

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.

Victims of politics

We, the students of Dhaka University, once known as the Oxford of the East, have been victimised by nasty party politics. Our future is in jeopardy. The wild-cat strike called by the BCL has paralysed life on our campus. They are very adamant to perpetuate their political programme. But sadly enough, the university authorities are indifferent to our academic life. They are sitting on the fence. Their callous attitude frustrates us a lot. They just postpone the exam schedules. Sincerely speaking, teachers' politics is more pernicious than students'!

Molla Mohammad Shaheen
Dept of English, DU

War and our responsibility

I thank Mr. Sirajul Islam for his views on war expressed in the DS letter page on Sept. 27 titled "Is War Necessary?" This is a very pertinent question all over the world now. As a teacher, I feel every learner in today's world must be taught to ask questions on whether war is good or bad, justifiable or not. Since recorded history, from the shores of ancient Troy to Iraq Invasion (War?), mankind has been engaged in the act of causing suffering and slaughter in an orchestrated manner, often on a grand scale. The rationales behind waging war are many, and the underlying causes are various and complex. War as a theme for history, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and literature has few equals. War is the combination of the horrible and the fascinating. It is man in the act of creating the ugliest of all horrors—killing, and it is also man in the act of creating the hugely romantic notion of the heroic spirit.

It is mankind seen at the extremes. We notice these extremes in the campaign of Bush and Kerry. It was heroic spirit when Kerry took part in the Vietnam War, but horror when he saw the brutalities. On the other hand, war is neither horrible nor fascinating to Bush, because he had never been a combat soldier.

Kamaluddin Ahmed
Shamoly, Dhaka

Can they deliver?

I refer to your internet edition news item of 27th September under the heading "B Chy and Kamal working for a national consensus". Many of us, past 70, who personally experienced or observed the sequence of tragic events right from the days of partition of the sub-continent may not disagree that all the developments, one after another, could not provide peace and happiness for most of the people in the region.

If Dr. B Choudhury and Dr. Kamal Hossain could act like Dr. Mahathir and Mr. Lee, only then perhaps there is some hope for our future. Bangladeshis at home and abroad will eagerly look forward to some positive results from the proposed joint efforts of Dr B Chy and Dr Kamal for the long waited national

consensus. It may bring about the change so urgently needed to save the country from the dangerous course.

Z.Rahman
USA

Hijab

I have noticed a lot of letters being published recently regarding the

would not be working in a company with over ninety thousand employees.

Anonymous
On e-mail

First year admission test

All the universities are making necessary arrangements for the first

"Rowdy post accident behaviour" (DS September 30th). Many other newspapers have also written editorial on this subject after the incident very recently at Rokeya Sarani involving the students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, underscoring the gravity of the problem.

It seems as a nation we know just too well our problems but too

part of a paper that I presented at a conference on September 26, 2004. Me and my friends, we gathered a number of ideas for the development of English. This is the second part of "We Love English" programme and I (FM Chaudhury) am presenting the main ideas for the second part. The paper also stressed the similarity between the letters in English, French, and Arabic. When I teach pronunciation, I use English with the letters of the other language which may be Bengali, French, or whatever language is used in the region. The teachers who were on training eagerly wanted to attend the pronunciation and speech course that I developed. The paper also stressed the importance of reading. Selective reading is a technique of choosing good materials to read such as literature, classics, and good articles. There is too much information (saturation) and people are sometimes overwhelmed by the amount of information that is available. So, reading becomes a burden and people may lose interest. We have to choose some interesting and helpful materials to develop language skills. So, selective reading is an effective technique to encourage reading. I developed the selective reading list and also encourage others to develop a list of selective reading. The more we read the more we know. Reading also helps us to think in English, increase fluency and speed, and develop a wide range of vocabulary. I have been working in language development programmes since 1982. I have been visiting Bangladesh for a few years and observing the problems with language development. Writing is the most difficult task in language learning. In the evening I conduct a private creative writing programme mainly for Ordinary Level students. I sit down with a small group of students and demonstrate creative writing, newspaper editorials and letter pages. I visit colleges and develop the Basic English programme. Besides this I visit rural areas and I am involved in supervising and training teachers. Me and my friends we are interested in the dream of English as a common language and a language of international communication and peace.

