

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.

Pre-paid mobile bad!

A very good point brought up by Mr Istiaque Uddin (Rifat) of RUET -- all the mobile companies favouring the post-paid owners! The leading carrier has started this "discrimination" for more than a month now. If there is no immediate announcement from them regarding reduced rates for pre-paid owners very shortly then it should be viewed as a ploy to force the pre-paid owners to switch to (or take an additional) post-paid package -- thus the mobile company can make some quick money by selling more connections by "artificial creation" of demand!

CNR
Chittagong

Private universities

My thanks to Mustak Hossain for his timely piece on the burgeoning of private universities in Dhaka. He rightly points out that by raising the security required for new universities from 1 crore to 5 crore the authorities inadvertently pushed higher education into the hands of businessmen. In doing so, our authorities abet the alarming slide of higher education into training rather than educating.

There is a vast difference between these functions. One applies to the practical needs of the job seeker trying to acquire skills or the union card needed to "fit in". The other, to the citizen with her/his obligation to raise questions, play a part in society's continuous search for goodness, justice, and creativity, i.e. a soul. With the acute crisis in our social values, the corruption and violence that have become endemic in our political interactions, this degeneration of education is the last thing we need.

I hope that Mustak Hossain intends to continue probing the higher education industry. If he does, I wish he would look into the orientations to be expected from those who are able to muster the 5 crore security deposit. Why have establishments like Dahrul Islam University, which were set up against a security of 1 crore, shown so little inclination to behave like institutions of higher learning? This university was allowed to set up a temporary campus back in 1995 and enabled to acquire 5 Bighas of land in Savar in favourable terms. The understanding was that it would build a proper campus in Savar and move out in year 2000. Yet, it not only continues to operate in Dhamondi but also has spread over numerous other buildings. The computer department it runs out of an apartment is only the tip of the iceberg. What is it doing with the five Bighas in Savar is a mystery. God help us lest we discover that the rot goes much deeper than honest educators, who wish to set up new places of learning, being unable to shake out 5 crore to get started. I presume, like primary and secondary education, our higher educational system has become nothing but a raw business. This, despite the fact that their faculty draw on some of our most revered academics and respected thinkers who have retired from the public university system.

Sultana Alam
On e-mail

Editing standards

Editing is both arts and sciences. A properly edited news item or an article, upon its publication in a newspaper (per se) can help enhance the image of the paper,

sustain the paper's market growth, promote trusted journalism, and provide a learning opportunity to those who would be interested to use the material mentioned as resources for knowledge and decisions. The good news is that a proper and correct use of prepositions in any write-up in English language (as the context permits) can help interpret, among other things, the scientifically established reality of a subject or an object in pertinent areas.

A carelessly or naively edited article (I mean the published one) can, on other hand, destroy the

an increase in the number of newspaper contributors (per se) having multidisciplinary academic backgrounds (such as, engineering and management).

Bangladesh needs to promote aggressively liberal arts and English in the country's education domain. It is essential, among other things, for meeting the challenges of the knowledge economy (wherein multi-disciplinary knowledge has a definitive market advantage) and those of editing. The country should afford relevant staff members of the mass media a regular opportunity for training on editing (etc.) for re-

worth mentioning here that Daily Star happens to be the best English daily in Bangladesh. Because Daily Star continues to publish several news along with columns, and above all the editorials are written down with justifiable proves. And the renowned writers are regularly writing in Daily Star using the latest words and phrases in exhaustive details for all types of readers. So for people like me it is a fact that there is no other way than to read the newspaper daily in order to learn English. I will request those who want to enhance their English to read The Daily Star everyday.

Your accusations unfortunately show a personal grudge instead of any genuine flaw that stays in our system.

Arani Siddiqi
IBA, DU

This is in response to the letter published in the Daily Star under the above caption on 06.08.03. This is just a small enlightenment to Ms. Samiha Esha (DS August 8). I understand her frustration regarding the empty seats at IBA and her friends who were deprived of studying at IBA. As an ex-student of IBA, at times I also wondered upon the same issue. Please let me inform that authorities of IBA know very well that every year there will be 10-20 seats empty because of students going to other universities, going abroad or simply dropping out. The initial intake is taken keeping this number in mind. The authorities know very well that a smaller number of students will graduate out of the actual admitted number... and that is the way it is designed. This eliminates the need for any waiting list. And so far IBA has been able to keep up its student quality and administrative system to the highest standards.

