

Why this fuss about dengue?

We, the inhabitants of Dhaka City, don't need our city corporation to kill larvae, which give birth to aedis mosquitoes, which cause dengue. Why newspapers are making so much fuss about dengue? Our successive mayors commit to give us a present of a clean, crime free, mosquito free Dhaka City. These sorts of commitments are enough to satisfy us. We should not ask them to fulfil their commitments. For making such a commitment is itself an act of magnanimity, which proves their love, beyond any doubt, for the people.

We, the inhabitants of Dhaka City, along with all the other people of the country, are mere robots to cast vote, not human beings. Our responsibility, as citizen, is to stamp ballot papers to see some or other political leaders in power. With the casting of vote in general, mayoral and local body elections end our responsibility as voters. Our next sacred duty is to watch, everyday, on the TV screen the people in power, with big smiles on their faces, delivering speeches; inaugurating bridges, hospitals, telephone exchanges; distributing prizes or certificates.

We, Bangladeshis, are not as selfish as like the people of American or European countries are that we will ask our political leaders in

because it is much safer.

But the MPs at the Cantonment Gate turned me away showing security reason. But what security risk did I pose at 10 p.m. that was not there at 9.45 p.m.? Why does the Cantonment have to be closed at 10 p.m.? Why can't we, the general people of the country use the Cantonment route the way the army people are allowed to?

I have asked other female colleagues at work who faced similar harassment to write about this issue. But their usual answer is why bother? Someone else will write about it. It is because of these people's nonchalant attitude that the army can behave this way.

S. Rahman
Uttara, Dhaka

Plight of fish processing technologist

Marine Fisheries Academy, the only institute of its kind in Bangladesh was established Chittagong in the year of 1973 with the collaboration of the than USSR government for proper maintenance, preservation of the fisheries resources and to produce skilled manpower in this sector. In the early period of its establishment cadets were trained in the Academy in the following fields: a) Nautical Engineering, b) Marine Engineering, c) Fish Processing Technology, d) Electrical

Final solution to the Palestinian problem

Nobody else but the people of Israel would know better about the final solution in eliminating an entire race of people seen as a disturbance in a particular society. That is what happened during the World War II in Germany where the Jewish people were put into concentration camps and massacred in gas chambers.

Don't the "refugee" camps for the Palestinians in Israel resemble a lot to those concentration camps? Nevertheless, the number of Jewish people in the 40s were not as many as the Muslims but who cares, that can be taken care by the body guards of Mr. Sharon, the Americans, be with them or be eliminated being termed as terrorists.

I really like the American people, may be because of their broad heartedness, their friendliness, and sometimes because of their naiveite. It is sad to see how a group of people is using these qualities for their own selfish purpose. I really hope that a day will come when the American people will wake up and understand how they are being used.

I also understand that the Israeli people, after going through such pain during World War II is considering that offence is the only way of defence but I think they should see from history i.e. Pharaon, Napoleon, Hitler that offenders never succeeded in the end. The only solution to this conflict is through dialogue and sacrifice. Please let us not lose hope!

Tim Rabbi, On e-mail

fish processing plants for 2/3 months are made compulsory for the cadet to acquire first hand knowledge on the subject.

Moreover, auxiliary subjects like Factory Management, Business Administration, International Marketing, OLQ (Officer's Like Quality), First Aid Training and Physical Training are taught in this special course.

But it is a matter of great concern that having such theoretical and practical knowledge in the specific field, most of these cadets remain unemployed due to lack of proper employment policy from the government. There are no such specialised training facilities anywhere in Bangladesh whereas there is an ample scope for appointment of this specially trained-up personnel in the frozen food sector.

There has been a spectacular growth in the frozen food sector in Bangladesh. From an export earning of only US\$. 3.17 million in 1973 it has gone up to US\$. 362 million in 1999-2000. Despite this phenomenal performance the sector has to face serious problems from time to time. Due to some bacterial attack on the frozen food, the EU imposed ban on import from Bangladesh in 1997 and advised Bangladesh government to implement HACCP system in frozen food sector for hygienically safe production of the item. And Marine Fisheries Academy, Chittagong has HACCP system in their syllabus of Fish Processing Technology branch to equip the cadets with modern food technology.

Then why aren't these meritorious cadets getting employment opportunity in the respective field? Appointment of at least three cadets in each factory may be made compulsory after formulating necessary standing rules for employment. This will immensely help the factory owners for implementing HACCP plan in the factory. If so done the professional like Fish Processing Technologist will get their due dignity and on the other hand their expertise will help the factories upgrading its product. Consequently, quality of the products will be improved and the country will earn more foreign exchange.

