

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.

Everest team-1

Thanks to Mr. Saif for the letter The Daily Star ran in its May 10 edition where he expressed concern about the 'Everest team-1'. He is right that we Bangladeshis have a weakness for the cliché 'first ever'. But the fact is that 'Everest team-1' is the first official team of Bangladeshi mountaineers going to Mount Everest's Base Camp aiming to fly 'green and red' bicolours of our flag in the next five to ten years.

It is common knowledge that mountaineering is not a child's play which cannot and, rather should not, be tried by merely watching 'Vertical Limit' and such action movies. The aspiring mountaineers know how mighty difficult climbing at sub-zero temperature can get since they watch adventure channels like A1 and Discovery.

Keeping that in mind, three junior members of the 'Everest team-1' underwent a one-month basic mountaineering training in India and practised walking by wearing proper boots and carrying lug-

gage weighing 15 to 30 kgs on their back. I do know little about the other three members of the team, though, but this much that they too did get trained up in basic walking.

The team leader, Inam Ul Haq, the first Bangladeshi to have been in Antarctica, has climbed all the high hills in the country and is one of the best trekkers we have. It is considered enough if one has the ability to walk to the Base Camp with a backpack weighing around 30 kgs.

Let's keep the fact straight that the 'Everest team-1' is the first official team of Bangladeshi climbers, with a specific mission. As far as I know, no fewer than five Bangladeshis have been in the Base Camp without any basic mountaineering training, but all of them went on their own.

I am quite optimistic that some members of the 'Everest team-1' will reach the summit one day.

Rajib Das
Dhaka



DS and politics

This refers to your recent commentaries. I would like to point out here that the Awami League is the worse of the two major parties, because it is willing to imprison the country and impose countrywide hartals as a result of which the country incurs heavy losses. The party is willing to lie its way to power and is threatening to launch a violent movement to unseat a democratically elected government etc.

How can a party, which breaks its promises at every step citing 'changed situation', be an alternative to the government which has been accused of human-rights abuse and inefficient administration?

We expect The Daily Star to adopt a totally neutral position as far as the political parties are concerned.

Anonymous
On e-mail

Is it right?

Day by day, some public universities of Bangladesh are facing acute problems of session jam. This problem was always there because of student politics. For the last few years, the students of Chittagong University are struggling with a long session jam and the only reason is student politics.

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) is another university where students can't

complete their courses on time. SUST today is more like a battlefield. Student politicians in SUST move with guns in broad daylight. It is impossible to think how a university of Science and Technology is running under such circumstances year after year?

Rupom
Computer Engg. (RUET), Rajshahi

Corporate governance

All regulatory and professional bodies are now underlining the importance of corporate governance. For ensuring much needed corporate governance, more transparency and accuracy in financial statements are very crucial. But, regrettably, in our country some important International Accounting Standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) have not been adopted yet. There is lack of collaboration between regulatory and professional bodies. So, more interactions among all concerned bodies are needed. There are also a lot of incongruities and inconsistencies in accounting standards that should be removed for ensuring corporate governance.

I am happy to learn that ICAB's latest compilation of 26 Bangladesh Accounting Standards (BAS) has been launched. But it should not be the end. Necessary steps should be taken to implement all

other accounting standards on a priority basis.

Md. Saiful Islam Monju
Dept. of Finance and Banking,
Zahurul Haq Hall, DU

Today's world

Very recently, we observed the holy day Eid-e-Miladunnabi, which marks the birth of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM). Our dearest Prophet always fought for the establishment of human rights. The ideals of Muhammad (SM) were set for the liberation of mankind from the clutches of corruption, brutality and terrorism.

We feel frightened seeing the bleak and terrifying picture of the present world where the so-called civilised soldiers torture the Iraqi prisoners in a most brutal manner.

The way the Iraqi prisoners are being treated by the British and US soldiers is really pathetic. The British and American people claim themselves to be the most civilised people on earth. But they are not behaving like human beings.

Now the time has come for the rest of mankind to protest this brutality. The British and US soldiers have broken all records of human rights violation. They are acting just like the brutal Pakistani soldiers who continued a crackdown upon the innocent people of this country in 1971.

