EDITOR The Daily Star DHAKA WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2002

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.

An appeal to Bill Gates

It is inferred from the recent declaration of Bill Gates, while he was in India, and his previous benevolent activities that he is not only the wealthiest person but also one of the greatest humanitarians concerned with suffering humanity in any part of the globe. I think his concern will get fuller expression and humanity will be better served and cared if he kindly pays more attention to the poorest section of the world community having scanty food and meagre health care.

I would therefore urge Mr. Bill Gates through your columns to keep in perspective my beloved country Bangladesh, while dispensing succour to suffering humanity in this part of the world. Dr. A. M. Choudhury, Professor Department of Management Studies, DU

Army and civil rights

This is in response to Major Khalid Moinuddin's letter (November 08). How could you say that alleged criminals do not have a right to defend themselves in court? Are you suggesting that torture, as a method of interrogation is acceptable? The constitution clearly states that an individual citizen has the right to "Life, liberty and pursuit of happiness". The army is violating the constitution by arresting people without proper warrant and

someone please take the pain to define the term 'nation builder of tomorrow'? Both the Bangla Medium and

the English Medium students are our own children. We have to prepare them for a better building of this wretched country of ours. We don't want our future to be divided. which may make them suspicious and hostile to each other. Rather it is high time we took measures to erase all sorts of misunderstandings which are responsible for this distinction. Finally, I'd like to thank The Daily

Star for the award giving ceremony they arranged for the meritorious students. But it would have been more appreciated if they arranged a programme where the bright students from both the mediums could join. Soman Parvez

IBA Hostel, Dhaka

Under normal circumstances, I abstain myself from interjecting in the numerous letters that are submitted by the enthusiastic readers of The Daily Star. Although I have my opinion on almost all the issues consuming newsprint in Bangladesh today, I do not assess myself as an expert on most of those issues, and hence choose not to delve into them. They are merely my opinion. However, an exception has

occurred as I take great interest in the letter by Mr. Hannan "Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow."

level students, I am quite appalled dents as unpatriotic deserters.

> English as a medium of education, agement!

student. Yes, I study abroad. NO, I am not a potential defector. Personally, I would love to be an Economics professor in Dhaka, or a researcher at BIDS. Mr Hannan and others can conjure up stinging remarks from the comfort of their homes in Dhaka all they want, but I can say for a fact that my university in Canada has a healthy Bangladeshi population from English and Bengali medium

schools alike, of which the proportion of students from both mediums wanting to stay back in Canada is almost EQUAL

Bangladeshi students here want to help create a better Bangladesh, contrary to popular opinion. We have regular group discussions related to various social issues back home, that include different ways to combat social evils and

"Caught in vicious circle"



Looked but overlooked

This is in regards to Dr. Shamin's letter (November 18) on the lives of the children of sex workers in Jessore.

I too feel sorry for the children, but just feeling sorry and sending money to some NGOs will not serve any purpose. Look again at the reasons why the women in the brothels

are so abused and exploited. Some were raped; others are harassed by their pimps and policemen. The answer to this problem is not throwing more money at it because no amount of money will change human nature and control the oldest profession in the world.

A better solution would be an enlightened policy on sex workers. They should be recognised as an unavoidable fact of life and treated as people, not as criminals. Many European countries, some states in the US and places like Thailand and Australia have regulated sex industries. Since it is not a crime by the way he blatantly labels meritorious English medium stu-Perhaps we should abolish

so that the cynics can shift their focus to more pressing academic issues such as how to reduce the number of HSC failures and expulsions from the all time high of almost 75% (Star Weekend Magazine cover story, Oct 11) this year, instead of indulging in idle dispar-Yes, I am an English medium

Most importantly, many

promote socio-economic development. Those who want to return to Bandladesh would love to implement these ideas. Those who want to stay back in Canada would love to provide intellectual and financial

support while maintaining ties with home. If English and Bengali medium students studying abroad can eliminate their differences and work together constructively, it's about time the mud-slingers and the so-called "social critics" back home stopped drawing up fictitious battle lines that create further rifts in the process. Samir Mainuddin Canada

Well, I am tired of seeing so many letters accusing the English medium students for going abroad, apparently for further study but ultimately for settling there. May I have the honour to ask the senders of those letters to find out one single student who does not want to go abroad?