M.H. Bari
Ex-Cadet (Fish Processing Technology)
Marine Fisheries Academy,
Chittagong

NGOs in politics

NGOs have always been in politics in one form or another. The involvement however took a critical turn in early 1995. A few NGOs under the instigation and leadership of one the largest NGOs became actively involved in our national politics more so in partisan politics. Ironically enough most of such activities were carried out by these handful of NGOs and NGO leaders right under the very nose of the concerned donors and often under their silent patronage.

The government's contention that the NGOs are actively involved in national politics is thus not unfounded. In this context I feel that the recently formed NCC for the NGOs should be allowed to proceed freely with its activities. As it is, politics has already infiltrated into all

spheres of lives including the government machinery, the educational institutions. Partisan politics has not spared even the sacred arena of our art and culture.

On the other hand despite all the criticism the NGOs happen to be the single largest window of excellence in our development initiatives. It is therefore all the more imperative that this credibility of the NGOs is not tarnished by a handful of "rotten apples" in the basket.

Let the NGOs be the cherished forum and the "powerhouse" of their beneficiaries consisting of the rural poor and the disadvantaged. Let no individual or group of individual use and abuse good name of the NGO community for some selfish gains.

Shamshur Chowdhury
USA

DU episode and 5000 Bangladeshis in foreign jails

Most of your readers may not find any correlation between the two topics I am writing about. But there is a correlation. Most of us who come to or look for jobs in foreign countries are the product of our universities and colleges in Bangladesh. If our universities are not running well or teaching us well we are not doing well here also. Most of our communities and associations are fragmented at least in all US cities, still follow corrupt politics of Bangladesh amongst themselves, become friends or enemies depending on the parties they followed in Bangladesh. Our children laugh at us and most of them do not find any interest or join our social, cultural, and national activities. As we are not well disciplined and organised we do not have a strong say in the local problems and opportunities concerning our members as other minorities like Indians, Korean, and Israelis like. No wonder more than 5000 Bangladeshis are rotting in foreign jails.

I often come across a lot of bias opinions regarding student activities and politics. No body should be above law starting from a layman to the Prime Minister. You may not like the VC or Provost but when he/she carries out his/her responsibilities according to the rules and regulations, whether we like it or not, we must have patience and give him/her a chance. If he/she violates law we have judicial system to take care of it. If the University Administration wanted to terminate a provost (whether based on party affiliation or not) if some or all the students did not like it they could have peacefully protested, sat in strike or went for hunger strike or go to the court for justice. But no body has the right to resort to violence. When police (male or female) come to execute the order and enter into a Hall during night or day, they come after taking proper order from a magistrate. If they commit any excesses no body should fight with them but one can sue them and if the excesses are proved in the court of law the victim will be compensated. This is the civilised way of living under law and the educated people should support it wholeheartedly. Our rights are being trampled by the students and the politicians, not by police. They are only carrying out their order of



'V' for violence

the authorities.
Golam F. Akhter
Convener, Bangladesh-USA
Human Rights Coalition, USA

Violence against women at work place

This refers to the column of Mr. Afsan Chowdhury "I just want a safe place to work" (July 23) where he duly described the characteristics of our patriarchal society and how it is hampering the intrusion of female labour force in the job market.

I fully agree with him as he said "we accept so many things including the autocracy of the rich but we are unable to deal with the democracy of women." We are still staying at the Aristotelian era where woman was regarded as slave depriving from all sorts of civic rights. Salma's shocking saga, as the writer narrated, is a perfect mirror of the corporate self-image of the people of this patriarch society. And it's a

something about it.
M. Mamunur Rahman
Department of Women's Studies,
DU

India's ONGC bidding for Cairn Energy!

It is interesting to see the clever approach employed by India's state-owned Oil & Gas Company (ONGC) in search of new energy sources for their country. After reports of negotiating 60 per cent of stake in Block 22 with Xpronet, now comes the news of ONGC bidding for Cairn Energy, which has a good gas field in Bangladesh.

