

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.

Rickshaws and inhuman labour

We were reading the letter on rickshaws by Khan Kabir (Oct 6, 2004). We have been in Dhaka for a few years. Mr. Kabir came to visit Dhaka for one month and he gives this idealistic view of rickshaws. We think that bicycles are better than rickshaws. In China and America hundreds of people ride bicycles. Last month, we were travelling one day, and we saw four men in a row who were speeding on their bicycles. It was a really nice picture. We rode rickshaws a few years ago. But the traffic in Dhaka is so dangerous and so bad, the drivers of the cars just drive any way they like. The most terrible thing is the condition of the streets all over Dhaka. The streets are so damaged and broken and when we rode a rickshaw it wasn't pleasant at all because all the bones in our body felt like they were going to break. When we put the rickshaw hood up, we banged our heads several times. We were soaked in the rain and we think that Mr. Khan Kabir does not realise these things.

Rickshaw rides are not fun. We know that a rickshaw does

not have an engine or fuel. But we think that a rickshaw-puller lives the most inhuman life. There was a man working in a factory in America, and he said that he was deaf because of the hammers that he used in the factory. All over the world, there should be better working conditions for people who are using human labour. Would Mr. Khan Kabir like to pull a rickshaw for years and live on the money that

a rickshaw-puller earns?

Rickshaws are decorated and they look like pretty devices. However, when we rode a rickshaw, we found it very painful to see a human being pulling other people. In ancient China and Myanmar, the rickshaw-puller pulled the vehicle by walking on feet which was even more inhuman.

Suchitra Sufia, M. Shahi, M. Chaud, Gulshan 2, Dhaka



Indian trade embargo?

A "Times of India" report said that New Delhi was considering trade embargo on Bangladesh because India thinks Bangladesh is harbouring anti-India insurgents on its soil. Delhi thinks that trade embargoes may achieve what political negotiations, diplomatic complaints and economic carrots could not. By doing so, Delhi is considering options like clamping down on the lucrative cattle trade -- estimated at Rs. 800 crore a year -- between India and Bangladesh.

However, my suggestion is: if India really clamps down on the cattle trade, the government in Dhaka should accept it without any hesitation and argument. If India stops its cattle from coming in, Bangladeshis would certainly face a great deal of trouble.

But if the government convinces the people to withstand this impending scarcity, it would do a great service to the country and the people will remember this

government for many years. We should actually ask India to stop its cattle to come in to Bangladesh. If that happens, the cattle industry in Bangladesh will flourish precisely what happened in the case of poultry industry. Previously, Bangladesh was dependent on India for eggs and poultry. However, that's not the case any more.

Therefore, we'd actually be grateful to India if it helps us build our own cattle industry.

Ekram Kabir
Gulshan, Dhaka

Hats off to them

It is absolutely unbelievable what one can do if he really wants to do it sincerely with his heart. A small online community forum (amadergaan.com) organised a concert on Friday to raise fund for Abdur Rahman Boyaty. What was encouraging to see was most of them were students united behind a noble cause and they overcame all the obstacles to arrange the event successfully. My question is if this group of young insignificant

(!) people can manage to do something like this voluntarily then what do our beloved politicians do with all the power when they are being paid for it? Don't they have any responsibilities towards us? What have they done for the flood-affected so far? Is that enough? These are our countrymen and they are dying every day.

Here politics has become a family tradition and they have literally created a monarchy in the guise of democracy.

We can never move forward until we get rid of those hypocrites.

RH Nizam
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Whom should we blame?

This is in response to the letter under the caption "Israeli atrocities" written by Mr. David Cassius from Seattle, the US (DS 9 October, 2004). Many thanks to Mr. David for reminding us of the failure to blame the Palestinians

for firing some home-made rockets inside the territory of Israel.

Well, I am strongly condemning and blaming the Palestinians because they are fighting with a few home-made rockets against many latest helicopter gun-ships and heavy armoured tanks.

Now, whom you and myself should condemn and blame, when Israeli-Palestinian leaders were courted several times to the Rose Garden, White House and eventually assured of Palestinian Statehood on 13 September, 2000 -- but nothing happened ultimately?

