

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.

What has happened to us?

Where has humanity gone? Are we alive? Where have the people who were spending their nice holidays in Southeast Asia gone?

Let us all join together and help to save fellow humans living in other parts of the world. Let us all join our hands together and give the unfortunate people a new lease of life.

Please help the Tsunami victims.
Ali Asghar, Purana Palta, Dhaka

We all have seen the destruction and devastation of Tsunami in Southeast Asia around three weeks ago. Here is a list of government pledges published in yahoo news.

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20050105/ap_on_re_as/tsunami_governments_aid&cid=516&ncid=2337

The Germans are topping the list with \$810 million. Our neighbouring country India has

pledged \$25 million. I know Saudi Arabia has pledged around \$30 million and UAE has pledged \$20 million. My question is that with the recent oil price almost doubled per barrel -- where is our Arab brothers' money going? Not to mention Brunei, which is right next to Indonesia. I remember that the Saudi Prince pledged \$50 million after 9-11 to the US -- only to be turned down by the former NY City mayor, because of his remarks.

I am amazed by the outpouring of the donations from people here in the US and around the world. It saddens me not to see such behaviour from our fellow Muslim countries.

Instead of spreading rumours about the natural disaster being created by the US or Israel or India through their nuclear tests - they should first help these affected people.
MHassan, US



PHOTO: AFP

Deplorable habit

In our country some political, economic, social and religious leaders have a deplorable habit which is influenced by a characteristic only found in one nation of the world, known as 'porosree katorota'. It means to be envious of anything beautiful possessed by others. This hinders our overall development.

When a Bangladeshi seeks a job, business opportunity or even nomination of a major political party, others become envious. The political, economic, social and religious leaders should shun the very bad habit of 'porosree katorota' and eventually promote balanced development in all fields across the nation.

Golam Ashraf
DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the country's best daily on its 14th anniversary! It's indeed great to see that The Daily Star has been relentlessly reporting the day-to-day news in the country as well the outside world without fear or favour, which is the foremost requisite for any standard daily.

The Daily Star is unique in many areas: it covers the diverse fields of interests apart from its national and international news, upholds the national heritage, provides a vast canvas for sports, literature etc. And most importantly it has pages for the upcoming generation -- that do inspire them in all possible ways. It keeps the readers up-to-date every morning about the happenings in the country and outside the country as well, its political features are unique in their texture and meaning/essence.

Today, it has reached the zenith of English language journalism in the country through its upholding of the journalistic ethics: journalism without fear or favour with an indomitable desire to protect the readers' "Right to Know".

The mega-presentation on its anniversary issue is simply outstanding and I strongly hope it will be keeping up its versatile spirit in the days to come with the same vigour and professionalism.

I hope it will also take note of the point that it can gradually look forward to upgrading its paper quality to a better one, though the present one is also very good.

Long live The Daily Star! Eid Mubarak!
Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Dirty politics

Yes, perhaps we are out of our mind. I am referring to Mr. Delwar's letter (DS:14/01/05). We (including the journalists) have a tendency to publicly harass and humiliate people with the slightest information of any misdeed by them without going into the context. There is always something beneath what is apparent. We must critically analyse the things before jumping into conclusion and definitely should not go out in public. It is said that hate the crime not the criminal even a criminal has a right to defend his act.

How come someone can accuse a former Air Force chief for a petty watch theft and that too was run in our news media? There is lot of news coverage to publicly harass and humiliate people (not public figure) of dignified positions which in effect disgraces the institutions they belong to.

For actual misdeeds there is the legal process to bring the guilty to book. Media coverage is not a decent or ethical idea. I agree with Mr. Delwar that this is dirty politics by some interested quarters.
Towheed Rizwi
Mohammedpur, Dhaka

Extra-judicial execution

Much ink has been wasted in the recent discourse on the merits and demerits of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), and I feel that it's time someone finally shared an informed opinion on the matter. It is indisputable that Rab's current rules of engagement allow it to liberally terminate suspects without an adjudication by the country's courts. Given few protections that

the Bangladesh constitution affords the country's citizens from the state, and the utter failure of parliamentary oversight, this may not be such a negative outcome. In fact, Rab's actions appear to have the support of the majority of the country's citizenry, at least for now.