The bidding price is quoted around £500 million, unofficially. According to ONGC Chairman Mr. Subir Rana: "Cairn has made many discoveries in India and they have a good gas field in Bangladesh which can be fully exploited. We are primarily interested in its Indian fields but if the Bangladeshi asset comes

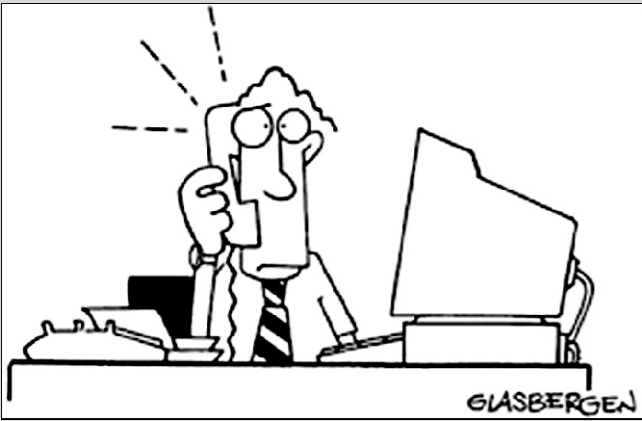
employing top scientists and developing not only his much-talked-about nuclear program but biological and chemical weapons as well. I know because I spent two decades as a senior official in Iraq's Atomic Energy Commission... Iraq's germ-warfare program was perfected during its war with Iran in the 1980s."

"The bottom line is that, taking into account Hussein's vicious nature and his declared intent to avenge his defeat in Desert Storm, he is perhaps the only national leader with both means and the motive to help bin Laden attack the United States. The U.S. government should urgently consider ways to push Saddam out of power. If it waits much longer, it may be too late."

Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Bappi murder
The recent killing of an innocent boy

A lineman is stronger than the Chairman



Lifeline lineman

So far we have been hearing this phrase of "a telephone lineman is stronger than the Chairman" Some may believe, some may not! Those who don't believe, they can visit Old D.O.H.S., an area of Dhaka Cantonment. I can bet on the fact that they will find how an ordinary uneducated telephone lineman is keeping hundreds of residents of the area captive under his thumb and playing with the telephone lines of the residents at his own will and wish.

He sometimes intentionally creates the problems, and he okays it but not without receiving handsome tips from the innocent victim. He walks about in the area with his chest high. If you make hundred complaints to the official complain centre, all will go in vain unless you can satisfy the need of the lineman. This is how the common telephone users are suffering and remaining under constant suspense.

Defense Officers Housing Society is supposed to be an elite area. If this is the condition of Old D.O.H.S., then God knows what is happening in other areas! I have been watching this man working in our locality for about, at least 15 to 20 years. So he knows everything of Old D.O.H.S. As a government employee he is so powerful that may be, either nobody dares to give him the posting or he is so clever that he knows very well how to handle his job just like he knows how to vex other people by his telephonic charisma which we fail to understand. It seems even the high officials of the telephone authority are less powerful than this man. Otherwise how can a government employee continue to work at one place for years? People are immensely suffering from this problem.

Can the Chairman, Telephone Department and other High authorities do something to bring such unscrupulous lot under control and save people from agony?

A Distressed observer
Old D.O.H.S., Dhaka

power to fulfil their election pledges. It does not matter whether they honour their election pledges or not, in the next election we will be standing on the long queue, for hours, to cast our votes for one of them.
Faruque Hasan
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

PM's U-turn

I am deeply shocked to learn the PM's unexpected U-turn regarding ban on students politics. All patriotic people of the country welcomed it when the PM suggested banning student and teacher's politics, which is plaguing our educational institutions for a long time.

The recent uprising at Dhaka University against police brutality is not a political uprising -- it is the uprising of general students and teachers, which was supported by the common people of the whole country. And this uprising should act as a lesson for all that campus politics is not needed to protest any misdeed.

M. S. Uddin
Nagoya, Japan

I was deeply shocked at Mrs. Zia's current decision about JCD. It was not long when she was bursting her lungs out at the Parliament in protest of student politics.

It is really amazing to see how politicians forget their words within days.
Mashuk
Dhaka

"Great Army"

The other day it was almost 10 p.m. when I managed to inch my way to the Old Airport Road from my workplace in Motijheel. I asked my driver to take the Cantonment route

Engineering, e) Refrigeration Engineering, f) Fishing Gear Technology and g) Radio Communication Engineering.

