

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.

Railway woes

I had gone to the railway station to buy a ticket to come to Chittagong from Dhaka for Eid. The earliest ticket I managed to get was for the 11th February. When Eid was announced to be on the 13th it was fine but then it was changed to 12th and I was forced to change my ticket because I had to go from Chittagong to my family home in Sylhet the day after. After a lot of hassle and requests I finally got a ticket for the 9th. I went to the Kamapur station at the stated time 4.00 pm on 9th February and found out that the train had not yet arrived. Some other train had been derailed and it was announced that my train (inter-city Shuborno Express) would leave at 6.00 pm. Being a single girl on my own, I went back home and decided to come back later. I came back at 5.40 pm and found to my utter dismay, the train had already left the station. I was shocked and at a loss of what to do. After many hours of stress and at a much higher cost alternative arrangements were made by my parents.

Will the Railway authorities please answer why the train left 30 minutes before the time announced on the public announcement system and who will be held responsible for this error? I want compensation for the ticket and all the inconvenience, all the hassle, all the stress, all the worry that my parents had to undergo for their stranded daughter alone in unsafe Dhaka city, and all the money that was wasted in the process.

Mahreen Murad

Chittagong

Why Eid Mubarak?

We are all not only residents of Bangladesh but we also believe in "Bangladeshism". We have gained our freedom with great sacrifices of our valorous brothers and sisters. Sideways we who are Muslims are following our religion with staunch belief and also strong determination. Eid has just passed by and hopefully we all have fulfilled our religious duties. My question to all the readers is that when we greet each other on the Eid day why do we say "Eid Mubarak"? Any language or caste does not bind our religion. It is clearly stated that it does not matter in which language we pray to the almighty Allah but with what intentions do we pray.

The word "Mubarak" means happiness in arabic. When "khutbas" and "munazats" can be offered in Bangla then why can't we say "Shuvo Eid" or "Eider Shuvechcha"?

I do not think that religiously we will be wrong by saying this. My kind request to the readers is that if I have stated anything wrong in this article please do come forward to correct my mistake.

Khalid Rahman

Dhaka

Split in NATO?

BBC world reports a "split" in NATO on mutual self-defence -- this time regarding Turkey. US demands anticipatory defence for Turkey in the event of an attack by Iraq. But reality check tells us it is the US that is planning and preparing to invade Iraq and is roping it a reluctant Turkey into giving US troops safe sanctuary. Is that anything other than a "ganging up exercise" against Iraq?

What is so wrong if France objected immediate and anticipatory self-defence? What is the true prospect of Iraq invading Turkey when it is under attack itself by the US? Indeed France will likely sup-

Valentine's Day



It was very amusing to see all the protests in South Asia about Valentine's Day. Some columnists in Bangladesh also wrote venomous articles denouncing the celebrations. Surely, post-modernism did not have hatred of Love in mind.

Truly, Love had not had a more difficult time. Who would be heartless enough to

become a self-declared enemy of Love?

As for banning the practice and "preserving" our "pristine culture", I must say it would be a draconian approach. I do think that if anyone stays within the boundaries of the law and practices their personal freedom in celebrating (or not celebrating) the day, no one has the right to inter-

vene. If you do not like it, fine; but that does not give you the right to ban others from celebrating it. If someone is gullible enough to be lured into the commercial appeal of the day, let him/her be. Every one is entitled to make a fool of him/herself in the name of Love.

Yahya, USA

the doomsayers who were keening about how the Greeks, the British and the Russians all failed against the Afghans? Well America succeeded.

War against Iraq this time will be easier for the simple reason that a great deal of Saddam's weapons were destroyed during the Gulf War and much has not been replenished. This time round, the Americans will also try to minimise infrastructural damage as whatever they bomb has to be rebuilt by them anyway.

The world should choose sides, not for or against America and Britain, but for or against Saddam. I for one would rather stand with Britain and America.

Satyajit Dhaka

Pavement for pedestrian

Footpath in various parts of Dhaka have permanently been occupied by the adjacent house owners. Dhaka Metropolitan police is very active in driving away hawkers from the footpath who occupy the footpath temporarily. But they overlook the permanent occupiers. If you walk along the road from Mouchak to Santinagar, you will notice how the owners of the roadside buildings have turned the footpath into their personal driveway.