I, for one, would like to see this public opinion codified in either a government decree or a judicial directive clearly and publicly mandating Rab to employ deadly force in circumstances beyond self-defence. In fact, Rab should be permitted to terminate the suspects they deem fit for execution, and maximise the deterrence.
EdAl-Hussainy
One-mail

Pakistan and Israel

I refer to the article published on Tuesday January 18, titled, "US forces inside Iran to pick sites for air strikes." This article was also covered by all major international media but the part which struck me was that both Israel and Pakistan are supplying information to the United

States that could be used for a potential military assault on that country. So, from one perspective, this would be the first time that Pakistan has indirectly allied itself with Israel to fight against a fellow Muslim country, irrespective of whether or not they're predominantly Shi'ite.

I wonder how Pakistan's military and civilian population feel about their country's unsolicited support to propping up Israel's aims and objectives to destroy Iran's military capabilities in order to protect an illegal Jewish state? What's next? A Pakistani Embassy in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem?
Abdul M Ismail
United Kingdom

Necessity of teaching grammar

Grammar is the backbone of any language. It may be called the skeleton of language. In the absence of the skeleton, a body cannot exist. Such expectation is illogical and unusual.

Without using the necessary formula can anyone solve mathematical problems?

Without following basic rules of science can anyone do scientific research?

If the answer is 'no', then it is not possible to learn English without learning the related grammar of English. English is the most sophisticated language in the world. To learn English one must know some basic rules and use the vocabulary for communicative purposes in a logical order. Learning grammatical rules and using them simultaneously in the Social Method of learning can certainly enhance the capability of the students learning English language.

One of my English medium students of second grade said to me the other day, "Sir, why didn't you come to teach me tomorrow?"

This type of students may have a good vocabulary because they read books written in English and taught in their classes. He had the input. But he failed to deliver a logical output for lack of grammatical knowledge.

I think, without imparting sufficient knowledge of grammar learning and teaching Communicative English fruitfully will never be possible.

Khan Md. Iqbal Hossain
English Teacher, Bangladesh Rifles College, Peelkhana, Dhaka

Terrorism and neutrality

As a responsible citizen of Bangladesh I cannot ignore some of the society's wrong elements. As a democratic nation, we must appreciate the good steps taken by the government while we must protest against the steps that are not for the welfare of the mass population. In this connection, I want to say that this four-party-alliance government has taken some important steps for the people, of which only two or three steps have gained popularity among the citizens. People from all over Bangladesh are giving the credit to the government for their steps against terrorism. But it is a matter of regret that the media have failed to join the people in the same spirit.

Congratulations CRICKETERS



PHOTO: AFP

Congratulations boys. You have made us proud; you have given us something to cheer about. This time around you didn't spoil the spoilsport. You gave us new feelings that we never had before. The last 12 days were like a dream to us. You gave us lousy cricket for 10 days. You gave us many firsts. First test win, first series win, first 10 wickets haul, and first century stand by

opening pair and the first man of the series! Prominent Indian sports writer Rohit Brijnath wrote in The Sportstar (Jan.8) that the win of Bangladesh over India was a small step for a small land. But I think the win over India is a big leap for Bangladesh because it boosted the players' mental strength to overcome Zimbabwe. Though some critics say the win came over a

weak Zimbabwe side, but I want to say that in the past we lost to teams like Canada. Though it is a team game and each player has to produce his best, I want to thank the two youngsters, Enamul Junior and Nafees Iqbal, for their brilliant performance.
Solaiman Palash
East Jurain
Dhaka 1204

Some of the newspapers claim that they are the most neutral and most sophisticated newspapers in Bangladesh. Ignoring the majority of the people and their opinion, they are continuously blaming the government for taking hard steps against the terrorists. They are shedding tears for the terrorists being killed in 'crossfire'. It seems to them the lives of the terrorists are more valuable than the lives of innocent people.