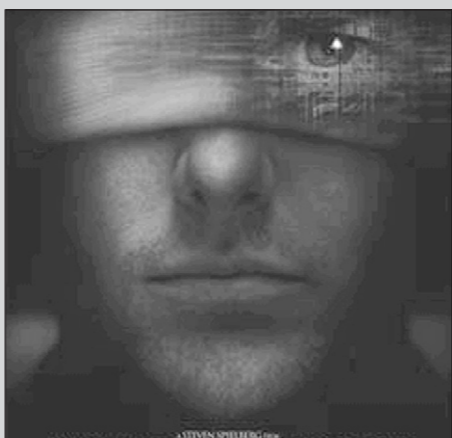
But due to fund constraint, lack of instruments and qualified instructors all the courses were closed excepting the first three courses. I am writing about Fish Processing Technology Branch. After proper scrutiny and appearing in written, verbal, medical and swimming test, meritorious students from all over the country are selected for admission in the Academy as a cadet. Amongst them only 8/10 cadets are successfully trained every year. The local and foreign experts conduct these courses. Besides, after completion of the course internee in the

"Minority Report" in Dhaka

For those of us who had the chance to see this summer's Hollywood blockbuster, "Minority Report" directed by Academy award winner Steven Spielberg and starring no other than Tom Cruise, a thought certainly ran by what if we had this in Dhaka.

This futuristic movie is based in the year 2054 when murder has been eliminated in Washington D.C., the crime prone capital of the USA by inventing a pre-crime unit who stops murders right before they occur, by seeing it ahead of time. While I do not want to give much of the story of the movie away for those who haven't seen it yet, but I must say we need to stop crimes before they occur. We do not want to see any more school children to die like Shihab and Bappi, we do not want any more Noushins to die in their father's laps.

We want to take back our capital from a



Present crime, future punishment

handful criminals and live our lives without fear--the way it was used to be. We want to go out anywhere at anytime without fearing for our safety. While I do not want to harp on the same string again and again that the government needs to wake up and fulfil its pre-election commitments to check crimes, we all need to come together in each neighbourhood and form citizens committees to check crimes. Every neighbourhood should have a crime watch program and we need to start somewhere. We cannot depend on the limited resources of the government to cure all ills in our society. Let us make this a society a place where we enjoy living by taking collective responsibility to rid crimes to make it worth living.

Parvez Murshed
Mirpur, Dhaka

very prolific proclivity here.

If we go to find the root women oppression it is clear that the nexus of patriarchy and capitalism has aggravated the situation. The male dominated society has made women subordinate and has deprived her from the basic rights. Mr. Chowdhury truly blamed SAP for snatching women's jobs. In addition to SAP, development theories like trickle down approach, basic need approaches have snatched her basic rights and perpetuated her inequality.

The state is responsible for promoting violence against women by institutionalising male dominance. It is time we woke up and did

up as a package, it is fine." I hope the word "exploited" will not be used literally!

I wonder whether our concerned ministries or policy planners ever thought of this scenario where ONGC buys out majority stake in exploration Blocks, as well as, take ownership of production assets of other oil and gas companies investing in Bangladesh.

The way we are losing our strategic position (if there was any at the first place), the dilemma of "to sell or not to sell" gas to India won't be thorny issue, because ultimately India will be the producer and the end-user of the gas, leaving the proverbial "Horse's Egg" for Bangladesh, thanks to our corrupted and visionless politicians/bureaucrats.

Nafees K
USA

"Bush, Blair and the Middle East"

This is in reference to the letter: "Bush, Blair and the Middle East," by Kathleen Haq (August 7).

Kathleen Haq has taken British Prime Minister Tony Blair to task for supporting the US President George W. Bush for his plan to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Now let's see what a prominent Iraqi dissident says about the subject.

After the September 11 attack on the WTC, Khidir Hamza, an Iraqi nuclear physicist and director of Iraq's nuclear-weapons program before his defection in 1995, wrote in an Op-Ed in The Los Angeles Times:

"Long before Osama bin Laden got to be No.1 on the FBI's most wanted list, Saddam Hussein was

the journalists to cite, in quantitative terms, the harmful effects of the air pollution, drawing from scientific evidences, which I am sure will be more convincing to create wider support in favour of uneventful disappearance of the 2-stroke three-wheelers. The journalists should seek data from WHO and other technical agencies in this regard.

The auto drivers/owners should realise that air pollution equally affects them and their children too. They should therefore refrain from making it a political issue. While I do support that alternative measures should be explored for effective rehabilitation of the auto drivers that should not be treated as a pre-condition for planned banning of the autos. Our country is in a cross-road, where our health needs conflict with the interest of a few people and I do hope the auto drivers/owners associations will act in the interest of the wider segment of the population that includes their own children.

Dr. Atiqur Rahman Khan
Uttara, Dhaka

cause especially that of the pulmonary diseases should lend their support. It is a matter of our "Life and Breath". Only a widespread expression of support, irrespective of political ideology and affiliation, would save out "Breath". Now is the right moment for

Smallness of mind takes nowhere. It's the fact with a person, a team and a country as well. Muhammad Mahathir has fixed the target to make Malaysia a first world country by 2020. If Malaysia cannot achieve the target by that time; it will certainly be at the top of the list of the middle income countries. It's true that only fixing target is not all, sincerity also matters a lot. Hard work and honesty come along with sincerity.