Z Ahmad
Gulshan, Dhaka

This is about the letters Ms. Samiha, Ms. Arani and Mr. Rahmatullah.

I disagree with Ms. Samiha about the waiting list system. But I don't agree with Ms. Arani and Mr. Rahmatullah either about the prevailing fixed seat system.

The waiting list system will surely deteriorate the efficiency and the enviable fame of IBA. On the other hand the fixed seat system is not perfect enough to offer recognition to many meritorious students. It seems like a rat race. So I think it would be better if there were fixed mark system instead of fixed seat system. To make it clear, all those who get at least 70 per cent or 80 per cent (it would be declared by the teachers of the institute in consistency with the question-standard of the admission test making sure that it would justify the required merit of a student for that particular programme) in written test would be called for viva voce. From those 'qualified in written' the teachers would select through viva, regardless of seat numbers, whoever are eligible to carry on their study to the last semester. Then the number might exceed 75 in one year or go down in other. We see a number of students enrolled to fulfil the required seats being dismissed from the programme every year.

I know this idea will seem to many to be strange for it will create some management problems. But I think the problem is not too big as such and there is logic behind this idea. The number of meritorious students of every year is not same. When the GPA system was first launched in the public examination the number of students with GPA-5 was only 76. The following year it was better -- 330. This year it is remarkable -- 1392. In the coming years it would be staggering. But the seat number for job-oriented disciplines at public universities is not increasing. Again some ineligible students are getting into sometimes because of fixed seat system.

So I would request the authority of IBA that they think about the idea so that the country can have all the more eligible persons for job market.

Aditya Ahsan

Shukrabad, Dhaka

The blame game

Bangladesh is a country with great potentials. It has also so far received help and assistance in cash and kindness from the foreign countries since the independence. But is has hardly made any progress whatsoever. Moreover, it was first known as the bottomless basket, later became the number one corrupt country in the world. It was all due to the failures of our leaders. They have got no foresightedness.

They are leaders no doubt. But not statesmen.

Not a single leader has the power to unite the nation that we saw during the Liberation War and before that. If one government does something that is good for the people and the country, then the next government either cancels it or changes it or stops it. As if it is a crime to continue anything good done by the opposition. Every government is busy in wasting money instead of utilising it properly. Two major political parties -- Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Awami League are busy in mud slinging with one another.

Let me tell a story of Aesop. An old man had five sons but he was miserable because his sons were always engaged in quarrelling and fighting with each other. One day he brought a bundle of sticks and fastened them tightly with a rope and asked each of his sons to break them. But nobody could do so. Then he asked them to break the sticks one by one, this time they succeeded. The old man then told his sons that if they live together like the bundle of sticks then nobody could do any harm to them.

So our dear leaders please remember "United we stand and divided we fall".

Iqbal Ahmed
New Eskaton Road, Dhaka

Necessity of public toilet

In our daily commute from one place to another -- while walking on the street or on the footpath -- there is a chance that you might face an acrid thing. Let me clarify by giving you an example, one day while walking in front of the Highcourt I found few amount of human waste on the side of the footpath. I was repulsed. It makes the footpath dirty. This is a common problem in Dhaka city. I request the authority to immediately make more public toilets, so that the passers by don't need to face such problems.

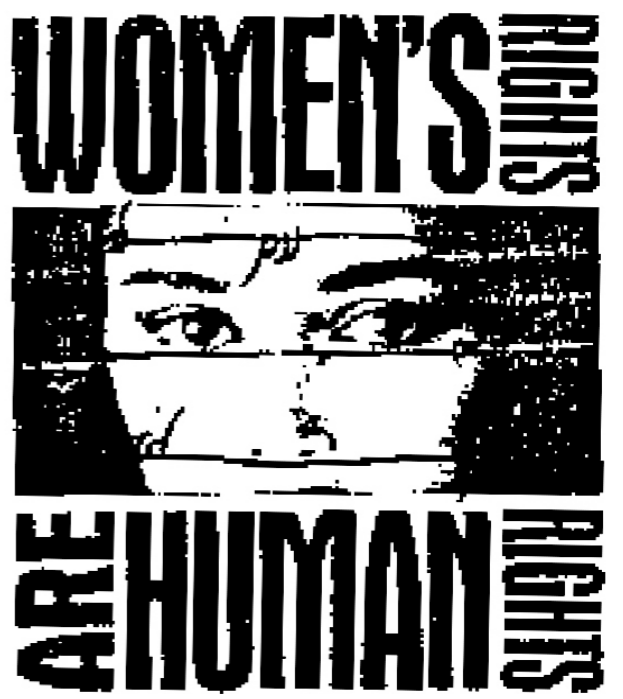
Haribur Rahman
Dhaka

Unionists press BTTB

This refer to a news published in DS on August 06.