Let's raise our voices together against such crimes.

Hasna Hasan
Department of English, Leading

University, Dhaka

The killers must be punished

We have no words to console his nearest and dearest ones at this moment of grief. We extend our deepest sympathy and sincerest condolence to the bereaved members of his family on his premature death. We pray to the Almighty for the salvation of the departed soul.

The nation has lost a worthy son. The government has tried to save the killers by issuing a statement that the killing was the result of internal feud. The political parties are blaming each other, but what is needed is an impartial probe into the killing. The killers must not go unpunished.

Kazi Safayat Hossain
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Double standards

Millions of Americans settle into the couch with bowls of popcorn and diet cola in the complete safety of their living room, enjoying the colour images of American troops fighting the just war, then comes the CBS Breaking News. Pictures of notorious Abu Gharib prison show prisoners being humiliated, forced to pose in a degrading position with each other naked. Some were beaten to death, then carted away with a faked intravenous infusion in the arm.

The war against terrorism is a war to preserve freedom, we were told. When Saddam did it, it was evil when Americans do it, it is the unintended consequences of a just cause. The hypocrisy is sickening.

The ugly side of the Americans has been completely unmasked by the imperialistic attitude that colour US foreign policy in the guise of freedom. If irony is not dead, surely it is on life support.

The killers that run the American government now must know that they can no longer win the war in Iraq because Americans do not belong there. Vandals cannot rebuild the house they are ravaging.

Syeda Akhtar (RN)
Gulshan, Dhaka

AL to join parliament

Yes, you read it right. The AL has decided to join the parliament. But there is no reason to have any illusion that good sense has dawned on the leaders of the AL after the deadline debacle. They are joining the parliament for a 'limited time' just to sign and save their membership of the parliament. Common people like us cannot even imagine the amenities enjoyed by an MP, irrespective of his political affiliation.

If you are an MP you can make law, and of course break it. You don't have to care for your phone bill, nor any hassle at the airport when you are returning from abroad. These are only a few examples. Our politicians will be busy in the streets enforcing hartal and disrupting our life while they will remain the 'honourable' members of the parliament and enjoy all the advantages of being an MP. We are the poor souls who have to shoulder the responsibility of paying for their perks.

The opposition leader Sheikh Hasina in an interview to the BBC said there is already an example set by the BNP during her regime and she is just following the example. Can't she herself set a healthy example which will be worth following to others?

Joy
Dhaka

Where is Saddam?

Where's Saddam Hussain? Is he watching his children's getting humiliated and assaulted by the Americans and their allies? He gave himself up to the Americans without putting up a fight, he didn't sacrifice a tiny drop of his blood for the sake of Iraq, he has dishonoured his birthplace, is he residing in war ravaged Iraq? Is he suffering the pain and hunger with his fellow countrymen? Isn't he the leader who had the honour and pleasure of ruling Iraq for over two decades? And now he's not with them to share the misfortune, nor is he there to be their saviour at this moment of crisis! What right did he have to govern them in the past?

He provoked Americans to attack Iraq, but couldn't save the country's sovereignty, nor did he keep his promise to his countrymen. Moreover, didn't he give America the chance to create an imbalance in the world power? And now he should be made to be amidst the Iraqis, than enjoying the privileges as a prisoner of war under the Geneva Convention.

Jinaan Khadeejah
East Ashkona, Uttara, Dhaka

Rooppur Nuclear Power Project

I was reading the internet edition of The Daily Star sitting here in Japan. The letter 'Rooppur nuclear project' written by a citizen drew my attention. I really wondered to read that being a knowledgeable and responsible citizen of the country he could give his opinion simply against the reality. The honourable citizen, do you know why the RNPP is yet to be implemented? Do you really know the benefits of having a nuclear power plant in our country? Without going into details, I just want to add that nuclear power is the only sustainable solution to the country's energy crisis, which is knocking at the door. Wake up every one!...and apply pragmatic thoughts to plan for the future...and here the future means decade after decade....