The most difficult walkway is in front of Twin Tower and Malibagh crossing Bus Stand near Hotel Meradona. They made the footpath curve to facilitate their vehicle's driveway. Pedestrians are unable to walk on that driveway. It's also risky to walk on the road. I request the City Corporation to look into it.

Nazneen Dhaka

Gas export

Western civilisations understand the value of energy. They know how to economise and rationalise their natural resources. Even India is not exploring its whole treasure of oil reserve. They buy oil from the Arabs as long as their supply last. The USA kept their oil reserves in Alaska intact. Canada has also its vast oil fields un-impregnated. Why?

Let everybody's reserves get exhausted and then only the Western civilisation will start extracting their reserves and, may be, they will sell their oil at a price 10 times higher than they are buying now.

In Bangladesh, once an elected Govt. invited the crocodiles to explore gas, now another Govt. is looking for the opportunity to say yes to the proposal placed by their economic patrons. With current level of negotiating skill and with a corrupt bureaucracy to run the contract Bangladesh has a very little chance of win-win situation with multi-national oil companies. Rather it may end up endangering its sovereignty in disguise.

M. Ayub Khan

Ottawa, Canada

Ethics

Before you can be good to anyone, you have to be good to yourself. However, who are you? Many believe they are the body they live in. This is not true. You are the basic feeling you had before you were born, and the feeling that you will continue to have after you die. There are many who believe that the feeling you have is located inside your body, but no one has ever discovered the seat of feeling in a body. Feeling must be located elsewhere. Sometimes we call that feeling your soul or your *Atman*. Whatever it is! It is you.

You live in your body, and you clothe it with different types of behaviours. When these behaviours are useful to others around you, you are told you are good, and when they are not useful, you are told that you are not good. If your behaviours are harmful to those around you, you are told you are bad.

Ethics is a relationship between people that allows them to live together. Among the groups of mankind, it determines the limits of the population in the groups. Groups who have the most functional types of ethics usually have greater population, and will control groups with less function ethical structures.

Nevertheless, what ever kind of ethical group you live in, do not lose sight of who you are. You can reduce the bitterness you were born with. Using laughter and love, and keeping a sincere smile on your face, it is possible to find happiness in this life. When you experience anger, and hate, make sure it does not go down to your soul. Do not allow yourself to feel rage. If the world around you will destroy your body if you do not hate, let your body be destroyed.

When you die you will lose your sight, your hearing, your ability to smell, the feeling that is in your body, and you will lose your memory. All that you will have left is your basic feeling. If all you feel is anger or hate. It is all you will have to live with, until perhaps you can find another life filled with that kind of anger or hate. If you have a feeling of peace, and openness, other souls will be reaching for you, and perhaps you will learn what ultimate love is. However, if that is not to be, you may be called back into life. It will be an easier life because you will be an easier soul to live with.

Robert W. Carlson
Elgin, USA

Bangladesh Cricket: Of shame and humiliation!

The players and the coach of Bangladesh cricket team said that they have made a lot of improvement in the previous years which will be reflected in their World Cup performances. And this is what they give us!

Bangladesh should be stripped off both the Test and One-Day status. This is the only way the country will be free from continuous humiliation and the game itself will be relieved from degradation.

Joy, Dhaka

The lesson from the initial results of the WC games should be that it is no good for cricket, or for that matter any other sport, to replace the management with the change of regime. Of course there are other points to ponder on.

MAH, Dhaka

It is time to take some tough decision regarding our cricket. It seems like the only contribution that our cricketers are making is adding to our dismal image abroad.

First there was the loss to Namibia (!!) in pre-World Cup match and in the World Cup, a damn defeat to Canada followed by the dismal showing against Sri Lanka where Vass created world record. If we are waiting for any miracle, then let us persist with this bunch of no gooders. If we are realistic, let us keep our Test status in abeyance; take a few years time off from playing Test or international one day matches, coach the players properly, evaluate them and then only return to playing international cricket.

We were given Test status not on our playing ability. When this status was granted, our players had practically no experience at all in playing cricket of more than one-day duration. There was then no scheme in the country and no tournament either to train our players in playing the longer version of the game.

We won't be ready for Test/international status in years to come and never unless we start from scratch. We need to build our cricketing infrastructure with one-day and



three-day tournaments like in other Test playing nations. We need to strengthen coaching facilities and reject most of the present bunch in our national team and bring in new talents. If we find new talents, and then if we have the infrastructure to train and sustain those talents then only should we dare to be in the company of Test cricketers. Otherwise, it would be playing with our national image and hurting it real bad.