It was shocking to know that Mr. Md.Obaidullah, GM, T&T north Telecom Region, was threatened by the government party supported employees' union for taking punitive steps against some dishonest and corrupt employees of T&T. I, as a T&T subscriber congratulate Mr. Obaidullah on his appropriate action.

In this regard I would draw the attention of the Transparency International Bangladesh Chapter, Consumer Association Of Bangladesh (CAB), the civil society and other non-governmental organisations to pressurise the government



Freedom she wrote

The act of violence against women are rampant in Bangladesh now. The latest victim of the abrupt growth of this abominable crime is Rumi, an intermediate 2nd year student of Chittagong. Being continuously teased and humiliated by two local boys -- Azam and Nazim, Rumi was forced to commit suicide by hanging herself on August 1.

Verbal abuse and sexual harassment has become the cause of death for many helpless girls in the country who committed suicide after being teased or chased by perverted men. For such criminal activities the constitution should have laws for punishing the criminals who are responsible for such terrible consequences. Unfortunately we don't have any such law. Verbal abuses and obscene gestures aimed at woman are no crime in Bangladesh. The government in power out of sheer lack of sensitivity and understanding has amended the 'Woman and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000' decriminalising these abominable acts. When government should enact tough laws and ensure the enforcement for prevention of any kind of repression against women, it is playing inadvertently with this serious issue.

Then what's going to happen with the Rumi case? Rumi's mother strongly demanded punishment for criminals who forced her to die. Will they ever be punished? Rumi killed herself in search of freedom, before death, she wrote, "I do not know when I will taste freedom; when will it be the end to all my miseries and sufferings. I suspect I will not live to see it." How many Simi, Trisha and Rumis have to choose this way of self-immolation before their real freedom is ensured in society? Is there no authority in Bangladesh to ensure their safety and freedom by taking whatever steps necessary before it is too late?

Md Rezaul Karim, Department of Law, DU

so that no harm is done to the GM for his actions.

Jkobar
Dhaka

Islamic University library

The students of the Islamic University (IU) are unable to derive any benefit from the central library as it is now plagued with many problems including shortage of books and lack of internet, e-mail and modern technological facilities.

Most of the 7500 students under 18 departments of this university often seek for reference books at the central library. But the failure of the library staffs to supply the books frustrates them as the majority of them are not trained, they often fail to find out the right books from the stacks. Moreover the central library

does not have adequate number of foreign newspapers, magazines or journals on various subjects. The supply of foreign newspaper and journals has been stopped from February last. The photocopy machine of the library often remains out of order. As the library has no arrangement to supply drinking water, students doing library work for hours have to go to the nearby tea-stalls to quench their thirst. Drinking of water from tea-stalls exposes them to many health hazards. The toilets of the library always remain dirty and unclean.

I hope the authority takes this into account and tries to solve them as soon as possible.

Altaf Hossain
Islamic University, Dhaka

Prevent river erosion in Hatia



Recurring nightmare

Hatia is the second biggest island of Bangladesh. It is famous for its agriculture and fisheries. And the population of the island is around 4 Lakhs. The law and order situation in Hatia is rather peaceful. River erosion in Hatia began in 1963. Forty square kilometres of area of Hatia has already gone under the river Meghna. It is a great curse for the people of Hatia. In recent past Horni, Cha-hondu, Charvarat, Charbodu,

Bantazora, Sudrakhali, Chandkhali, Muladigram, Lomboria and some other villages was taken by the river Meghna.

No steps has yet been taken to prevent the river erosion in Hatia. However the erosion is still going on, if nothing is done to stop this erosion then one day Hatia will just disappear from the map of Bangladesh. Presently six unions of Hatia have become the victims of river erosion. Two Lakhs of

people have lost their home already. They are staying on the *Beri*, it is an un-protected char (accretion) like Boyar Char, Nijhum Dip, Nonliar Char. Now my earnest request to the government is to find ways to prevent the river erosion in Hatia and an immediate rehabilitation of the landless.