A Bangladeshhi
Shizuoka, Japan

Killing of MP

Beauty of summer

To me, the most significant feature of summer is full-bloomed krishnachura with its red and yellow coloured flowers. It is amazing to find the tree with all its beauty amidst the sultry summer. For instance, if one takes a walk along the mall-chatter of Dhaka University, it will create a soothing effect on his mind. It is sad to see that in the name of urbanisation and industrialisation we are chopping down trees indiscriminately. Amidst all of these hostile attitudes, Nature is still very kind to us.

It is time we developed a rapport with Nature for our own sake. To maintain ecological balance, we should encourage everyone to plant trees in this summer.

Md. Nazrul Islam Sumon, DU



PHOTO:STAR

Ahsanullah Master MP was no ordinary politician; he was the voice of the working people of the country. Since I never had the chance to meet him personally, my interest about this dedicated and distinguished trade unionist is limited to just reading random news and attending his public meetings in Chittagong. From my little knowledge, it was not hard for me to grow an impression about him. Surely, he was not just another ordinary lawmaker of the Awami League but a true and honest politician who put the interest of the working classes at the top of his political agenda. If there are leaders left in our political arena, who have a genuine concern about the workers' condition and at the same time do not want to hinder industrial progress just for their selfish political aim, he was one of them. No wonder, even many industrialists had warm relationship with him. His popularity was reflected in the recent public mayhem in Tongi. I would like to assert this to the readers, who must have seen the pictures of the angry mob in Tongi. They were no mere Awami League activists but the frustrated workers who now feel they have lost their only true representative.

People's frustration knows no limit. I was not shocked to see those pictures in The Daily Star, they just reminded me how helpless and hopeless people now feel at this utterly shameful failure of the government.

Momtaz Jahan
Fulbari, Sylhet

The common man is living in acute fear and anxiety. With every passing day, things are going from bad to worse. It is unlikely that things will improve in near future. So the only course left to the government is to call the armed forces and hand them the responsibility of restoring law and order as was done about a year before. That is of course not a durable solution, but what can you do when so many people are dying every day?

The humans rights organisations criticised deployment of the army at that time. But they could not suggest how the problem of lawlessness could be tackled. Every country must be judged by its own context.

Momtaz Jahan
Fulbari, Sylhet

Assurance only!

A few months back I purchased a pair of sandals worth 400 taka from a shop at the Elephant Road. But unfortunately the pair lasted only 5 days. I was a bit shocked, because it was totally unexpected. However, I looked at the cash memo and found no clause related to warranty/guarantee period. I blamed myself that I had been a fool not to check it earlier. I should've remembered 'purchaser be ware' rule. However, after 4/5 months I went to the shop once again to buy another pair of shoes

and this time the man in the cash counter informed me that they refunded all those who appeared within 2/3 months of purchasing defective shoes. When I asked for my chance he denied and said that the warranty period was over (though it was not written anywhere in the memo). This time I bought a pair worth Tk 1,000 and while taking the memo I reminded him of the absence of any warranty/guarantee clause there and I insisted that there should be such things. I didn't want to make the same mistake once again. What he gave me is verbal assurance of two months warranty. When I told him to write down those lines in the memo, he called another person and what they told was astonishing-- nobody had ever asked for such things and verbal assurance was enough etc. In the shop, there's no complaint-box or whatsoever through which I could give my feedback.

At this point, I would like to ask the shoe companies, the famous ones in particular, to update their age old cash-receipts by adding the necessary clauses so that customers are not cheated.

Engr. Hafizur Rahman Arman
MBA programme, IBA, University of Dhaka

Who is going to be the next victim?

Un-American?



PHOTO:AFP

What are these Americans-- Bush, Rumsfeld, the Generals, et al talking about when they say that the activities depicted in the despicable photos showing criminal mistreatment of the Iraqi prisoners are not American behaviour but Un-American? These are typically American acts as borne out by the facts right down the ages. It started with their treatment of Native Americans, their only crime being they were not white; their black countrymen, their only crime being they were black; the American Muslims in recent days, their only crime being they

were Muslims; and James Yee of Chinese descent, and only yesterday Brandon Mayfield, who is a white American--and you know what? They are converted Muslims!

