

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.

Dear readers,

We are going to have a new e-mail address for the Letters to the Editor page. Please send your letters to letters@thedailystar.net

Fake currency notes

It's really very sad to write about my horrifying experience of a fake hundred taka note. A few days back I got the note from my *Amnu* and went to a shopping mall. I wanted to buy some chips for my brother and gave the note to the shopkeeper. The man suddenly told me "Apu I can't take your money, the note is fake..." It was so embarrassing for me to face the situation. It's really bad that fake notes are available in the city.

The government must take steps to stop this fraud immediately. And I suggest the commoners not to hurry -- always check the notes you are exchanging, specially the hundred and five hundred taka notes.

Please be careful.
Samihha Esha
Uttara, Dhaka

Right thinking

Sajib Wazed Joy, the son of the former prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, has perceived the major cause behind Avami League's failure. In the recent Jubo League meeting, he requested the party leaders to end internal feuds, instead of clamouring against the alliance government.

He rightly felt that internal clashes are the main cause behind the party's poor standing today.
Md Atiub Uddin
JU

Robbery of employees' salary

This is taking place regularly and causing severe financial damage to both owners and workers. But how much is being done by the policy makers and administrators as a preventative measure?

Why doesn't the government make it mandatory (or at least attractive) for the organisations to deposit the employees' salary into their nominated bank accounts? This should minimise the practice of carrying a huge amount of cash (salary of all employees in carry bags) which provokes this type of crimes.

Is it not possible to set up special banks for economically underprivileged workers to provide free basic but reliable banking services? Would anybody like to comment on this thought?
Masrur Khan
Sydney, Australia

Extension of service

The extension being given to the topmost officials prompts me to say, "When politics walks through the corridor of administration, good governance exits through the window."

A Shamsuddin
Toronto, Canada

Dirty politics

What's happening in our country? Are we out of our mind? I just learned from someone about the way a former Airforce chief was put in an embarrassing position. The law came to his rescue. What on earth is wrong with us?

Please stop this dirty politics.
Delwar
San Francisco, US

Asenior politician

Abdus Samad Azad is an old and experienced leader. I did not see him in news for a long time and was not sure what he was doing. I feel exhilarated to have seen him in the news today that he was in India for treatment and has come back.

The country needs the senior leaders to tell us the true history.
Kazi Firuz
Kosice, Slovakia

Rab and law

I should like to commend The Daily Star for reviewing the methods adopted by the Rapid Action Battalion (Long list of violence as crossfire

erly within its jurisdiction? Moreover, what risks are attendant upon a state-sponsored lethal battalion that is surely not immune to the supposed corruptible seductions of power? S Akhtar's appeal to the US and UK as examples to be followed at this time beggars belief. Detainees have suffered in Guantanamo and Belmarsh for up to three years without charge, without trial and without access to loved ones. One does not have to live on a Cuban island to understand the evil being perpetrated upon it. Nor does one have to have one's child shot in crossfire to realise that violence begets violence with yet more innocent victims.

who are preaching us in their own ethical standard, but there is no doubt in my mind that they are not serving any cause of this nation.

No politician in my perception in our country is willing to dedicate or offer her/his focus on the well being of our people, all they are doing is how to win the election which requires muscle power and money. Four percent of GDP plunders and all the terrorist activities are the outcome of such politics.

People who have to survive within this, struggle hard to find a way out. On their way any hope, fictitious or genuine, they want to cling to as a desperate move. It goes from a new legislature on tax regime, new terms of reference to University Grant Commission, banking rules, reduction of interest rate or even a soft loan offer, and the latest Anti Corruption Commission!

MM Haque
Jeddah, KSA

BTB mobile phone

On 28 December, 2004, the prime minister inaugurated the much talked about BTB mobile phone. Before the inauguration people had a big expectation that the BTB mobile phone would offer its services for affordable prices. After the inauguration, as soon as we came to know the call charge and connecting fee, we were simply frustrated. Bangladesh is one of the few countries in the world where the mobile phone companies are charging abnormally high prices both for incoming as well as for outgoing calls. In Bangladesh because of short duration of pre-paid cards people are making unnecessary calls to use their units and the mobile phone companies are making sky-high profits from the poor people. Although we have a Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) which is supposed to look after public interest, but unfortunately we are not finding its role as expected.

The Daily Star in its 4 January, 2005, issue published a news analysis with the heading "BTB Mobile Puzzle" where it revealed that "Private operators usually refrain from disclosing their financial statements to the press as those are not listed with the stock exchanges. But sources told The Daily Star that one private operator's net profit jumped more than 52 percent during the year 2003, while another company contributed 35 percent to the total revenue of its parent company abroad." If this trend of high call rate continues I guess only the foreign countries will be benefited.

Recently, when I was coming home via Delhi, at the Delhi airport I saw an Indian company selling calling card from Bangladesh to India and other countries. When I asked about the calling charge the sales woman informed me that it would cost only Tk 12 per minute from Bangladesh to any province in India. But if we call from Bangladesh to India with any mobile phone, it costs around Tk 35 per minute.