Our former generation failed measurably to become competent nation builders. You cannot cite a single domain where our former generation is really heading us to prosperity. The ruling party is stubborn. The opposition prefers streets than parliament. Doctors are negligent in Govt. hospitals and take percentages from diagnostic labs with unnecessarily prescribed tests/operations. End

lish Medium students in your paper as of late. I am a previous winner of The Daily Star Nation Builders of Tomorrow award (2000-2001) and currently I am studying at a University here in Ohio.

I have been horrified by the response of some people to this award given graciously by The Daily Star. It is a shame that people consider all English medium students to be eager to leave the country. I myself have no such desires. I am here just because I want to study Genetics, a subject I believe has great potential for the future of Bangladesh. I challenge anybody who is against my coming to this country to find a program in Genetics in Bangladesh that can match the rigorous standards of the degree programs that are in use here in the US. I have no insane attraction to life in America in fact, I have been taught and shown from a very young age that the quality of life in Bangladesh far surpasses the quality of life that one can hope to achieve here. Most of my relatives who live here are from Bengali medium schools, and most people here have a horrible time juggling their careers, families and social lives. I plan to complete my studies here as soon as possible and go back to Bangladesh and start some kind of genetics and biotechnology research facility, providing many graduates in Biology-related fields with valuable employment opportunities. I wish people would stop judging

all English medium students by the rare members they have met who have expressed a desire to remain in the US. It is true that we English medium students have been brought up in a very liberal way, where the international media has had a profound effect on our lives. It is also true that many of us are not as comfortable speaking in our mother tongue as we would like to be. But I have many friends from my English medium school years who study at NSU, IBA and the like. I do not know much about the people who have been making negative comments about English medium students, but I do know that my main motivation in my life is to make a difference for my country. Give us some credit for that, at least.

Shihab Azhar Ohio Wesleyan University

I would beg to differ with Shamser Chowdhury (Nov 19). Rather than "inducing a kind of superiority complex amongst the handful", shouldn't this kind of publicity induce a longing to work hard and excel amongst the masses? Besides, it is human nature to want recognition for one's accomplishments. Giving a platform for meritorious students can serve only to increase the number of successful candidates in the future.

Moulana Bhasani

It was a great disappointment when I found out that most of the English language dailies (Internet Editions) of Bangladesh did not carry any articles on Moulana Bhasani on his 26th death anniversary. However, I felt elated to see Engr. Inamul Huq's article on Moulana Bhasani in The Daily Star (November 18). Neither the writer nor The Daily Star needs my patronising comments. Yet, I am feeling obliged to write this letter. I would request the editor of *The Daily Star* to publish more articles on various leaders and personalities on regular basis, not just on their death and birth anniversaries.

Given the fact that Moulana Bhasani had a long political career spanning over more than half of a century, it is difficult to cover all aspects of his life and struggle within the parameter of a single article. Therefore, Engr. Hug had to be too brief in describing many of Bhasani's accomplishments. I have also disagreement with some of his generalisations on Moulana Bhasani. Yet, I was deeply impressed with Engr. Hug's concise appraisal of Moulana Bhasani's life and struggle. I wholeheartedly endorse his proposal for naming or renaming some of the landmarks, roads and institutions in Bhasani's name. This is the least that we can do to show our respect to whom we owe so much in so many ways. However, I would most respectfully add the following comments on Moulana Bhasani:

On Moulana Bhasani's death anniversary, like the preceding years, glowing tributes were showered on him. Nice words were spoken of his long political career and selfless dedication for championing the causes of the most underprivileged segments of our society. However, it is unfortunate that most of our political leaders find it expedient on such a solemn occasion to pay their tributes to Moulana Bhasani on their respective party lines.

