eternal, never-ending struggle between what is right and that which is wrong"- was on her way to execute the "outdoor" responsibilities. Private or public, inaugurating an important programme, or going back to her official residence, attending political rallies or returning to the office, the responsibilities outweighed a patient's desperation to reach hospital for treatment. Indeed, her presence is notable.

It occurred to me once a few months ago, at the same Sheraton juncture. My car ceased moving for almost 30 minutes at the proclamation of her going by. The sound of

siren was nowhere to be heard. Exasperated and disappointed, I decided to walk across the road to attend a meeting which was in my own humble qualification a very important one. I was called to a halt! Once elected, our so called leaders comfortably fail to recall the oral proclamations and announcements made by them prior to the

election. Instead, they gaze at shaat asman (seven heavens), detaching themselves from reality even in minuscule scale.

Had the patient died on the way to the hospital, would the prime minister take the responsibility gracefully? Perhaps we (or I for that matter) are making a huge cry out of nothing. But is it so difficult to remain modest and humble?

Shumon Sobhan
11/3 Zigatola
Dhaka

"Invasion of the Managers"

With reference to the "Point-Counterpoint" article by Munim Chowdhury in your daily (September 14, 2006), I tend to agree with the author that thousands of Indian mid-level executives have been working in various private sector organisations in Bangladesh. There is no denying the fact that the bulk of them, if not all, are working without any valid work-permit and illegally remitting money to India. There are many Sri Lankans doing the same. And I fully agree with Mr Chowdhury that this should stop.

However, I cannot agree with his analyses and arguments. It is true that many Bangladeshis are working as executives and managers in various prestigious organisations in Bangladesh and abroad. But the number of such Bangladeshi managers is abysmally low and the most qualified among them emigrate to the West for better prospects and job satisfaction.

Unfortunately the bulk of Bangladeshis with managerial skill, experience and proficiency in English are in their fifties and sixties. The brightest among the younger generation prefer not to stay longer than five years to serve (literally) and suffer in Bangladesh. The rest of the business graduates, as I found them during the four years that I spent in Bangladesh as a dean and professor at an English medium private university (1998-2002), can neither communicate in correct Bengali nor English. I do not know about their managerial skill,

although I feel that in any discipline one needs to communicate with one's peers, bosses, subordinates and clients. And I am sure, their lack of proficiency in English, unlike the fourth-rated Indian managers who, according to Mr Chowdhury, come to Bangladesh to make easy money, is the biggest problem. These ill-equipped Bangladeshi graduates with abysmally sub-standard degrees, especially from the scores of private universities, are simply not employable. No sensible Bangladeshi employer would employ them in managerial positions in the private sector.

In sum, I find Mr Chowdhury's article factually correct, that is thousands of Indians are illegally working in Bangladesh as managers. But it is difficult to agree with him that Bangladeshi employers prefer Indians to Bangladeshis although the latter are equally good or even better than the former. One cannot blame the Bangladeshi employers for preferring Indians to their compatriots without the requisite qualifications and skill.