Believe me, these are all typically American behaviour, as is the incarceration of the prisoners in Guantanamo Bay held there without recourse to judicial rights. They say these people are not held on American soil, therefore they do not come under American law. But then the Americans haven't signed on to the International Criminal Court, so the Guantanamo

prisoners are in a legal limbo, a virtual dark hole. The US intentionally did not sign on to this Court because it wanted to be free from any internationally imposed justice, after committing war crimes and similar misdeeds.

So, Bush and the others, please get off that high horse and the self-made moral pedestal, and stop acting as if the Americans are any better than others. Because in spite of all the power and wealth, you have failed yourselves and the world. What a pity!
Sayed A Chaudhury
Gulshan, Dhaka

Safe motherhood

Every woman longs for motherhood. It gives a sense of fulfillment to them. She has to suffer much pain to become mother of a child (and may be a lot more hassles to bring up that brat!).

Child marriage is threatening safe motherhood in our country. Girls conceiving in their teens run the risk of having under weight babies and other complications. The life of the baby and its mother (who herself in some cases is merely a baby) can be at stake. Besides lack of education, lack of social security often prompts the guardians to opt for an early marriage of their daughter. Law can hardly stop the practice of child marriage. A massive campaign should be launched to create awareness among people about the bad effects of child marriage. Provisions to offer health care to mother and child in the remote areas should be ensured.

Now on the Mothers' Day (May 9), I want to take the privilege to pay tribute to the best mother in the world, my own mother. I love you, Ma!
Saif
Dhaka

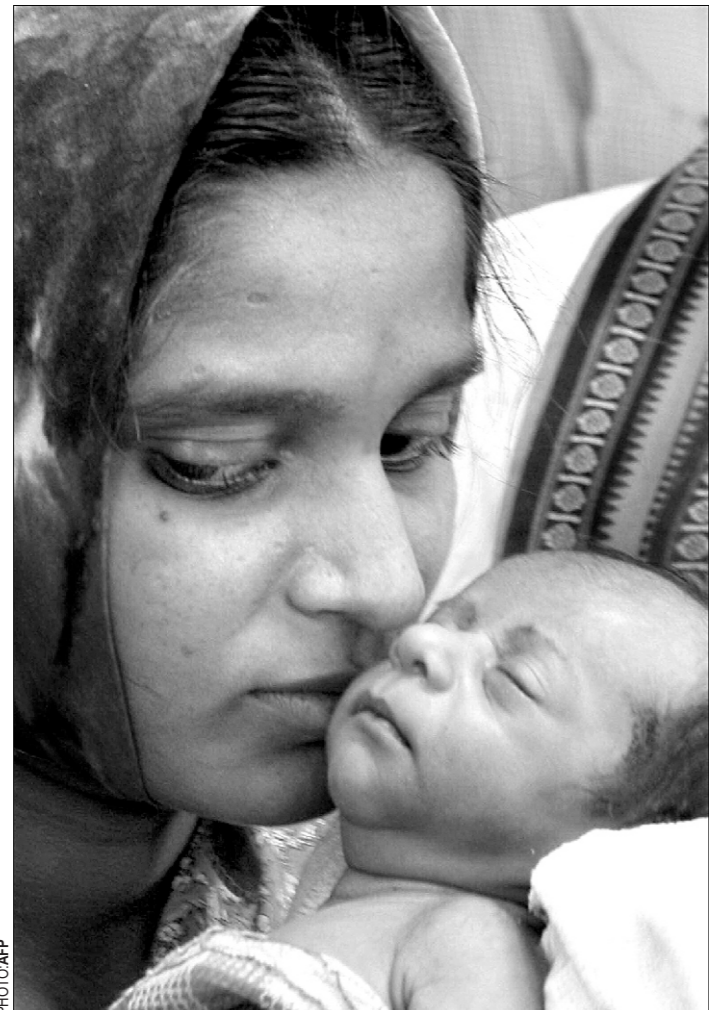


PHOTO:AFP