General people know very well which newspapers are neutral and which are not. I would like to urge all the newspapers to judge everything objectively.
Muftah Wali
Jahangirnagar University

Editorial orthodoxy

As far as I know, our newspapers have full freedom in terms of publishing news and views. And as far as political bias is concerned, most of the newspapers maintain their own positions by all means. But the ethics of journalism does not support that kind of biased news coverage or truncated way of expressing views. Keeping aside all kinds of partial characteristics, I would hope that there would be no editorial orthodoxy as far as the contributors are concerned. Rather, they should encourage all the writers so that they can write freely.

I also believe that the balance of unity within diversity can only come from combining different points of view, rather than hiding anything.
Md. Harisur Rahman
Anthropology Department, Jahangirnagar University

Freewheelers!

Kudos for the investigative report published in your newspaper under the heading 'Freewheeling bigwigs' Nobody has so far bothered about the colossal misuse of public property because everyone from top to bottom is involved in the process. Some high powered ministers use up to 10 cars each taken from different corporations placed under them. While preparing for the last NAM conference (which did not take place) expensive Volvo cars were imported less than five years ago (with proper maintenance a Volvo car can be used for more than 20 years) and these were allocated to the ministers. When the present government came to power these were replaced by Nissan cars!

On the other hand, we see some ministers using their own luxury limousines with the flagon.

We should learn from our neighbouring country where ministers still use those old-fashioned, cheap cars.
S.A. Reza Hussain
Baridhara

Two weekly holidays

It is really heartening to note that the Pay Commission has recommended the reinstatement of two weekly holidays on Saturday and Sunday. This is a commendable move and we strongly support its implementation for several reasons, which are elaborated as follows:

The economic development of

our country among other things is inextricably tied to continual aggressive growth of exports, the market for which is in the western world. With Friday being the weekly holiday and because of the time difference (ranging from 6 to 12 hours behind), we practically remain 'disconnected' for almost three and half days (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) from the rest of the world. This anomaly needs immediate rectification.

From a logical point of view, a one day reduction of working day will result in considerable savings (one sixth) for the government in terms of electricity, fuel, telephone, depreciation of buildings & vehicles and physical facilities cost. The apparent loss in terms of one working day can be offset by increasing the number of working hours for the remaining days in the week.

The veritable traffic jams on the roads of Dhaka and Chittagong (not to speak of the smaller towns) will be relieved for two days in a week with resultant positive impact on the environment in addition to the commuting costs at both the government and personal/individual levels.

At the individual level, two days weekend will enable a person to have adequate rest, prior to resum-

ing work next week. Currently, with household chores, shopping for groceries (bazaar), attending Jumma prayers, leave very insufficient space for proper rest and recreation. In fact, Fridays in a way turn out to be more hectic than the normal working day.

The criticism that can be levelled against this recommendation is only quasi-religious. In fact, nowhere it is mentioned that Friday needs to be a holiday. In addition with the advent of modern day banking and the introduction of automated machines and other non traditional banking options, access to cash and banking services is always possible.

We therefore urge the decision makers to evaluate this recommendation by the Pay Commission in right earnest so as to enable its early implementation. Needless to say, this will be a very wise decision with far reaching ramifications!
Shairul
Banani, Dhaka

Misuse of vehicles

I had been following with keen interest the various reports over the last few days on the misuse of vehicles procured for development projects by senior government officials including ministers after completion of project activities.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Cheap entertainment!