Frauline M Chaudhury, Estelle Mahnuma, Suchitra, M Shahi
Gulshan 2, Dhaka

unconcerned to take steps to tackle them. Students who are supposed to be the future vanguard of the nation openly demonstrate behaviour that should scare the hell out of those who think we have a future. Vandalism such as the one we are discussing has assumed this proportion because in the past all political parties, in their desire to use students for their political goals, have encouraged such behaviour. Now it seems things have changed and political parties are now less inclined to do the mischief they have in the past. In the belief that they would help end this problem, I urge upon the government to do take the following steps.

First, intelligence agencies should photograph students in such acts which should be easy given the advance in technology. Second, these photographs should be published in all newspapers very prominently so that families from where these culprits come are put to shame. Finally, the law should take its own course and meanwhile the education institutions where these students study should rusticate them for a good number of years.

Those who participate in these acts and are not students should be treated as ordinary criminals and shown the long arm of the law. These acts of vandalism have continued because students feel very secure that they would never be questioned for their acts. The above steps, if taken, will, I have no doubt, end these acts of vandalism provided that political parties, including the government, do not side with the criminals.

Shahjahan Ahmed
Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka

Halder's passing

I was shocked to learn that former AL lawmaker S. Halder died. My heart goes to his family in this day of great loss. Even though I stand in the opposite side of his political belief (that is BNP), somehow I felt very empty at the news. May be it is the profession of politics I like and the people who dedicate their life for this noble cause of struggle for uplifting others. We are here in South Florida, USA, devastated after two hurricanes went right through us. So after a few days of power loss when I turn today your page (Daily Star's) on the Internet I read only two news, one that of Lailat-ul-Barat and Mr. Halder's demise. I was expecting at least a modest writing about this man who is known to us all as a high ranking politician. It would have been very nice if you had granted him a few lines. Why are we so stingy praising others?

At the end I want to congratulate you for doing a great job for journalism in Bangladesh. Your paper contributes to our national strength.

AKM Momin

Florida, US

We love English (Part 2)

If we want to learn English well, we need three things 1) an interest and a passion to learn 2) English reading materials 3) the computer. I was educated both in the US and England, and I attended studies in India and Nepal (Tribhuvan University). English is the medium that I used since childhood. The writing on 'We Love English' was a

TIB report

I have read the TIB report on corruption at the waterside of Bangladesh (DS 29 Sep 04), it was long overdue. They undertook an exhaustive investigation into the matter and I only hope the authorities will take it into cognisance and do the needful.

The investigation has been very correct in identifying Dock Workers Management Board (DWMB) as one of the main impediments in the improvement of efficiency and productivity at the port. The port costs will be greatly reduced if this barrier alone is removed and a room is made for a level playing field.

The investigation, however, missed one area of corruption and that is the office of the Dock Labour Safety Officer. This person has nothing better to do than going around checking

where were the policemen who were supposed to be on duty? Where were the RAB and the members of other law enforcing agencies that have been deployed round the city to detain the public under Section 54? In an interview on September 27, 2004, an ex-IGP said, "Sometimes it becomes difficult for the police to reach the victims in time and to rescue them." An excuse, after all. Are those people more agitated than the pickets during hartals, or the students who have just lost their friend in a road accident?

No, I'm not supporting those ill-fated robbers, rather trying to protect us. The same can happen to anyone. If, for instance, someone on the street, pointing towards you yells, 'Hijacker', take a deep breath and think "what might happen to you." So, "Dear policemen, please get to the victims in time".

MA Timeq
Dhaka

Chittagong port

Bangladesh is again inching towards the records which it achieved three times in the past.



vessels for any apparent fault in gears and extract illegal tolls from ships and its agents. The highest authorities are well aware of his corruption but somehow he manages his way through just like the Titas Gas Meter Reader, who was caught red handed but no action was taken against him.

In this country, the average citizen is very vocal against the street crimes but never realise that white collar crime is the mother of all crimes that breeds all other crimes. Until we as a nation fail to address this white collar crime, we will never get out of the mess that we are in.