A great leader of Moulana Bhasani's stature deserves much more than yearly rituals and pious announcements. Flowery tributes often underscore Moulana Bhasani's relentless effort for the salvation of our peasantry and working class. He is rightfully called a self-sacrificing and fighting leader of our political history. Many speakers in various seminars on his death anniversaries often characterise him as the "undisputed leader" and a "true friend" of toiling masses.

Yet, Moulna Bhasani was more than a spokesman of our peasantry and working class. His legendary name was also an integral part of Bangladesh's struggle for freedom and independence. He was both the maker and shaker of political events in the then East Bengal in the early years of Pakistan. Moulana Bhasani was responsible for building-up the politics of opposition



The Leader of the Oppressed

and agitation in the formative years of Pakistan. He was the most volatile defender of maximum provincial autonomy for the then East Bengal. Therefore, in any genuine homage to Moulana Bhasani, an authentic acknowledgement has to be made about his significant role in the emergence of Bangladesh as a nationstate. Bhasani's life and struggle during the Pakistan era (1947-'70) can be meaningfully assessed with reference to some of his accomplishments as: the Builder of a Viable Opposition in the Early Years of Pakistan; the authentic Founder of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League; the Defender of Bengali Language and Culture; the Leader of the United Front in1953-'54; the Ardent Champion of Full Autonomy for East Pakistan; the Founder of National Awami Party; the Leader of the Volatile Student-Mass Movement in 1968-69; and Leader of the Freedom Movement.

Throughout almost six decades of his struggling political life, Moulana Bhasani was both a demanding spirit and a dauntless voice for freedom and emancipation of the humblest and disinherited citizens against the overwhelming state powers in the grip of the ruling elite of the society.

Waheeduzzaman Manik, Clarksville, Tennessee, USA

It's about these military and security threats. It's not about oil, stupid! Mahmood Elahi Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

barrel

Fuel price increases Thanks to Shikha Monsoor for her letter

on fuel price hike (November 18). Shikha Monsoor gives us timely and valuable information regarding fuel price. I would like to add one more information. The Govt. of India has just recently (probably on the 15th of Nov. 2002) reduced fuel price substantially. If I remember right, the reduction is about 20 per

cent. The pretexts under which our Ministry of Energy has proposed price hike of fuel are: (1) Increase of crude oil price in the

international market. They quoted crude oil price as US dollar 35 a (2) Fuel price in India is high

thereby encouraging smuggling from Bangladesh to India. As is revealed from Shika

in the streets and berated for their manner of clothing. What's next? Shonku Dhaka

"No deaths in army custody, PIO says"

Did the PIO honestly say that there were no deaths in army custody? And then the ISPR Colonel chimes in with the comment that even playing field injuries are investigated? What a tangled web we weave! This is taking dissimulation to

Bill Clinton and his definition of what is is! These press briefings remind me of the infamous 'five o'clock follies' during the Vietnam war, when army officers used to give the official version of how

America was winning the war! So if we accept that no one died in army custody, is it safe to assume that they died immediately

> afterwards in the hospital? **Kishore Pasha**

> > danger.

recommendations have increased significantly over the last decade! crux of the problem. To understand After the democratic movement in the '80s, thrice the Jatiya Sangsad was elected by the people for the furtherance of national and individual causes and interests. Earlier twice, the parliament lost its credi-

bility and effectiveness for walkouts, abstentions and subsequent resignation from the Parliament, ignoring the unfulfilled dream of the downtrodden citizens of our nation. However, the rank and status.

perks and benefits were not sacrificed rather to our surprise we found that both the treasury and opposition members of the Parliament attended parliamentary committee meetings, drawn salaries and allowances, availed of

duty-free cars, retained their diplomatic passports, joined parliamentary delegation abroad, used VIP

done a research and determined from a desire to gain access to Iraq's oil reflects ignorance of basic that the donors have steadily reduced their contributions which economic principles and the realnow account only 3% of our GDP It is obvious that it is not oil but but their words of advice and Saddam's brutal regime that is the