Golam Ashraf
DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka

August 21 probe

The one-man judicial probe body has submitted its report on August 21 mayhem at the AL rally. From the press briefing before the submission of the report, we came to know that the attack could have "foreign links". One of our neighbouring countries has already protested this.

The government should handle this matter diplomatically and politically. The government should also make the report public to minimise the public concern and scepticism. The recommendations put forward by the committee should be materialised in toto to thwart further trouble in future. The real culprits behind the attack must be brought to book.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen
Dept of English, DU

Why the Tigers fail?

In the editorials and the web sites that promote Bangladeshi cricket, I have not seen anyone realistically analysing why the Tigers fail miserably time after time. The selection committee has tried to change the combination of the team, a new coach has been appointed, a new physio has been appointed, the cricketers are taken care of with utmost sincerity, yet they have failed. Why?

I have seen a recent footage of the Tigers playing against Pakistan in an ODI this year. Among many observations I had, one classic example is the batting of Javed Omar Belim Golla. He has talent, has been the first Bangladeshi player to have carried his bat throughout an innings on his debut, has a solid defence. But he also has some technical problems, which people with more experience would be better able to identify. Golla does not move his feet at all, seems to stretch when facing out-swingers (his feet glued to the crease), has a habit of shuffling across his wicket which on occasions contribute to his getting out LBW. Now I have not seen any article that analyse areas like this for any of our batsmen. With all due respect to Dav Whatmore, isn't it obvious that someone needs to identify the batting frailties of our batsmen? In the case of Golla, my belief is that if he can correct these technical glitches, then there is no reason why we can't have a very big score from him soon. But someone (specifically BCB) needs to bring the heads together and sort these things out.

M Rubaiyat Kibria

School of Electrical and Information Engineering

The University of Sydney, Australia

Flawed argument

I don't agree with Mr. Arshad Khan's argument that the French ban includes wearing all kinds of religious symbols like Islamic hijab, Jewish cap, and Christian Cross (October 8).

It should be understood that wearing the Cross or the Jewish cap is not considered a duty by the followers of those religions, but hijab is mandatory for a Muslim woman.

Jamil Ahmed
Houston, Texas

Are we that rich?

It is absolutely shocking that Dhaka University alone loses Tk 45 lakh a day due to strikes and political unrest (DS, October 6). We have millions of people in our country starving, and here we are throwing away Tk 45 lakh every day. Why?

Azad Miah

Oldham, UK

"Crime takes on terror proportion"

The report "Crime takes on terror proportion", seems to lack objectivity. While I agree the government has failed to stop the grenade attack and many such crimes, I must also point out that the government has been able to substantially lower the number of petty crimes that spread during the AL rule. People are breathing with ease these days. The statistics the report cites do not depict the current situation -- you cannot determine the overall crime situation by just taking the number of deaths into account. Most of the listed incidents were hard for any government to control.

Crime busting is a major challenge for any government, especially in a morally corrupt country like ours. But there has been no help from the opposition.

Russel Siddique
On e-mail

Where is your success?

It has been more than three decades since we fought and earned our independence but our politicians are still playing with this 33 years old country of ours. Recently, Bangladesh experienced some dangerous bomb blasts---blasts at three cinema halls in Mymensingh, attack on the British Ambassador in Sylhet and the grenade attack on the AL chief. Unfortunately, our so called successful government failed to track the criminals who are carrying out such heinous and barbaric acts.

The RABs and CHEETAHs are being introduced but their main motto--commitment to people's safety is not at all protected.

I want to recall the attack on the AL chief at Bangabandhu Avenue. What did our intelligence agencies do to stop the grenades from entering the country? What did our highly efficient law enforcing agencies do to stop the criminals from entering the crime scene?

At least, the government is aware of the fact that the opposition leader's life is at a constant threat from the fundamentalists and radicals who cannot stand her and democracy. We want to know who carried out this attack and how. The prime minister gets extensive security and the leader of the opposition does not get the minimum of it. Is this democracy?