Abuzar difary Shameem
Chairman Bazar, Hatia, Noakhali

Md. Osman Gni
Bangabandhu Hall, DU

IBA (DU) should change

Ms Samiha Esha spent cumbersome hours in replying to my letter, but I feel it was all unnecessary. Firstly, her points have been full of flaws, and when I have been trying to correct her, she has been constantly denying her own statements and making up new stories.

Miss if your beautiful dream of being a part of IBA was fully shattered, it is most unfortunate and plays of merit and luck. I am not saying people who don't get chances are incompetent; they are merely at a less advantaged position. You cannot make everyone happy, and professors in IBA are not gods that they can make every dream come true.

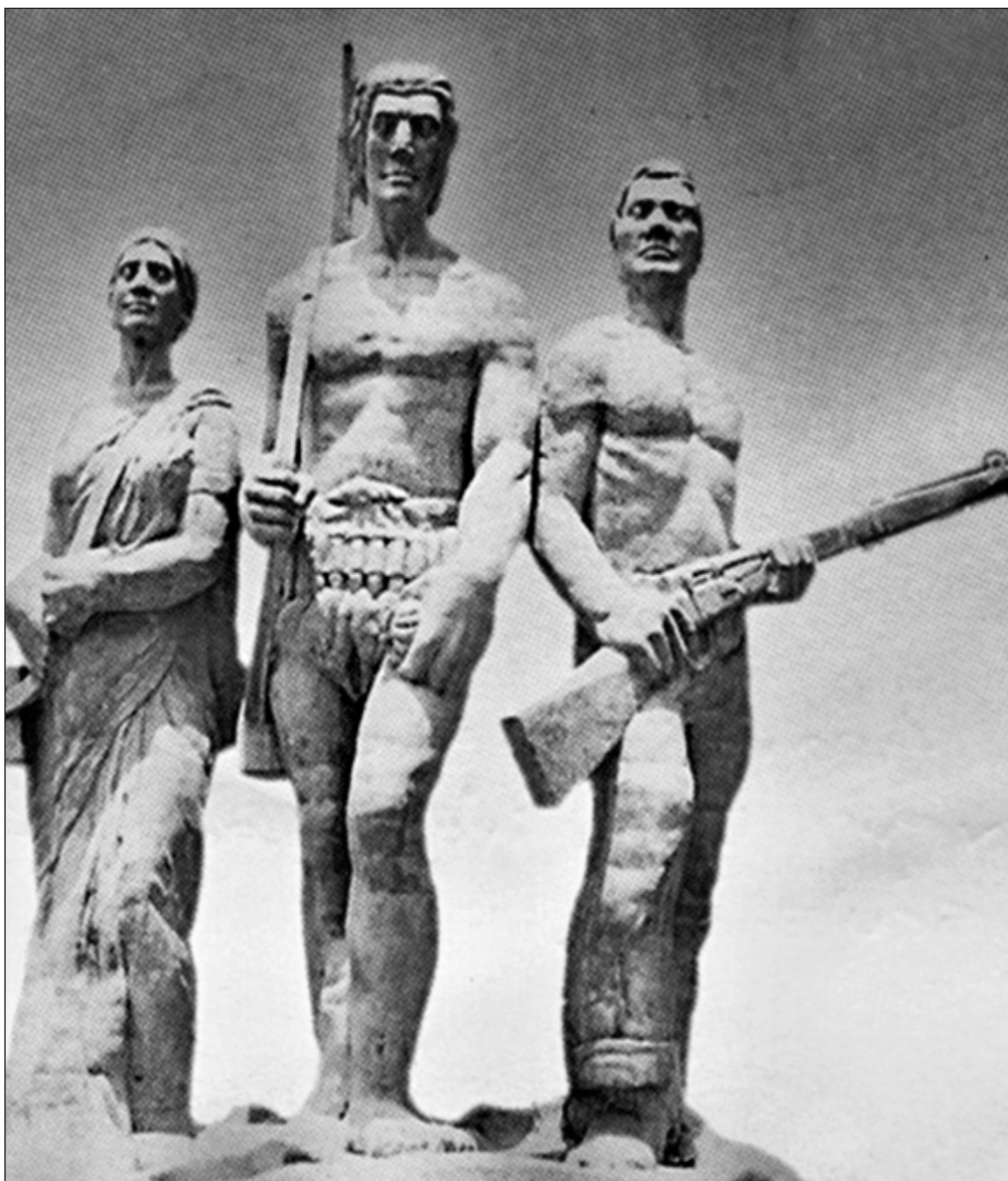
tooling purposes.