> what an aggressive regime means, one has only to look at Japan during the World War II. Here was a militarist Japan which attacked Pearl Harbour without any provocation and was carrying out a war of aggression against its neighbours. Defeating and disarming Japan was the top priority of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. But once Japan was defeated and became an ally, President Ronald Reagan had been urging Japan to rebuild its military to share the responsibility to protect Asia from any Soviet expansionism. What a difference a regime change makes!

> > Similarly, as long as Saddam

Hussein is in power, he will use his

oil wealth to build weapons of mass

destruction which he might again

in those countries, the police have no way of exploiting the women. Doctors visit regularly to do AIDs and STD tests.

It's not the perfect answer but it's better than bulldozing the brothels and pretending that the issue doesn't exist. Gora Dhaka

death in custody is the worst form of human rights violation. Coming from an ex-military personnel, I am appalled at the attitude shown to the civilians

As to Mr. Nasim Ahmed (November 12), I can only say that ignorance is not an excuse. You have a moral obligation to know vour rights and stand up for them. It is a sad day indeed when people look the other way when people die in army custody

I ask all the readers of this newspaper to stand up for our civil rights. Our constitution and democracy depends on it. It is our duty to make sure that the government commits no crime. If we fail then the power hungry dictators will continue to plague our national Yahya

"Nations builders of tomorrow"

USA

For the last couple of days, I have noticed that a lot of letters have been published on behalf or against the remark made by Mr. Hannan. A number of readers, mostly from English medium background, criticised Mr. Hannan for his remark. I was shocked to read the letter of a father, Abeer Chowdhury that his son has become crazy and impatient to go abroad and as a father he does not even have the right to ask him to stay back!

However, I don't disagree with those who claim that it takes similar effort and pain to do well in A or O Level exams as it is in SSC and HSC. I also don't think that getting 6 As and 3 As is a piece of cake. Their achievements must be acknowledged whether it is by The Daily Star or by some one else. But my question is. "can we call them the nation builders of tomorrow?" If the answer is yes then the next question is of which country-where they were born or where they are going to settle. In this case, can

sity teachers do politics for promo-While I acknowledge that to some, tions. Stupid students are lured the event hosted by The Daily Star into politics with arms. State owned may come off as being exclusive, enterprises are running on losses one certainly cannot allow an for unscrupulousness of the individual to declare, "...These employees. Our former generation students, if anything cannot be the could not thrust the shattered nation builders of tomorrow..." and colonial economy in 30 years. not set himself up for a mild retort. Even the social security is far cry. My recently concluded under-Villagers are getting poorer and graduate experience was at a poorer day by day and heading private, four-year institution in the towards the city for more employ-US and upon completion of my ment opportunities giving rise to previously set academic goals, I the number of slum dwellers. Polices here are the most hated

fully intend to return home to Dhaka. It may be difficult for the concerned contributor to fathom, but a life in Dhaka is considerably more attractive and enjoyable to me than one in the US. But personal intentions aside, there are numerous examples where the US educated college and university graduates have returned to Bangladesh in a conscious effort to cease the "brain-drain," and contribute to their indigenous society

in constructive, and to some extent, innovative ways. Young, energetic Bangladeshis, who were educated in a New England Ivy-League colleges, manage one of the most circulated Bengali daily newspapers. An even more credible example -- the creator and founder of Grameen Phone has a foreign academic background. All these individuals are equipped with an important tool; they have had the chance to peek in from the outside.

