

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.

Stranded Pakistanis



It is an open secret that about a quarter million Stranded Pakistanis (most commonly known as Biharis or non-Bengalees) have been languishing and leading a miserable life amidst frustration and deprivation in 66 squalid camps of Bangladesh for the last several decades. No doubt, they have been struggling most peacefully and non-violently under the leadership of Alhaj M Nasim Khan to reach their home land—Pakistan. To our utter dismay, despite all assurances, commitment and agreements, Pakistan has miserably failed to repatriate its own nationals stranded in Bangladesh for the last 33 years. Successive governments came to power in Pakistan but their fate remains to be determined.

General Pervez Musharraf, during his state visit to Bangladesh in July 2002, had assured that his government would look into the matter once the Afghan issue is resolved and Afghans are back to Afghanistan. With the change in political scenario,

Afghans are going back to their homeland making room for Pakistan to ponder over the issue.

Stranded Pakistanis have been demanding a tripartite meeting of Pakistan, Bangladesh and SPGRC (the lone representative organisation of Stranded Pakistanis) to resolve the long lingering issue across the table through mutual dialogue and understanding. Unfortunately, till date neither Pakistan nor Bangladesh has responded to the call despite the fact that both the countries are signatories to the Delhi Agreement.

Through this column, we appeal to the Honourable President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to rise to the occasion and take immediate steps for holding a tripartite meeting as proposed by the leader of the stranded Pakistanis to resolve the issue, once and for all.

SM Sadruddin
Munshipara Camp
Saidpur (Nilphamari)

Requisition of private vehicles

Regular and frequent requisition of private vehicles especially microbuses and pick-ups by police has reached epidemic proportions. Such vehicles are being stopped many times daily and the usual procedures are: 1) Vehicles are stopped on the pretext of checking Blue

and expensive treatment to recover normalcy. The normal work of the private companies is sorely hampered and transport of personnel and goods disrupted causing huge monetary loss.

Questions therefore arise: What current law allows for such mass requisition especially when it is reported that there is abject misuse of the vehicles? How many times

Police brutality on the poor

I would like to voice my views about the present state of police harassment for nothing.

The day was 28 June, 2004. I was going to Nilkhet along the footpath of Sonargaon Road running beside Sergeant Zahirul Haque Hall. On the way, I caught a glimpse of two

arrested and taken to a police station. All these happened right before my eyes. I had nothing to do but to observe the whole scene like a tongue-tied onlooker. My question to the authorities: what was wrong with them playing Ludu? What crime did they commit? I can firmly say the answer will be "no". If it is so, then why were they arrested and why they faced physical torture?

Thus, many people of the lower echelon are perpetually oppressed by the police across the country, and it is extreme in Dhaka city without any sensible cause. They adopted this way of harassment simply to make money in an unfair way. I want to draw the attention of the authorities through my letter so that they take necessary steps to stop such police brutality on the innocent poor.

Muhammad Selim Hossain
University of Dhaka

Beautification

Beautification work of the Supreme Court compound is being conducted for years. This is our national heritage. So, this work is appreciable.

Presently, footpaths in the compound are being taken care of. It is a matter of pleasure that the work is being conducted without cutting any trees. That shows concern for the environment. This green area is also a good support to the environment. But something is going wrong now. Bricks are placed very close to the trees, which are marked in the footpath area. There is no blank space around the roots of those trees. As a result, it will hamper the growth of those trees. Roots of these trees should be encircled with some free space so that the trees can breath easily.

The authorities should see what they can do to avoid suffocation of the trees.

TM Moshiur
Shenpara Parbota, Mirpur,
Dhaka

Give us a green patch

I fully endorse the views expressed in your daily by Mr. K Siddique in his letter under the above caption published in the DS on 10 June, 2004.

The writer has put forward his suggestions in a very appropriate time when the present regime is undertaking special care for widening and beautifying the VIP Road leading to Zia International Airport, considered to be the gateway to Dhaka. On both sides of the Airport Road, starting from the turning of Kamal Ataturk Road (Kakoly) and ending at the Cantonment Staff Road railway crossing, one can find a long stretch of low-lying land and ditches, which may be turned into road side park, nurseries, garden with pavement for morning and evening walkers of the adjacent areas like the cantonment, Banani, Gulshan and Barihara etc.

In Egypt, while travelling from Cairo to Alexandria by road, I observed cultivation of various types of seasonal fruits on both sides of the road which were leased out to the member of the public for such purposes and also observed the same in the country side of the UK where road side cultivation of seasonal fruits like straw, grapes etc. are encouraged. Pick while you drive sign boards are commonly seen in the countryside of the UK.