Shahjahan Ahmed, Dhanmandi, Dhaka

The appalling performance of Bangladesh against Canada in the World Cup 2003 has left me pondering on a couple of questions:

1. Does the team know that they are participating in the Cricket World Cup?
2. Do they really deserve the Test status that has been bestowed upon them?
3. Are they balancing the last World Cup's success over Pakistan by losing to a low rated team like Canada?

It's really high time for our beloved "Golden boys" started playing good, sensible cricket. Otherwise, what's the use of embarrassing this country in front of the world?

LB, On e-mail

On February 11, Bangladesh was defeated by Canada in the team's first appearance in the World Cup tournament. The Canadians, a collection of mostly part-time players, were considered the underdogs of this WC.

Bangladesh team has had a mission to beat Canada and Kenya and an upset, if possible, with a Test playing nation. But Bangladesh's attempt to end their world record losing streak ended in embarrassing failure as the team suffered a 60-run defeat by Canada. It was a stunning result from a country which had lost all three games on its only previous appearance at the World Cup in 1979 - scoring the competition's lowest score of 45 on the way.

While 140 million people in Bangladesh were aspiring to win against Canada, for sure, Bangladesh's dream has been shattered by its worse ever performance. While someone could argue that Bangladesh produced one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history with their 62-run victory over Pakistan in 1999, it is hardly deniable to say that a team like Canada where very few people know what the cricket is about can beat Bangladesh.

It would be a blunder to call it as upset. If so, how many upset the Bangladesh cricket team has ever been made? Every time they lose and they claim that they had a bad day, or the boys could not click on, or the cricket is the game of glorious uncertainty, and so on. It's the time to think about cricket and its future. While the government can't afford clothing for the cold-stricken people, people dies without food and shelter, is it not a luxury for Bangladesh to spend huge money for the cricket in this way? If the team wins they get prizes, money, apartment, etc. why don't there is any policy of punishing them when we are losing in such a way?

We the Bangladeshis here in Canada are also deeply frustrated at this performance and urge the BCC to take action against the team and to set an example for the future of the country's cricket.

Asadul Islam

University of Saskatchewan, Canada

Surprise or no Surprise records will show that Bangladesh lost to Canada in the World Cup 2003. It has broken a lot of hearts especially those who have helped the Bangladesh cricket to come up to this level.

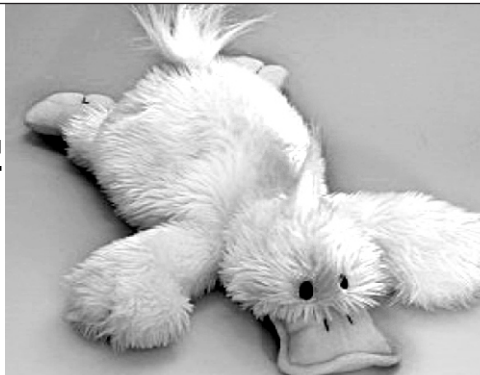
The political problems that the CRICKET CONTROL BOARD faces are really serious. There are groupings and lobbying and no one seems to like each other. And it is the game which suffers the most.

The Board should have kept the original team that played the first World Cup till this tournament, and in the mean time should have picked up some upcoming youngsters to further Bangladesh cricket. But no, what the Board did was they replaced nine regular playing members from the World Cup squad and made a new team that toured a lot of countries without any success, the reason best known to the Board. At the same time you have an immature captain who is not fit for the position.

At any cost Bulbul, Akram, Nannu should have been included in the World Cup team. The selectors and the Board should take full responsibility of the utter failure of the team and should resign.

Yaffie, Brooklyn, NY, USA

There are not too many good things Bangladeshis expect these days but our cricket team beating the amateur Canadians in the Cricket World Cup surely was one. The Bangladeshi cricketers have totally disgraced themselves and humiliated the country they represent in being thrashed by 60 runs by a group of amateurs from Canada, most of whom had to take a month's vacation from their daily jobs to play in the World Cup. This hapless defeat is made even more ignoble by the fact that, in Bangladesh we spend millions to develop the cricket team. So improbable is this defeat that it is akin to Bangladesh beating Canada in ice-hockey! Most Canadians I



know don't even know of the existence of the game of cricket, let alone the fact that they have a cricket team playing in the World Cup. Compare that to the millions who follow the game passionately in Bangladesh.