KR Zaman, Dhaka

Violation of rules

I got a job in DEPZ, Savar, on 1 Sept. 04, but was not issued an appointment letter. I was verbally told that I would be given a salary of Tk 20, 000 per month. But at the end of the month (on 30 September) I was given much less. I saw a mention in the payment voucher that I was dismissed from service on 1 October. I was shown no cause or given no prior notice before "dismissal" from service. I got the reduced salary as I took 2 days' leave during the flood and I was late by some minutes (2 minutes on a day) on some days due to disruption in bus service. On one occasion the bus got stuck up due to accident of another bus on the road and on some other days it was late due to severe road jam. The company accepts no excuse. They cut one day's salary for every three days late arrival even by a minute. But they would pay for no extra time work, however long it might be. I was to attend meetings on weekend and often after office hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) on workdays, but this overtime work was neither recuperated when it delayed arrival in the morning or by

redress from injustices meted out to them.

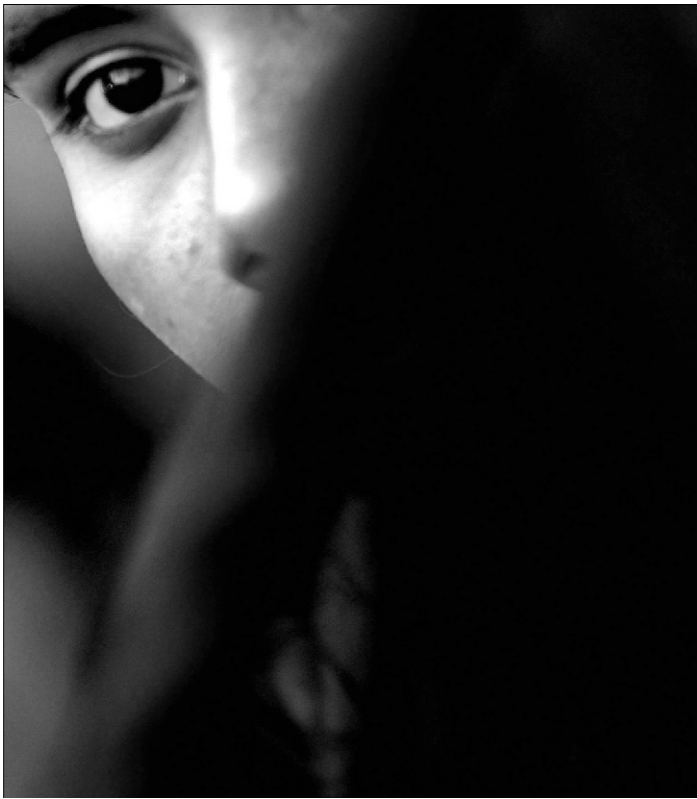
It is expected that the authorities would show some concern for the Bangladeshi citizens working in EPZs and come up with regulations to protect their minimum interests.

An aggrieved citizen
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

"Partha's plight"

Brig- Gen Shahedul Anam Khan deserves our thanks for his sensitive write-up on the above-noted subject in the DS of Sept. 28. In their desperation to find a scapegoat for the grenade attack on the Awami League rally on August 21, the ruling party got hold of Shaibal Saha Partha on the basis of his having used the same cyber cafe for allegedly sending an e-mail threatening to kill Sheikh Hasina. Apart from this dubious connection, the authorities have shown no incriminating evidence to show Partha's involvement with the assailants of August 21. But nevertheless, he had to undergo physical incarceration at the hands of interrogators for about two weeks. He has now become a physical wreck, requiring hospitali-

We need harsh laws



hijab and its effects on the status of women in Islam. I want to share my thoughts on this matter, like many of The Daily Star readers have already done.

It is almost universally believed that the hijab makes women feel inferior to men and that they do not wear it willingly - they are either forced by male superiors in their families, or simply compelled by the norms created in a male dominated culture. This is true in some cases. In poor countries and among people not educated about Islam, it is seen often that women are ordered to stay indoors and cover themselves completely either against their own will, or in cases where women don't even have the right to THINK that it is against their own will. However, to say that this is what happens everywhere would be wrong and inappropriate.

I myself am a hijabi. I have been educated in the United States, and work for one of the largest technical companies in the world. I have made the choice of wearing hijab because I am educated about the subject. It makes me feel proud of my religion and makes me proud to be a woman in my religion. To say that the hijab locks a woman's mind and vision is indeed very wrong. I do not find my mind and vision subjugated at all. If that were true, I

Timely commentary

Your commentary "Throttling democratic dissent will lead to hartals" is definitely one of the finest I have ever read.