The Finance Minister's comment to the newspapers' reporters after the discussion on 'A National Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction...' that Transparency International often exaggerates figures on corruption in Bangladesh would have been taken gladly by the present main opposition party, had he made the comment one year ago, when this opposition party was in power. I am sure, the present opposition party will not now agree with him, rather it will agree with the TI. Though one year back when it was in power, it accused TI of falsehood. A picture rotates 180 degree in our eyes, depending on the situation we are in.

F. Hasan
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Women equality

I feel gravely concerned at the recent occurrences both in the university and at the national level. The Shamsunnahar Hall incident is a shame for the whole nation. It should not be treated as a mere incident in the university, it is a shame for the all the educated persons in the country who had ever access in the nation's prime university. It clearly shows that the whole nation has derailed from the goal and the values.

We, the innocent non-political civilians are mere watchers of the derailment. While the occurrences in the Shamsunnahar Hall are being talked about quietly, loudly, openly and at household levels, the things that are going totally unnoticed are really shocking me and simultaneously shaking me inside my heart. The wise and prompt decision to have an enquiry into the matter are appreciated. But what I cannot appreciate is the matter that in none of the two committees prominence of women are visible. While the matter relates to the one of the

prominent women's hall, the enquiry committee is devoid of eligible and effective women.

Despite our long pronounced intentions of giving women equality with men, we refrain as a nation for promoting the goal. Otherwise, we would have seen at least equal number of women, if not more (in this case, there should have been predominant number of non-political, highly concerned and committed women) in the Enquiry Committees. In the inner corner of my heart, I always breed fancy ideas. Thus I dream seeing another One-Member Committee comprising of a single highly efficient and highly committed woman who will have her independent report on the university incident which shatters our goal and deviates from the values.

I also perceive of a university context where names of the students and the teachers will be pronounced because of their commitment to education and not because of their linkage with some political groups. The university teachers all over the world are respected because of their commitment to education and students' primary goal at the university level are assumed to be accumulating knowledge for the betterment of the society and the nation. I sincerely hope that my dreams come true.

Shamima Islam
Dhaka

New flag law

The new flag law is unconstitutional. Hoisting flag is a form of expression. Article 39 of our constitution guarantees freedom of expression, thought and conscience. Therefore any individual or political party has the constitutional right to express in the way they choose. In case of our national flag the only thing we have to maintain is its dignity and honour. Hoisting "half-mast" flag is a very decent way to express the grief, especially at the death anniversary of a great leader like our Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Ahmed K. Rashid
Azimpur Road, Dhaka

Abandon poverty alleviation/reduction programme

Since the country has achieved independence three decades back, we have gone through so many poverty alleviation/reduction programs. And still we are languishing under the jigsaw of poverty. It's time to abandon poverty reduction programs and go for programs to acquire a place for the country in the first world in 25 years. If we miss that target, at least we will be able to alleviate poverty and become a middle income country. But if we put all our efforts to have 'Daal-bhaat', we will go hungry forever.

Look at our Test cricket team. It almost always faces humiliating defeat. For its target is to 'achieve' defeat with dignity or at best make a draw, and its mantra is New Zealand took 27 years to win a test match. With this sort of mentality what more can it achieve but humiliating defeat? If the team could play with the target to win a match, it would draw, at least would avoid humiliating defeat.

Muhammad Mahathir has fixed the target to make Malaysia a first world country by 2020. If Malaysia cannot achieve the target by that time; it will certainly be at the top of the list of the middle income countries. It's true that only fixing target is not all, sincerity also matters a lot. Hard work and honesty come along with sincerity.

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F. Hasan
Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Bus service: Gabtoli-Baridhara

We the people commuting from Shamoly, Kallayanpur, Gabtoli and the adjacent area to Gulshan and Baridhara for work and other business cannot avail direct bus service. We need to come via Farmgate if we want to commute by bus but in this case we have to change bus which is very difficult at Farmgate area. The alternate is using tempo, which come up to only Mohakali Rail Crossing. Again the hassle of changing transportation occurs.

So, I request the concerned authority especially BRTC to start a bus service from Gabtoli to Baridhara. This will be of great help to the people working in different diplomatic missions, foreign NGO and Multinational companies.

Tarek, Dhaka