In Singapore and Malaysia, big business establishments and shops are encouraged to beautify roads adjacent to their business establishments with colorful trees, flower plants (particularly on tub....).

A foreigner, whom I was accompanying from ZIA to the hotel in her maiden visit to Bangladesh, remarked, "We spend a lot of money and time for cultivating these sorts of colourful trees and plants which are commonly found growing on your roadside. Since we enjoy a gifted environment where nature is so beautiful, then why not we take some extra care to preserve it for our own benefit."

C.R. Azim
Gulshan, Dhaka

Reflections on Bangladesh

Mr K Nayar was possibly stymied doing a parabolic assessment of anti-India feeling in Bangladesh. He didn't go through the hard realities but exalted the impression he developed long ago. His Pakistani friend's "Dholak Bajna" was simply a rhetoric having no semblance of the vision of Indian leadership.

Their vision to create a large market for Indian products transformed into a reality. No hate campaign was perpetuated by any leader or association in Bangladesh, unlike print and electronic media in his country, but a natural corollary has been enunciated, the causes of which never received conscious acknowledgement, though deceleration crept in. Mere epithet does not improve the feeling rather stoppage of manslaughter at the borders and removal of trade barrier are prerequisites combined with genuine efforts to restore equanimity.

Our leader's inability to inaugurate launching of a book commemorating India's assistance towards our liberation war did not merit citation as it was exclusively the view of the writer. Antagonistic relationship between our two top leaders is essentially a product of

our domestic politics, not a paradigm, but the agenda of economic interest, intrusion of BSF members into our territory every now and then to kill innocent people are common and reign supreme.

However, his unpretentious advice to the highest but impregnable policymakers of his country could be resounding.

Rezaul Huq
Lalmata, Dhaka

Budgetary measures and protests

Every year, the local manufacturers, traders, importers, exporters, and other business groups raise a hue and cry whenever some tax/levy is increased, even marginally, pointing out a host of rather irrelevant reasons.

We all know that the cost of production of any product in Bangladesh is much cheaper than in any industrial country, and it is one of the cheapest in the world. If the QC is maintained, and systems losses reduced, our exports would rise exponentially (compare our R M G sector). The public/consumer should be shown both sides of the coin. Rich tyrant business tycoons exploit the poor workers and put pressure on the government so as to increase their profits. The ministers have to be tough in dealing with such hypocritical presentations.

A. Mahseen
Dhaka

Labour unions

The Ministry of Finance is in the right direction to curb the under-cover activities of the labour unions of the NCBs (nationalized commercial banks, DS report June 18). It is an open secret that the political use of the unions have spoiled the labor leaders, and they are practically beyond disciplinary measures, because of the protection racket.

Rent-seeking culture is entrenched in our society, and there are no leaders strong enough to curb it. The cure starts at the top political level, and it is not forthcoming criticizing the opponents is child's play! The salami racket has to be smashed, before the economy can take off when it goes beyond the growth rate of above seven percent.

In the public sector (services and goods), if the supply position is greater than the demand, then there is less scope for bribery (add red-tapism). Our political masters cannot concentrate with dedication, and are not willing to suffer in public interest. After the budget is passed, the implementation would be lax, thereby taxing the citizens indirectly.

How to get out of this vicious circle?

Alif Zahr, Dhaka

Indo-Pak dialogue

India's new Congress-led government wants a constructive dialogue to resolve the 55 years old conflicts with Pakistan, including the Kashmir issue.

The previous Hindu nationalist administration initiated the dialogue after a two-year break. The new government timetable envisaged a series of official level talks between the foreign secretaries and a possible ministerial meeting in August.

To remove tension and

Marlon Brando

With the death of Marlon Brando last week, the world lost one of the greatest actors of the twentieth century. He was an extra-ordinarily brilliant actor and moviegoers of the past four decades will never forget Marlon Brando.

His classic movies like "A streetcar named desire", "On the Waterfront", "The Wild One", "Viva Zapata", "Julius Caesar", "Guys and Dolls", "Mutiny on the Bounty", "The Godfather", "Last Tango in Paris", "Superman" and "Apocalypse Now" will always be remembered through the generations.

Born in 1924, "Bud" Brando became an actor (rooming with actor Wally Cox) after being expelled from Shattuck Military School.

He made his professional stage debut in the 1944 hit, I Remember Mama, but made theatrical history with his brash yet complex 1947 performance in Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire", which he later recaptured on film.