The truth is there and nobody in particular is to be blamed. I appreciate your thoughts. You have covered everything happening since 1991.

Jamshed Taher, On e-mail

"Asia today"

I was watching the news programme "Asia today" on BBC. The programme covered a report on vulgarism in Bangla cinema. The BBC reporter went to the shooting spot, I was shocked to see the report and I felt like vomiting because my brother was also watching TV with me. Oh! That was hellish! I don't know how to describe it!

Any foreigner will think that girls in Bangladesh dress like the cheap actresses and extras, because they don't know the fact. The producers and directors add cut pieces to a movie so that it becomes more enjoyable to the illiterate viewers. And most of the extras and vulgar actresses come from the poor families that live near the FDC. Artists with sound family background are not interested in joining the film industry as it is full of vulgarism, corruption and indecency.

Yes, nowadays good movies like "Moner Majhe Tumi", "Matir Maina" are being made too, but bad movies far outnumber them. The movies are full of vulgarism, terrorism, rape, murder etc. Most of the movies are based on absurd stories.

I've observed that there are some directors who say that their upcoming movies are different from others and free from indecencies. But when the movies are released they turn out to be no different. The viewers return home disappointed.

The government should take measures to put an end to such unhealthy entertainment.

Cantara Wali Ruhi
Dept of English, JU

Rowdy post-accident behaviour

My attention was drawn to your very timely and well written editorial

Three cheers for rickshaws!



My 15-year old son and I were visiting Dhaka last month. Wherever I took my son, he would only want to ride a rickshaw. He thought it was the best form of transport. Nearly perfect in being environmentally perfect, no engine noise, no fuel required, no choking exhaust fumes, open air ride, and no blocked visibility. And, above all, he was elated that he or I did not need to ask anyone for a ride to any place in Dhaka with rickshaws around.

I recall that two or three days after Bangladesh earned its independence on December 16, 1971, I got very restless while staying at a village away from the scene of action in Dhaka. I convinced my guardians then to let us all go to Dhaka. We landed at the river port of Narayanganj. There was no transport available to take us to Dhaka, except, you guessed it right, rickshaws! We took rickshaws and rode all the way from Narayanganj to Dhaka.

Khan Kabir
NY, USA

Burnt to death!

Three people were burnt to death! The incident took place at night on September 26, 2004, on the city's Free School Street. They could be robbers but they were humans, after all. This has become the custom to express the anger of the agitated public on the hijackers/muggers. I do not want to refresh your memories about those incidents rather my concern is somewhere else. The cameramen of different private TV channels could reach the spot and video the public kicking the culprits. Then

Transparency International has reported that the customs department occupies the top position in corruption, though sometimes it is reported that police is the top.

The Chittagong port has been described as the second most dangerous after Indonesian ports. That is no doubt disgraceful. But I was really surprised watching on TV the interview with the reporters of our honourable shipping minister. He simply refused to recognise the TIB.

Anis Raqham
On e-mail

overtime payment.

Dismissal from service without adopting disciplinary measures or issuing prior warning is illegal and keeping people employed without issuing appointment letter is also illegal. I guess I was dismissed as I insisted on issuance of an appointment letter to me. But they have no provision of office discipline or regulation made known to their workers either generally or individually with appointment letter. The employees don't even know BEPZA regulations. So they are at a loss to understand what to do to seek

sation.

But what about the others who had used the same internet connection on that day about the same time? So long we were told that the minority community were pro-Awami League, but now we find that a member of the same community is accused of trying to kill the chief of that very party!

It is quite difficult to believe. Had he been coerced to do what he is being accused of? We don't know what to think really.

Abul Mohsin
Siddheswari Circular Road, Dhaka

Dismal cricket

The performance of Bangladesh cricket team in the recently concluded ICC Champions Trophy was absolutely shocking. Our cricket players are still not capable of playing at the international level. Their performance has rather deteriorated over the years. It is not yet understandable how come our boys still make the same silly mistakes over and over again. There are no excuses for their bad performance, it is their own fault.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