It has been two months and the government has no clue whatsoever. We, the common people strongly condemn these bomb attacks and we have nothing more to do. GOD SAVE US and make our leaders less selfish, more patriotic.

Arafat Islam

Texas, USA

Investment in telecommunication

Bangladesh may be one of the poorest countries of the world, but we pay the most for communication. Here mobile call charge is Tk 7 per minute which is the highest in the world.

It shows how intense the demand is. It is a good place to invest in telecommunication.

Saif,

Dhaka

Banned drug

A doctor at the DMCH prescribed a drug for me which was found to be a banned one. What protection do we, the citizens, have against such unethical activities on the part of the doctors?

Jahangir Hossain
Department of Microbiology
University of Dhaka

We demand justice

I read the letter of Naomi published on October 6, 04. It is common in our society that women are subject to brutal torture. Like her, I am also shocked to witness that women like Rahela are raped, killed or maimed. However, I differ from her in one respect as she emphasised the need for enacting stringent laws which will work as a deterrent. I believe that we already have such a law namely, Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000, which was especially enacted to deal with the offences relating to women and children trafficking, injury due to dowry, rape and so on.

This act also has provision for capital punishment or life imprisonment. The law is there but it is not being enforced properly. So, that is where things must improve.

Bivuti Tarafdar

Dept. of law, DU

India bashing, now what?

There has been quite a bit of uproar in the columns of The Daily Star recently regarding the FM's outburst against India. There have been some columnists writing out soaring articles against the 'big brother', and a lot of readers also expressed their discontent over Indian aspects.

Towards everything above, India has never reacted. Instead, now the neighbour has come up with a Rupees One Hundred Crore aid for the flood victims, and also opened up the scope for Bangladeshi commodities to enter Indian markets more freely.

Now what? Can we expect the honourable FM to be a little more patient and tolerant before bursting out in the future? Can we expect our intellectual columnists to be a little more intellectual while writing their soaring columns? And some dear readers, who have been writing out for so long on these issues, are you still not happy?

Its a shame on Bangladesh, and shame on us. India has shown that it is truly an elder

Safe landing procedure violation

How the former MD of Biman convinced himself to go to the cockpit to talk to the crew during landing? And why the crew requested him to stay there?

The carelessness could cost the lives of all the passengers and the crew, which were fortunately saved, but certainly the poor airlines would have to bear the costs of the accident anyway.

Nazmul Ahsan
QA Analyst -- HSMP
Office of the Chief Technology Officer
Government of the District of Columbia



brother, and not a big brother. The neighbour has shown how to be really diplomatic enough. Reaching out to Bangladesh's needs of the hour, India has rightly expressed its views. Now, its our turn to reciprocate -- and we'll see how our government does that! We also need to see how our FM reacts to this gesture from India. But Bangladesh has always taken very active steps to criticise India's various roles, policies and all.

Syeda Sultana
Gulshan, Dhaka

Hire foreign leaders!

Ever since the independence of this country no political leader or party could deliver anything tangible to this poor nation, and I don't see they would be able to deliver in the near future, in spite of the fact that we are a nation having both talent and resource. Our leadership has indeed failed. We need a drastic and radical change, something like complete washing away of everything excepting Noah's Ark. Readers, I believe you all got the message. However, there is an imaginary solution to our political, economic and social problem. Let's invite Dr. Mahatir Mohammad or Nelson Mandela or both to run the administration/state affairs of this country for the next 5 to 10 years. They will have all authority excepting authority on independence and

Tests'. She has rightly picked up the limitations of the admission test system at the universities.

The question papers of the admission tests in the public universities are set in accordance with the SSC/HSC curricula. But the government needs to take into view that an increasing number of students in the country are at present studying O/A Level. The style and system followed by the Edexcel curriculum has a significant difference from the local curriculum. Even though the subject contents are the same, the O/A Level students face more practical questions while the SSC/HSC students face mainly theoretical questions.