As Brando added to his screen credits 'Julius Caesar', 'The Wild One', and 'On the Waterfront', he became a symbol for rebellion against the stuffy American conformity of the 1950s and an idol and role model for actors everywhere.

Brando shot to fame in 1947 with his groundbreaking performance in Tennessee Williams' play "A Streetcar Named Desire" as the brutal, animalistic Stanley Kowalski.

Brando, a devotee of the Method, gave a raw, vital performance under Elia Kazan's direction that had critics swooning. Using the technique, fostered by Russian director Konstantin Stanislavsky and popularised at Lee Strasberg's Actors Studio, actors such as Brando drew on their own psychology and experience in creating roles.

Brando's first film, "The Men" (1950), earned raves but it wasn't until the 1951 film version of "Streetcar" directed by Kazan that he became a major movie star. Three years later, Brando won his first Oscar for his performance as ex-boxer Terry Malloy in "On the Waterfront," also directed by Kazan.

His roles in "Streetcar," "Waterfront" and "The Wild One" (1953) established him as an icon of the 1950s. Over the course of his career, he was nominated for eight Oscars, winning two for "Waterfront" and "The Godfather" (1972).

He followed his early success with hits in "Guys and Dolls" (1955), "The Teahouse of the August Moon" (1956) and "Sayonara" (1957), but his career went into decline in the 1960s, particularly after his mannered performance as Fletcher Christian in the 1962 big-budget flop "Mutiny on the Bounty." He also played the mad Colonel Kurtz in "Apocalypse Now" (1979), a film racked by dissent and difficulties but hailed by many as a classic about the Vietnam War.

His later films were a mixed bag. He earned a supporting actor Oscar nomination for "A Dry White Season" (1989), parodied his "Godfather" role in "The Freshman" (1990) and played a thoughtful therapist in "Don Juan DeMarco" (1995). But he also rented himself out for performances in "Christoper Columbus: The Discovery" (1992) and the widely panned "The Island of Dr. Moreau" (1996).

Brando was married three times, to Anna Kashfi in 1957, the Mexican actress Movita in 1960 and a Tahitian named Tahita. He had nine children.

"He gave us our freedom," said an admiring Jack Nicholson, the noted actor.

Adib Reza, Paribagh, Dhaka.

Campus violence

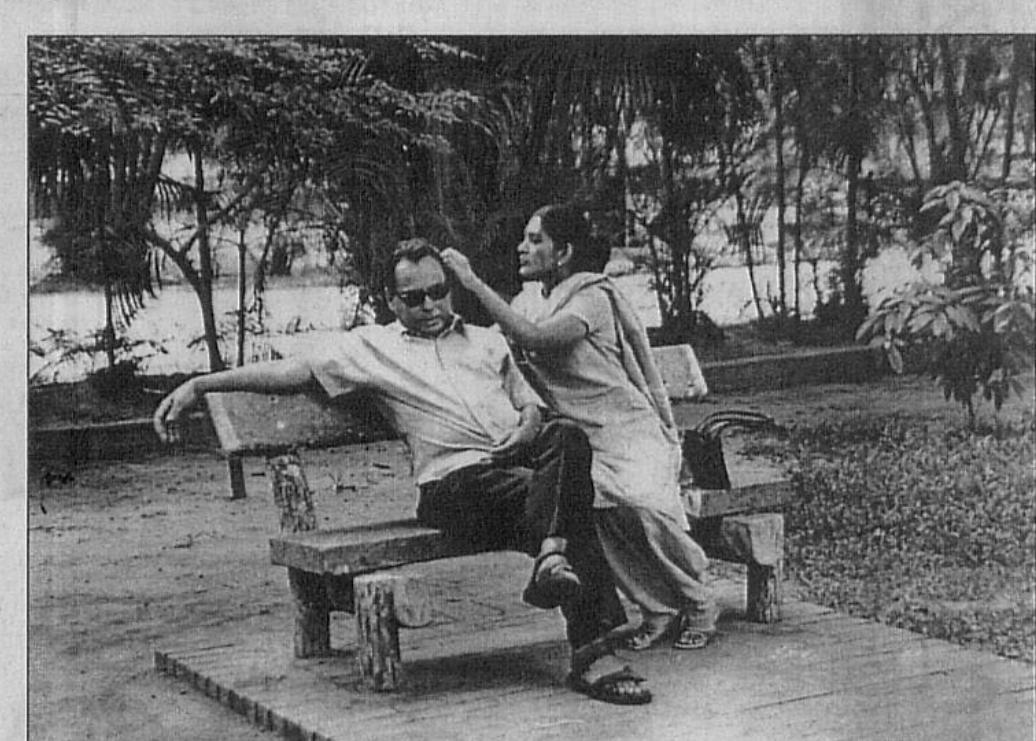
It is needless to say that the colleges and universities are a sacred place for learning. But violence on the campus of these institutions has become a daily affair. The campuses of the colleges and universities have now turned into a kind of political battlefield. The main reason of violence in the campus is political rivalry between students from different organizations. Some dishonest politicians are using the students as pawns to serve their purpose.