Taj Hashmi, On e-mail

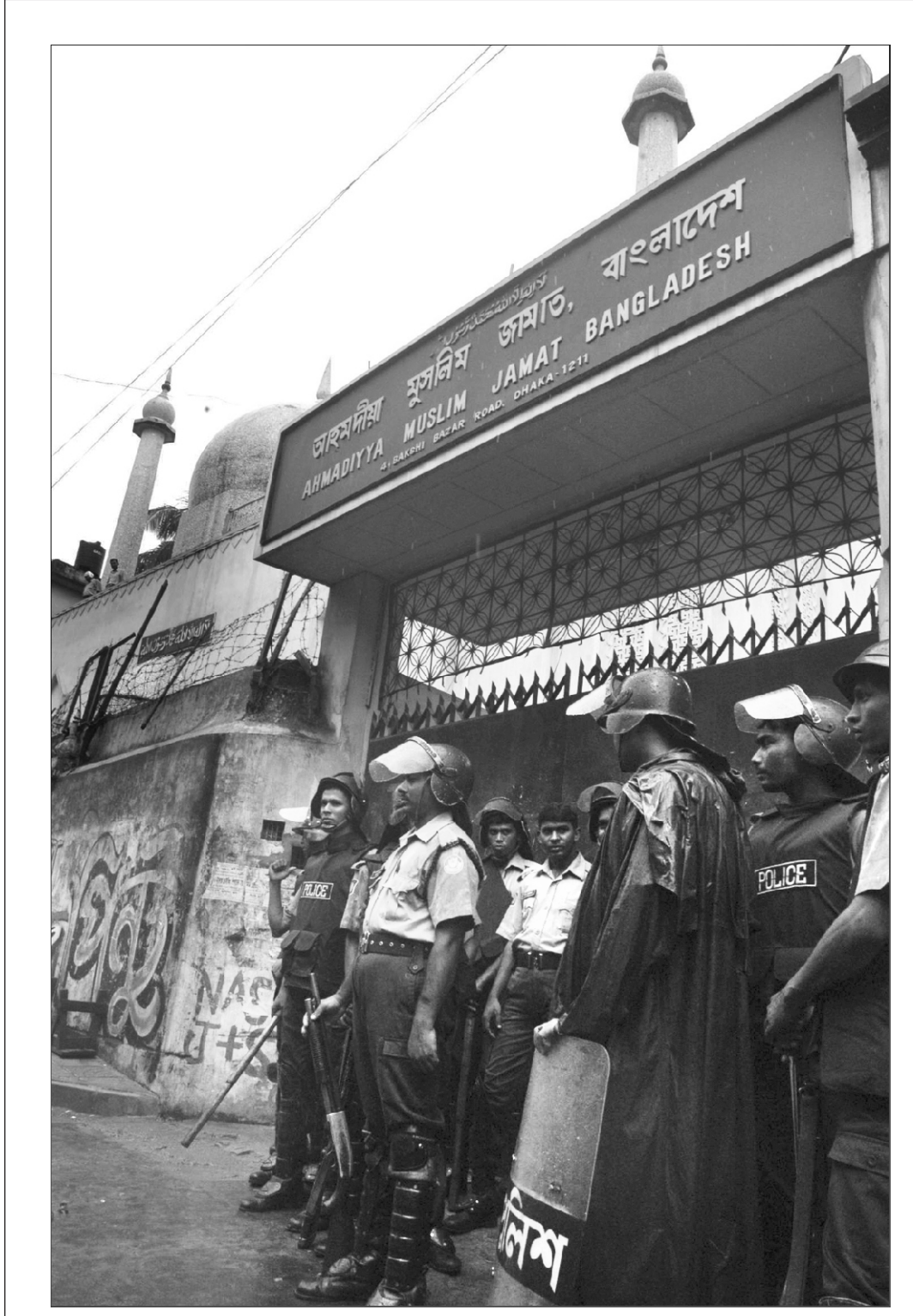
Ask relevant questions!

We applied for the job of "Research Information Officer (Research)" at the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). However, we were asked questions that apparently had nothing to do with research.

They didn't ask anything about the research and research technique; they didn't ask how to conduct a research or anything about the research methodology (the soul of a research). They didn't ask how to conduct a survey, or how to design a questionnaire.

I'm drawing the attention of the BGMEA authorities to the matter. I'm also appealing to all other employers to set relevant questions for job seekers.

A candidate
On e-mail



Ahmadiyyas in trouble

A campaign is being launched against the Ahmadiyya community. In the banner of different Islamic organisations these fellows have raised the demand that this segment of Muslims be declared non-Muslims by the government. Moreover, they have taken a very offensive stand against this peace-loving minority sect. This chaos has been created by a hardliner group targeting the Ahmadiyya community.

It is really brutal and inhuman. We have observed that after a pause a group armed with sticks gathered around Ahmadiyya mosques after the Jumma prayers. In different areas their houses were attacked and burnt.

I don't know much about them. But apparently we observe that Ahmadiyyas are innocent and harmless. Why should people try to persecute them?

The government should take immediate steps to stop repression on Ahmadiyyas.

Sharif Nishat Hussain
College Road, Auch Para, Tongi, Gazipur

Poor environment and children



Our children are dearer than ourselves. We can tolerate many things but for our kids we want the safest, dearest, cleanest, and healthiest surrounding. We can't even imagine a tiny little harm to our children.

I'm a mother of a five months old baby. We are trying our best to provide the best for our baby, but feel helpless at times as even with our best efforts we constantly fail to give what is good for her.

We live in a roadside house, so all sorts of street noises can be heard from every room. A child's brain takes three years to reach a certain stage of maturity. During this time all sorts of nutrition and healthy environment are needed but she hardly can have ten minutes of peaceful sleep during the daytime. She stirs up on and off because of the sirens of the police cars, horns of buses and trucks and so on.

Now she needs cooked food.

Again I feel frustrated because there is scarcity of pure things around us. Even these fruits and vegetables are not good for human body.

I boil, filter the water before giving it to her but still don't feel hundred percent sure of its purity.

Because of the dengue fever I always keep her inside the mosquito net where she looks like a caged bird. Still, she gets mosquito bites sometimes.

I want to take her to a park in the afternoon but in my area we don't have any park, not even an open space or clear footpath to move around.

I know you will put my name on the list of unduly worried parents. But where shall I get a safe and healthy environment for my child? Who can help me and my child and many other children like her?

Rifat Parveen
Shantinagar, Dhaka