I would therefore urge the relevant government department to immediately reduce the call charge of all mobile phones and increase duration of pre-paid cards at least to three months for the greater interest of the country. Otherwise, foreign companies will introduce different technologies to grab this business.
Khaleque Zaman
Kabul, Afghanistan

Errant politicians

This is in reference to an editorial published in a Bangla daily on 8th January, 2005.

If in two words our fundamental problems can be defined, illiteracy and immorality will dominate.

Illiteracy brought incompetence, inefficiency and endemic corruption and immorality brought this nation down to anything unthinkable. There are men and woman

Tigers make history



PHOTO: AFP

The cricket world witnessed the addition of a fresh page in the game's history book on January 10, 2005 when Bangladesh outplayed Zimbabwe in the first encounter of the two-Test series at Chittagong, to clinch their first ever win in the longer version of the game.

Warmest felicitations from all go to Habibul Bashar and other members of the team for creating a red-letter day in the country's cricket history. The success, would, no doubt, bring a great relief to the countrymen after a string of failures in the international arena. Of course, last month's memorable ODI win against India helped the team to boost up a lot in addition to coach Whatmore's relentless inspirational wordings.

Bangladesh, no doubt, created sensation but it should be remembered that over-enthusiasm and over-confidence can bring quick downfall. The point should be noted by the red and green boys.
Aziz Amirul
Uttara, Dhaka

I think this victory of Bangladesh cricket team was a much needed one and we are happy that now our boys have proved that they have the ability to play top class cricket. They have the ability to perform and compete at international level but after some dismal performance in recent times, we were really very disappointed. However, the Tigers have shown that they can win Test matches! It took a long time for India and New Zealand to register their first Test victory but compared to them, our boys have done it for us quite early.

However, we shouldn't look back now. It is time to move forward and I believe they are on the right track now.

I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks to all the Bangladeshi cricketers and of course to coach Whatmore for presenting us a perfect New Year's gift! Shabash! ...keep it up!
Nazmuz Saquib
Mayakaman, Basabo, Dhaka

At last the dream has come true. The wait is

over, the jinx has broken. Bangladesh scored their first Test victory over Zimbabwe. Lots of accolade to the cricketers. The victory is sweeter because it has come after long four years and 35 Tests. We all have been waiting for this moment for a long time.

This was a total team effort, everyone of the team had some contribution to this victory. The batting prowess of Habibul Bashar, Rajin Saleh, Nafis Iqbal, all-round performance from Rafiq, Mortaza and Khaled Masud, and bowling of Tapash and Enamul Jr. helped the team to earn their maiden victory. The players had a goal and they reached the goal convincingly. They had passion, they were eager to win the match and at last they got it. The tears that came from Mortaza's eyes told the whole story. Congratulations to all of them.

Though Bangladesh won but I had a desire unfulfilled-- I couldn't watch the match live in the stadium. I had planned to go to Chittagong to watch the making of history but had to cancel the trip for personal reasons. So I remained glued to the TV for five days and watched the 'match of our life'.

Solaiman Palash
Dhaka

At last we got this long expected victory. I had thought (on the basis of our previous performance) that our grandsons might see such a victory but our heroes proved me wrong. I'm very much delighted with this victory and writing this letter with my hand trembling in joy. The victory has enlivened the whole nation.

As a nation we are ill-fated. We had very few events to be delighted about in a decade. At first, I'll congratulate our team leader Habibul Bashar and all the members of Bangladesh national cricket team for presenting us such a glorious win.

Our Test status was questioned by some cricket pundits and I hope this victory will help them assess the position rather positively.

I hope our cricket will prosper day by day with this great win.
Dr. Chowdhury Jalal Uddin Murshed (Rumi)
Medical Officer, Diabetic Hospital, Sylhet

the hopes among the survivors, an MP of our parliament is reported to have spent an astronomical amount of money for the wedding ceremony of his son. Personally, I am speechless after reading that news reported in the Daily Prothom Alo (January 8, 2005).

Sometimes I wonder what our politicians are made of. Although at certain times we see them handing over relief materials (may not be from their own pocket) to the needy

people, but they do so for publicity, rather than from fellow-feeling.

Well, perhaps there is little to be done when most of the sensible elite of our country support such acts and encourage others to do so.
Rahmatullah
One-mail

Tsunami and us

The devastating natural calamity that took hundreds of thousands of

the prayer the Imam was talking about the harshness of nature and telling how helpless we can be after the will of God. But he did not offer any sympathy for the dead or the injured ones, he rather said these were the signs of the Dooms Day. It was a rehearsal of the day before the Day of Judgement. So you should keep yourself away from all the wrongdoing and lead a religious life. Does that mean that all the people who are dead and who are suffering committed great sins?

Can we judge who is a sinner or not?
Badal Hasib
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Crime, corruption and security

I agree with Mr. Azad Miah (Jan 10, 2005) on the Rab actions and the security issues. Rab's success in curtailing crimes will be short lived unless the fundamental problems are addressed. Of course, there are people within the political structures who support, sustain and protect the armed criminals, and until they are dealt with the enforcement of the law, curbing crime will only be a temporary event.