The entire point of this correspondence, please refrain from generalising. Because intelligent people know that generalising leaves them vulnerable to arguments from groups that do not fall

within the stereotype. S. S USA * * * Here we go again yet another

smear campaign against English medium students! While I wholeheartedly agree with Mr Hannan (November 13) that we should salute the meritorious SSC and HSC students alongside O and A

Everyone knows that there is neers have got some fixed permore to life than "securing high centages in all developments records". High records can only be works, approves faulty structures secured through perseverance on bribes. Businessmen exploit and effort, and one needs these workers, default loans. Politicians qualities to succeed in life. Recogare experts in murders, vandalism nition is a signal to the achievers and harbouring terrorists. Univerthat they are on the right track and that they should not lose focus.

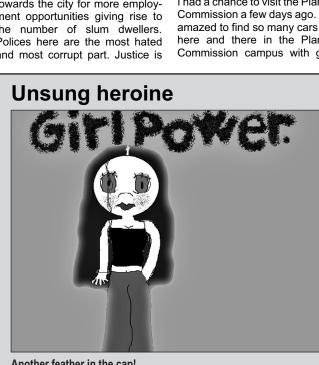
> In a country where the prevalent attitude is to stifle initiative and reward sycophancy, the media's approach to reward achievers is verv much commendable. Samir Mainuddin

Canada

'Plantation in cars'

I had a chance to visit the Planning Commission a few days ago. I was amazed to find so many cars piled here and there in the Planning Commission campus with green

and most corrupt part. Justice is



always a dilemma.

Under these circumstances, if anyone wants to go abroad and tries to settle there, nobody should scold him/her for being escapist. He/she has got only one life and he/she does not want to spoil this precious life cleaning the mess of garbage piled by his/her former generation.

Mohammad Nazmul Islam (Shuvo) Japan

This is in regards to the letters and

loundes and dates etc. It means individually they accentuated personal gains forgetting the national causes and interests.

This gives the donor countries the opportunity to advice us every now and then! In order to improve the situation, it is imperative for every members of JS to give national importance the topmost priority and then individual interest. Golam Ashraf Gulshan. Dhaka

New world order

With the new world order "forced" upon all of us, we need to reform and change our lifestyle. You would be happy to know that, I have already made some progress. To compliment the new world order, I have developed a new way of spelling some frequently used

use to threaten his neighbours as he has done before. The real danger is that once Saddam has nuclear weapons, he might assume this would free him to conduct conventional aggression with impunity. With nuclear deterrent, he might try to reconquer Kuwait wrongly thinking that the U.S. and its allies would shrink from taking any action for fear of nuclear retaliation. Saddam may not be suicidal, he is capable of serious miscalculation when he thinks he is strong. His refusal to withdraw from Kuwait in 1991 even when a formidable U.S.-led force was ready to go into action to oust him from Kuwait is a

clear example of this. Another great danger Saddam poses is terrorism. Clearly, it is about security and military threats that Saddam Hussein poses that is

crux of the problem. It is about

Saddam's using his oil wealth to

Recently I have been told by a friend that Bangladesh has a female air traffic controller at ZIA International Airport.

We are aware that there are female pilots in Biman Bangladesh Airlines but achievement of a female as air traffic controller is an exciting and big news for a country where women are still strugaling for equal rights.

Job of an air traffic controller is much more stressful than that of a pilot. An air traffic controller has to guide aircraft for take off and landings, assign different flight levels to avoid mid-air collisions, keep track of hundreds of flights overflying the country's air territory and give clearances. All these responsibilities are carried out by an air traffic controller simultaneously. You can now imagine the alertness required for the job and the stress that goes with it.

As an aviation enthusiast, I am aware of female air controllers in Europe, Far East, US, etc. A Bangladeshi woman entering this field as equal partners is a big news and it is an achievement for the women folk of the country. Congratulations!

Ziauddin Ahmed, Dhaka

We are rich enough to destroy expensive Pajero jeeps and let green plants grow on it. Amazing! Will the concerned Minister look into it?