Donors can support the effort of Bangladesh in the area mentioned under a national programme like: Capacity Development of Mass Media People. If a similar programme does exist, then its effectiveness should be enhanced and the public be informed periodically about its success, working-in-progress and other developments.

Dr. M. S. Haq
New York

Learning English and The Daily Star

English language of late has become a global demand because of its universal appeal lying in every sphere of life. To meet the requirements of the new era and to cope with the populace of developed countries learning English has become an absolute necessity. It is



DU in distress

DU impasse

We, the general students of the University of Dhaka, which was once known as the Oxford of the East, are frustrated. The JCD and BCL are practising their rituals. Woefully, the authority is callous to our academic havoc. Our future as well as destiny is totally chancy. The authority concerned postpones our scheduled exams leisurely. Believe it or not, we, the bona fide students of DU want to pass in time. We want to enlighten ourselves, not to ensnare in political morass. I entreat the VC to resolve the stalemate diplomatically. I hope a peaceful and impeccable denouement of the political dramas staged on our dear campus to bypass any further hullabaloo.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen
Department of English, DU

Pilferage on DU campus

It's quite surprising that though a large number of guardsmen are patrolling Dhaka university dormitories, faculties and other buildings, valuable personal belongings of students and teachers are often being stolen. At dormitories, main targets of the thieves are the clothes which are being spread under the sun. Eid and other vacations are the peak periods of such nuisance. Going home on holidays is a matter of anxiety now.

In last summer vacation telephone sets of teachers from the arts building were stolen but authorities refused to replace them.

So, it seems that the authorities refused to take the responsibility for such occurrences. Actually, I think this kind of theft occur in collaboration with the sentries. We are worried about pilferage in the campus and dormitories and the silence of the DU authorities on this matter.

Shamsul Alam Monir
Department of Public Administration, DU

Our blind VC

We are sorry that Mr. Hasan Zahid Tusher of Daily Star was attacked by the JCD terrorists and was

seriously injured. We are sorry that at this moment we really have nothing to offer him than our sympathy.

We are sorry that we the general students could not save you from the terrorists.

And now when everyone knows who the terrorists were as their names and photos were published in the newspapers, the authorities concerned have failed to take necessary actions, or should we say they have not done anything so far as they are backing the so-called students politicians of the ruling party. It seems to me that our VC and his fellow men are fully blind at them.

I wish Mr. Zahid's quick recovery and we hope that he will write against VC and his fellow men's attitude towards the terrorists.

A concerned student
DU

Card phone sufferings at DU

I am writing in support of the letter written by Mithun Das regarding the card-phone sufferings. A couple of days ago, there were many coin-boxes in the same places of the phone booths. Mithun Das has written in his letter about the card-phone suffering of Dhaka city dwellers. I specially, want to make a brief description of the card phone nuisance at DU dormitories. There is a card phone set in each dormitory of DU which most of the time remain out of order. It makes a problematic situation for a lot of students. So, the students often have to go to Nilkhet spending Tk 10 for rickshaw fare to make a phone call, wasting their valuable time in the process. I would like to draw the attention of the DU authorities to activate these every day essentials and thus rescue the students from their miseries.

Shamsul Alam Monir
Department of Public Admin, DU

A personal view



Right or wrong...

A few days ago I went to a renowned cinema theatre named Modhumita to watch a movie. They were showing two movies for the price of one. One was the Waterworld and another was Fire. Waterworld is a famous movie with a nice concept. I have nothing to say about it. But I have a lot to say about Fire. Particularly about its consequences. The picture which is depicted in the movie is basically about two women who are deprived of sexual relationships with their husbands. Physical desire is very natural. It comes spontaneously from both sides. But in the movie we see that Nandita Das, playing a house wife was not happy with her married life, especially when she was informed about her husband's extramarital affair. She suddenly gets into a relationship with her sister-in-law played by Shabana Aazmi. Then the story moves forward to its destiny.

But my point is in our country there are a huge number of women whose husbands are working in distant places. Generally a lot of people are working abroad but our women are very much faithful to them. Homosexuality is absolutely prohibited according to our religion and society.

So I consider the showing of this movie as a conspiracy against our tradition and culture. I ask the censor board why they passed the movie in the first place? I have also become very disappointed with the role of several theatre authorities. Are they trying to be modern by following such attitude?

Ali Ahmad Mabru, On e-mail