What is even more important is to address the social problems to seek a permanent and humane solution to the crime problem. What draws people to crime needs to be investigated and steps need to be taken for a long term effect. Equal opportunity of education and jobs is a prerequisite for peace in the society. With a high level of unemployment, it is only natural that the youths will find their way into other things. Job creation, vocational training, and placement help for the young people are critical to making them a productive part of the society, rather than destructive elements. Social justice is a key requirement to ensure that people are not disillusioned about the laws of the country. If laws are applied to everyone equally, then people will be less prone to violating them. When people are left out to a miserable life of hunger, poverty and sickness only to watch what the rich section is doing often in flagrant violation of laws because of their high connections, some of them will make justifications to do something more radical. And who can blame only them?

Crime and corruption are just two faces of the same coin. Crime does not only mean toll collecting, hijacking, drug-trafficking, killing and the like. Corrupt practices like bribery to get one's way illegally, getting preferential treatments by political connections, getting a job or contract by nepotism are just as big a crime as are encouraging or condoning exploitation of women or serving the rich and powerful. Moral education for the society is as important as any other education, if not more. Every area of the society should embark on ethics training for each kind of work at every level -- government or private, industry or academia.

Moral teaching may not have as tangible results as physics or accounting or engineering, but the actual return will be huge in the form of a low-crime, low-corruption, and a more peaceful society. Unfortunately, there seems to be little attention to this aspect from our social and political leadership. Until we start doing something in this respect, crime-corruption containment efforts will be just band-aid, with no real cure for the problem.
Wahid Chowdhury
One-mail

Future of Palestine

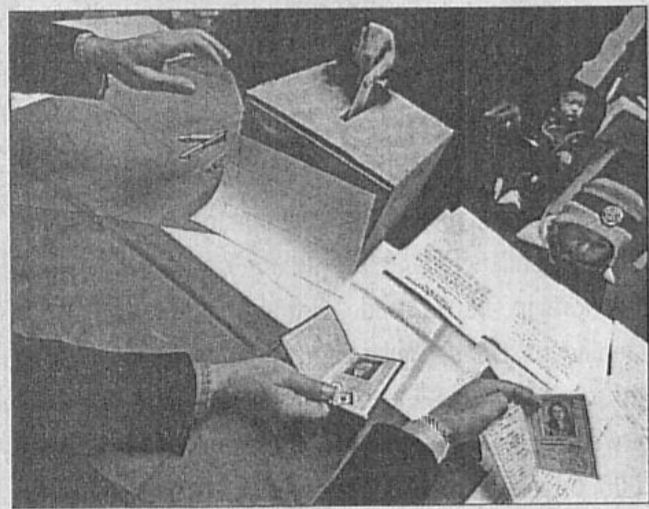


PHOTO: AFP

When the world has witnessed the Tsunami disaster, an important election is being held which has a very significant impact on the Middle East peace process. Mr. Mahmud Abbas is going to be the leader of Palestine after Mr. Yasser Arafat. His commitment to a peaceful path to Palestinian statehood offers new hope. Obviously, he will be facing enormous challenges when he will start his work on Monday. He has promised a free Palestine to his people.

Jerusalem is at the heart of the Israel-Palestine conflict, and both peoples claim it as their capital. Mahmud Abbas hopes to put an end to this clash and regain the lost land.

We all pray to the Almighty and hope that after this long struggle, Palestinians will be able to get their land back.
Cantara Wali Ruhi, JU

Tsunami and man-made crisis

The unprecedented and unkind torture of the Tsunami in the wake of an earthquake that befell several nations of Asia, and brought in miseries and sorrows of an unparalleled kind, found solace in the overall feelings of the world nations. Several countries and the UN forthwith declared their concern and commitment and extended generous help and assistance to all those victims. And also unprecedented was the holding of a Joint International Convention of the nations under the auspices of the UN at the very centre of the catastrophe i.e. Indonesia. I hail these humanitarian and kind gestures of our brethren from all over the globe irrespective of religion, caste or creed. This is the kind of humanity that's called for at the hour of need and we all must hail and appreciate it.

So, let's all come forward in such a strength during all such disasters.

Let us all pray and prove that we are really lovers of peace, prosperity, humanity and



democracy, not partially but fully and our commitment is unbiased and unqualified and we offer the same, for heaven's sake, also to the people of Iraq and Palestine. Every day killings of innocent people in both these countries surpass the

nature's killing through earthquake or Tsunami. The tragedy that engulfed the five nations could not be checked or controlled by humans but the man made tragedy that devastated these two countries and annihilating the two innocent

nations cannot be ignored and tolerated any more or discounted on the plea of installing elections or favouring so-called democracy. If the so-called saviours cannot really save them they will perhaps need another kind of Tsunami

to wipe out the invading forces in the sacred lands of Iraq and Palestine.

In conclusion, our government should learn from these natural calamities and be prepared to face them by installing early warning systems and

ensuring all concerned to be able to face and overcome any disaster.

This time we have been spared, but who knows what's there in store for us in the future?
AF Rahman, One-mail



PHOTO: AFP