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Donors and developing countries

Renowned economist Dr. Debopriyo Bhattacharya have

words, as follows: Peace should be spelt as oil. Defence as o-f-f-e-n-c-e (of-

fence) Freedom as i-n-v-a-s-i-o-n (invasion). Civilised as b-o-m-b (bomb).

Love as w-a-r (war). Azad Miah Oldham, UK

It's not about oil, stupid

easy-to-hide bio-chemical weap-The widely held argument that a ons with the terrorists' skill, can be US attack on Iraq stems primarily devastating.

Monsoor's letter. NY Crude for December delivery traded on the 15th Nov, 2002 was 22 + dollar per barrel and the Brent Crude traded at 25 dollar and as I heard from Durdarshan news, India has reduced the fuel price in its domestic market to almost the same level

as is in Bangladesh now. None of the two pretexts under which the Ministry of Energy is proposing increase of fuel price is. therefore, any longer valid. Would the government take note of it and release us from the burden of fuel price hike.

Capt. H. Imam Indira Road, Dhaka

was surprised to read Ms. Mansoor's letter on the subject. do not challenge or dispute her at this moment but I am amazed from where she was able to collect all these data and information.

On top of the prices mentioned there is an added cost of finance, storage, distribution and marketing needless to mention losses. Industry insiders as well as BPC will also share my view **Emdadul Haq** Dhaka

"Army excesses at Rayerbazar"

I see that the army went on a rampage in Rayarbazar (November 19). Was this under orders of their superiors or was it an impromptu rampage?

I wonder what imaginative excuse the ISPR colonel will come up with for this rampage. Does the remit for Operation Clean Heart include preserving the sanctity of Ramadan? How about the Wetlands Protection Act? What about spitting in public places? For the last few days, my initial

acquire nuclear and bio-chemical apprehensions about the army weapons of mass destruction. Biocrackdown were being allayed. chemical weapons are particularly Custodial deaths, unofficial since threatening because they can be the ISPR denies them, seem to unleashed clandestinely and have stopped. There is a number perpetrators are difficult to identify. and address to file complaints. All A year after the anthrax attacks, these are laudable steps.

the United States does not know But now I am worried again. who was behind these attacks. The army also shut down restau-Such an unconventional attack, rants in Topkhana a few days ago. one that would combine Irag's Now comes this rampage in Rayerbazar. I know of incidents where women have been stopped

Fake encounters in India?

I wrote to you a year ago about the news of handing over of Pakistani prisoners by Northern Alliance to India. At that time I also informed you that these poor souls will be

used in fake encounters in India and their dead bodies will be presented as evidence of Pakistan inkling in terrorism in India. We have been seeing this since December 2001 attack on Indian parliament. The list goes long. But the latest incident in which two people were killed by Indian police and later they claimed that the two deceased were Pakistani national has sparked a controversy even in India when one of the witness told media that whole incident was a fake encounter. The victims had no weapons and were already dazed when attacked ruthlessly by police. The doctor who told the media about this is now being presented as a liar by presenting different documents. The witness has already told a noted Indian journalist that his life is now in

One can now understand that how much Indian war mongers want to keep the pot boiling and divert their public attention from the core issue of "KASHMIR". Hope the Indian public now realise who are responsible for all those so-called terrorist attacks in India. I want to ask a question to Vajpayee that why he is unable to see poverty in South Asia about which he talked so much at the time of Agra summit. A report published in Indian news portal Sify News showed that hundreds of people in India die of starvation every year. India should now stop building weapons of mass destruction and give its public the basic necessity of life and allow people of Kashmir to decide their fate so that peace return in South Asia which has been in great danger by the provocative actions taken by Indian policy makers. Just by pointing fingers at Pakistan and Bangladesh India cannot bring peace in the region it has to take some bold decisions to handle the situation in Kashmir by allowing plebiscite in Kashmir. Shah Affan, North York, Canada



Another feather in the cap!

comments published about Eng-

plants growing from the tiers, steering, oil tanks etc. It was really nice and artistic view.

Dalia Satter