Even if the ICC does not cancel Bangladesh's Test status, the Bangladesh Cricket Board should do the honourable thing and surrender it. A country that cannot last 30 overs against part-timers from Canada, should have no right to play the likes of Australia and South Africa in the 5-day version of the game.

What horrible thing to do the country on Eid day!

S. Abedin, New York, USA

How many times will we have to burn in utmost humiliation? How many times we will have to find a cause to justify or rationalise our failure? How many more players would be changed and we will get the same result, i.e. an astonishing defeat!

No matter how hard it is to swallow, it actually happened. Bangladesh lost to Canada by 60 runs only chasing 180 for victory. Then Bangladesh lost 1st 3 wickets in 1st 3 balls against Sri Lanka. We succumbed to a humiliating 10-wicket defeat after achieving only a total of 124 runs. Yet there's more to come.

I watched the Canada-Bangladesh match from the beginning till the end and felt that Bangladesh had never been on the top. I should admit even amateur Canada is a far better team than Bangladesh. Loosing is a habit and Bangladesh is in that habit very well. It doesn't matter against whom they are playing. Moreover it is proven that the real ability of Bangladeshi player is to get 120-130 runs. Rarely they get more than that and those are nothing but fluke.

The players as well as the selectors, board committee every body is responsible for this poor performance.

Though it's hard but I should admit we are good for nothing, especially in games and sports. May it be physical or psychological, we are not worth it. Our players shouldn't be over-rated. We should realise the fact and come down to reality. We should remain content with holiday cricket and picnic games. I am sure if Bangladesh had to play the ICC championship this time they wouldn't be able to qualify for this World Cup.

Is it too late to bring back our "Royal Bengal Tigers" home? We have been humiliated enough, we don't want it more.

Md Iqbal Hossein Rahimi
Kalabagan, Dhaka

I hear that the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has declared Royal Bengal Tiger an endangered species. Given the performance of the 11 'Tigers' that we sent to the Cricket World Cup, I would request the Home Minister and the IGP to ensure their safety while they are back home lest they fall prey to the wrath of the millions of cricket lovers of the country and thus we fail to conserve the last remaining tigers of our country.

In the meantime readers, could you please suggest some other alternative careers of these tigers so that they can at least do something productive?

Al, Uttara, Dhaka

Why will Bush not listen to the voice of experience?

We see that some European Leaders have said that the Iraqi situation must be settled by talking but again Bush and his team are threatening that 'time is running out for Saddam'. Why do successive American Governments always seem to want to go into another country using their 'weapons of mass destruction' on innocent people? Have they not learned from their experience in Vietnam?

With each speech that Bush makes, he makes it more and more obvious that he is not really interested in what the Weapons Inspectors find or do not find. He is simply determined to attack Iraq. He really should take some notice of the European Leaders, who after all, have much experience in world affairs.

Kathleen Haq, UK

How Bush's war monger team is creating panic by raising terror alerts in USA to scare American public by gathering reports from the so-called highly reliable sources which later turn out to be a hoax! This is in fact a nice technique to prepare their countrymen for war by crying wolf. This trick will keep the American public uneasy and frightened, which in turn will keep them supporting their President's highly controversial foreign and domestic policies.

By adopting tough stand against the Muslims, USA is not doing any good for itself. This will further increase anti-US sentiments worldwide. The world is already getting suspicious of USA intentions and several million common people in all the continents have now come out on streets to register their protest against Bush's crusade, including America. In NY alone more than 100,000 Americans staged a rally against war for oil.

Instead of investing money to boost a shattered US economy the Bush administration is spending money on war preparation, hoping to control Iraq's oil field to give a jumpstart to their ailing economy. For Bush administration the lives of innocent Iraq's doesn't mean anything.

If Iraq's WMD is such a big concern then why Israel's WMD and nuclear weapons are not considered dangerous for world peace? Bush should first disarm America and all those countries that are holding lands illegally in their occupation and have destroyed the world peace, then ask others to get disarmed. By going to the wrong front and not addressing the real causes of unrest Bush is proving himself to be the most immature leader of the world.

Shah Affan, Toronto, Canada