As we are the general students, our

BTV drama

The quality of BTV drama is deteriorating day by day. Most dramas start with the love story of a young man and woman. This couple roams here & there, as if the house-roofs, parks, libraries, footpaths, rickshaw seats, classrooms, drawing-rooms, bedrooms, college/university campus, lake areas are for the lovers only. It seems there is nothing in life except falling in love. The guardians concerned are heavily engaged in making this couple happy in a wrong or right way, and all of a sudden the director winds up the drama without giving any positive message to the viewers.

This earth is not a stage of drama, rather a harsh transit for human life. It has different bounces of difficulties and also different branches of merriment that should be projected in the right way. A drama should not be totally detached from the reality. Mujib, Shyamoli, Dhaka



Bastille Day was officially proclaimed a national holiday in France in 1880 and the motto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" had been restored in 1848.

The French Declaration of 1789 is not simply a copy of the American Declaration of Independence. It takes as starting point the reflections of the Philosophy of Enlightenment of the authors like Lock, Voltaire and Rousseau.

On July 14 the French celebrate Bastille Day. This day marks the end of monarchy and the beginning of the French Revolution. Several factors led to the Revolution.

France had the largest population in Europe and not nearly enough food to feed it. The wealthy and growing middle class, merchants and businessmen were allowed no political input or power. The poor were in a bad situation and it was getting worse. The country was nearing bankruptcy. By the late 1780s, the people of France began to speak out. Assemblies were held and the demand for a constitution was made. When King Louis and his Queen Marie Antoinette tried to quell the unrest, the people rebelled.

On July 14, 1789, the masses assembled together and stormed the Bastille Prison, a symbol of the corrupt political system. Thus began the revolution. It was the first democratic revolution in the history of mankind.

Kaumrun Nahar

Teacher & columnist Authentica-An English medium school

Books and then the driver is informed verbally to report to such and such place.

2) A side-kick, usually a constable, then finalises a 'deal' for amounts ranging from Tk 200 to Tk 500 and the Blue Book is returned till 'caught' next time.

3) This is a novel method for the traffic police to supplement their income.

If no money is available/or given the vehicle and driver are requisitioned and subjected to rigorous duty without proper rest, sleep, food or time off. On return, both the vehicle and its driver require long

and for how long can the vehicle and/or driver be requisitioned? In case of damage who is responsible and to what extent? Lastly, what can be done to stop this "legalised hijacking" of vehicles and drivers? Finally, no patriotic citizen will begrudge placing all they have including vehicles at the authorities' disposal in times of national peril or emergency but certainly they must know if these are forcibly taken (many drivers have been assaulted for frivolous purposes, including picnics).

S. Skander Ahmed
Dhaka

misgivings, frank discussions between the two countries are an absolute necessity. I personally hope that the Kashmir issue will be resolved in the greater interest of this region. After a landmark summit meeting between the former Hindu nationalist prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and President Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad last January, India's new left-leaning government wasted no merit citation as it was exclusively the view of the writer. Antagonistic relationship between our two top leaders is essentially a product of

the facts that have been straining the close (geographically) relations, between these two countries, especially after the tragic deaths of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Mr. Nayar has pointed out and admitted that Indo-Bangladesh trade is a crucial sector where India has been exploiting Bangladesh most. But that is not all. I would like to invite Mr. Nayar to have a walk on both sides of the river Padma, and ask the mills and factories because they are going to import those commodities (of less quality, more price) from India. One of their great successes is the closing of the Adamjee Jute Mills.

This is all I (on behalf of Bangladeshis) want to convey to the people of India, who love their country and who are eager to love their neighbour too.

Solaiman Tipu,
University of Chittagong

education is hampered tremendously. The effect of campus violence is horrendous. Many valuable lives are lost because of this; it causes session jam and damages the careers of many brilliant innocent students.

Finally, I would like to request the government to put an end to this violence for the future of this country.

Zahid Mollik
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Sadat College, Karatia, Tangail