I stayed in a university dormitory recently to gain experience. For a personal reason I need to watch the TV news regularly and collect the up to date local and international information. However it's very difficult to watch the TV news because most of the girls are indifferent to it and the TV is controlled by Balaji telefilms from 12:00am to 12:00pm. They hardly watch any Bengali programme, I'm hurt! And if you request for anything else, there will be war! I wonder what makes people watch the monotonous and trite Hindi TV serials. I tried to watch some TV serials to know what is so special about these programmes that the common women folks of our country are so fond of. I'm telling you, if anybody is an insomniac, these serials can be an effective medicine for him. Most of these serials are based on internal chaos, extra marital affairs, jealousy and war between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Same old story! But many of our viewers can't help watching those. I can bet that those TV serials and tele-films of ntv and channel I have far better stories.
Cantara Wali Ruhi, JU

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

The only flaw in the reports as I find is that the vehicles were being misused for decades since the birth of Bangladesh. It is just that over the last two decades the matter has gone out of all proportions and to a shameful stage. I personally had the misfortune of "obliging a minister of the time frequently with a four wheel drive Nissan Patrol car" while working for a development project under USAID funding during the mid nineties. I was working as its Administrative Manger under extreme duress. Most of these project vehicles are usually procured out of foreign grant funds and for specific activities. The vehicles are usually procured for field visits related to performance of a specific component of project activities. Most of the Project Directors being lower in rank than the Secretaries or the Ministers, he or she is simply obliged to provide the vehicle or else earn the "displeasure" of the concerned Secretary or the Minister. No wonder some Secretaries were "irked by the reports". Ministers and Secretaries in this country had been having a good time for decades at the expense of the welfare of the general public. It reminds me of a line of the lyric of a popular folk song, which says "Lau-er Aga Khailam, dogha khailam, dugdugi Bajailam...etc.". Worst of all, most of these vehicles are often used for ferrying families to extended family relations living in different cities and district towns all over the country. Eid-ul-Azha is a day away and I would be surprised, if some such vehicles are not used for trips as described above, despite your reports. Of late however there has been an added dimension to all this. Ministries themselves are now procuring such luxury vehicles out of their own revenue budget. Use of such large and expensive vehicles have also turned out to be a status symbol in our society at large.

Once again I congratulate The Daily Star for working hard on the issue. Do not give up, be at it. Shamsheer Chowdhury
One-mail

A dream in you heart - a perspective

I read with interest the article by the former president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (Daily Star 11/1). Whilst one must not take away from the efforts of Mr. Chowdhury, it is regrettable that he has chosen to ignore completely the coach, D. Whitmore, whose efforts were undoubtedly the impetus to victory. At a time when those who voted with their hearts for Bangladesh's Test status were counting their worry beads, he has appeared Terminator-like to save the day. An ideal coach for the young team, his impassive resolve has obviously inspired the Bangladeshis, as it did the Sri Lankans. Not unlike Churchill, he is seen as a man for a particular purpose and though he has moved on from Sri Lankan cricket, his professionalism is still revered here. It is clear that the man seen in Bangladesh's next challenge - a similar gaggle of gawky yet talented players who will bloom under his no-nonsense tutelage. Ironically, though he is Sri Lankan-born, he will benefit from the colonial respect for the 'white' coach - but if this is for the greater good, so be it.

As a Sri Lankan cricket supporter, I will generously credit him for our victory in that World Cup campaign and wish him well in his current task. A rare picture of Whitmore sporting an ear-to-ear grin after the Indian victory said it all - he is where he wants to be.
Athula Senanayake
Colombo

Secretariat vehicles

I was amazed to notice no appreciation about the above topic in The Daily Star! Two reports were published in the front page, highlighting the national issue. The report on "Investigation of Secretariat" explored the genuine picture of the attitude of our powerful administrative personalities! Another report was titled "Establishment Grilled for Failure to Submit Report" (misuse of 4,000 government vehicles). The later report has genuinely bolstered the former one.

The administrative cadre is living in another world. Have they been selected to avail a luxurious life; beside their powerful role, while the greater percentage of citizens is suffering from hunger, illiteracy, lack of shelter, lack of treatment etc? A citizen
Dhaka

Bikinis

This is a response to the letter by Mr. AF Rahman. Bikinis seem to be all right to him in beaches, but I am afraid most of us won't like the idea. I cannot really agree with him. A worried teenager