Right after completing the A Level, most of the students get to realise that this country is not ready to take them in the public universities. As a result, they either fly abroad to study or go for buying certificates from the many private universities in Bangladesh. The only option left for the students who cannot manage either of the two is to go for private coaching for admission in the public universities.

The Daily Star is doing a very good job in 'Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow'. But how can they (students) build the nation which does not fulfil their needs for higher studies?

A concerned student
European Standard School (ESS), Dhaka

Admission tests

Through this column I would like to



Misinterpretations

A couple of years back I was confronted with a Pakistani who vehemently declared that all these storms, tornadoes and floods, a regular phenomenon in Bangladesh, are in fact "the curse of Allah". Although reeling with rage, I could do little to clarify or change her views as she was a very senior woman. Some religious people, at least in this continent, have a high level of rigidity. Once in Kuala Lumpur, a money changer asked me, "There are so many floods in your country, surely you people don't pray, do you?" A couple of days back, I came across a discussion programme 'Islam ki bole, aamra ki kori'

in a local TV channel. There a maulvi was putting forward his views in something like "after what Saddam had done during his rule, why 'Allah's Gazab' won't fall on him?"

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Time and again we cross paths with such so-called religious people who refer to our plights, hard/ bad times and defeats as "Allah's Gazab" on us. Is that what the religion teaches us?

Ayesha Hossain Shahnila, Dhaka

sovereignty of the country, which should be vested on the Supreme Court. After all, we are hiring foreign experts in large numbers in almost every field starting from sports to development of political skill, then why not we start hiring honest & efficient and proven politicians who can deliver? All political parties and leaders shouldn't interfere, in any form, in their work and only observe remaining quiet. Political leaders, whose full time profession is politics, will be provided with monthly emoluments from the public exchequer for keeping quiet. Still the country will not be a loser.

A frustrated citizen

On e-mail

Admission problem of O/A Level students

This is in response to the letter written by Dr. Sakina Sultana, ex-Chairperson of Pharmacy Dept., Jahangirnagar University, on First Year Admission

support the views expressed by Prof. Dr. Sakina Sultana of Jahangirnagar University in her letter 'First Year Admission Test'. I want to further highlight the differences in the contents and modes of evaluation of students sitting for SSC/HSC, and O/A Level examinations. As regards the contents, the basics are more or less the same, though the O and A Level contents are more extensive. Some of the topics included in SSC/HSC are not specifically included in the O/A Level contents. As regards evaluation, the SSC/HSC students are judged on the basis of how much they can commit to memory and reproduce on answer scripts. As opposed to O/A Level form of evaluation where the students are judged on their acumen in interpretation of theoretical content in a practical situation. As a result, stress is less on memorising the definitions and theories, and more on interpretation and implementation.

dent confused families-- people with not so strong social, educational, cultural background.

Our sister anonymous(of 6th Oct, DS) belongs to a minority group in choosing her way of life. The majority --the unfortunate girls or ladies are coerced this way or that way into wearing "Hijab".

SN Mamoon

Dhaka

Disastrous performance

The cricket team and management must be asked a few questions. A lot of people think the team selection or management was one of the major causes for the defeats. Aren't the players to be blamed? The coaches can spoon-feed them at the most.

Nayeem Islam

The Aga Khan School

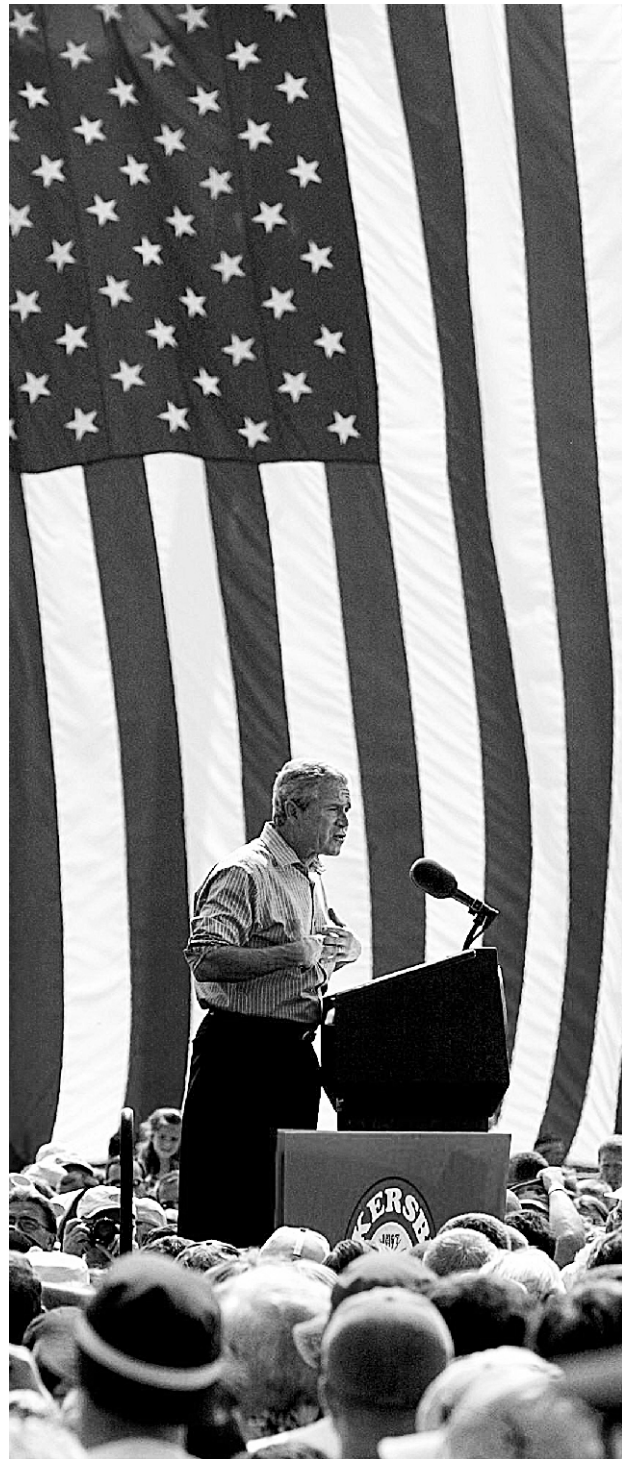
They cannot be wrong!

What would take Bush and Blair to admit the truth; that they led their countries to war on premises that did not exist at the time of invasion? First it was Keys who blew the whistle when he said there was "probably" no WMD in Iraq when it was attacked with Blair suggesting then that Iraq could launch WMD attack in 45 minutes. One by one, every one closely involved in this unilateral invasion of Iraq has admitted the main reasons for invading Iraq, that it possessed WMD and had links with Al Qaeda, are not true. Powell did long ago, and most recently, even Rumsfeld admitted that the US was wrong on the WMD and links between Saddam and 9/11.

Now Duelfer, the person that Bush administration appointed to replace Keys to find those illusive WMDs, has said categorically that years before the invasion, Iraq had destroyed all WMD plans and programmes and any stockpile of chemical weapons it possessed. The only allegation that Duelfer made against Saddam has been that the former dictator "intended" to resume WMD programmes sometime in the future. Duelfer is the official that Bush referred to as "let Charlie come back" when reporters had asked him many months ago if ever WMDs would be found in Iraq. Duelfer also stated that Saddam's threat was diminishing when Iraq was invaded.

If a vague "intent" can be taken to be a justification of the allied invasion of Iraq, then this should surely go down in history as the most ridiculous and unlawful justification for invading a country.

What amazes me is that both Bush and Blair still, after this extremely embarrassing revelation by Duelfer, insists they were right! If any of our third world leaders would have been so exposed, the West, the keepers of the world's conscience, would have turned him into a cheat or a fraud and thrown him into the gutters of history and rightly so.



However with Bush, neither he nor his party and supporters are going to say he is wrong. They cannot because they believe that the President is a prophet with a divine mission to fight evil in his "crusade" for

Christianity. A prophet can neither do wrong nor lie and those who oppose him can only be heretics!

Shahjahan Ahmed

Dhanmondi RA, Dhaka