

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.



PHOTO: AFP

Too Sharp, too furious!

It was a very dark and cold night at Jahangirnagar University dormitory. As dark and cold as death. The window was broken and the chilling winter wind was as sharp as a blade. I had neither a woolen blanket nor a thick pull over. Only a thin *katha* was my prop! I was trembling all through the night! People say it is difficult to bear the sudden cold wave in our country. I say it

is not only difficult to bear but sometimes it keeps you awake the whole night.

This was the first time I realised how deadly winter can be for people who are homeless and how helpless these people are who does not even have any warm clothes to protect themselves.

I have a request to everyone. Ours is a poor country, but if

the rich and privileged ones of the society can help the poor and underprivileged people all over the country, specially in the northern districts, their sorrows and sufferings during the winter can be lessened. After all, we all as human beings have a duty towards other human beings who need our compassion.

Cantara Wali Ruhi, Dhaka

later reportedly through interventions by the RSF and various other influences.

I feel sorry that a country like ours could not provide a safe shelter to a dedicated journalist like Mr. Samad. How unfortunate we really are.

Udatta Bikash, Ph.D.
Human Rights Practitioner
Dhaka

Godhra "Killing" revealed!

And finally the truth has seen the daylight. The incident that killed 59 Hindu pilgrims in a train in Godhra was result of an accident. This occurrence was neither triggered by any Muslim mob nor was it a part of international conspiracy but just a simple mishap that started inside the coach "without any external input", bravely declared by Indian government investigation on January 17th. But the question is what good would this finding do to the Muslim population of Gujarat when the damage has already been done.

Helplessly the world witnessed that this train fire incident set off a riot against Muslims in Gujarat in 2002. What was most disturbing of all was the role of the then government Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). During this tragedy, intentionally or unintentionally, the BJP government not only went silent but also played the role of a bystander as their fanatics went on killing the innocents with the

sanctuary of the government of that very state.

Obaidur Rahman
Gopibag 1st Lane, Dhaka-1203

Child admission

Admitting a child in a reputed school is like a bad headache for many parents in Dhaka. Children are deployed like troops, fighting for seats in Grade 1. In schools like Government Laboratory or Viganunessa, 6 to 15 candidates appears in tests for one seat. As a result, parents have to take their children to tutors, or teach themselves. Why should a child learn things even before joining schools? Isn't it the school's responsibility to teach them the basics.

I think now is the time to take this matter seriously. Dhaka's population is rising, and parents are likely to face more trouble admitting their child in the future. The Ministry of Education must act now. We need more primary and high schools of good standard.
Tahsin Hyder
Maple Leaf International School,
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Missed call is not an option

I can't totally agree with Cantara Wali Ruhi, who in her letter gave her personal view on mobile culture and recent missed call syndrome. Though I do agree with her on some point. Yes, unnecessary missed calls

are absolutely irritating and they should be stopped. But I do not know why she criticised our film media to show such element as a plot. Movie is like a reflection of life. The images portrayed in the film 'Wrong Number' are actually taken from life. Believe or not, 'missed call' is already growing to be a popular trend among the young generation. And they do it all the time. It is totally ridiculous to say that they would be influenced more by a mere movie. I think that if someone gets influenced by watching a movie, consciously or unconsciously, should not watch movies at all. Those who have no control over identifying good or bad are not eligible to criticise either. Criticising has become a popular part time job for few people.

Nadia and Shabnam
BBA, IBA
Dhaka University

The saga of the SUVs

Rafiqul Hasan's incisive report (DS: Jan 17) is an eye-opener that shames us. The SUVs that should be plying

on the off road rural areas facilitating development activities in the district and outlying areas, work in the lap of luxury at the beck and call of the topmost in Bangladesh! Should we be surprised in being crowned the king of corruption three years running? If such be the norms at the top one wonders where is their honour, dignity and integrity and the example they set for all of us to follow? Criticism aside, which I am sure is deserved, let us look at some solutions, which can be summarised as follows:
1) Send at least one or two SUVs (the newer the better) to each of the districts, and if numbers permit at least one to each upazila headquarters. This will motivate the officials there to visit and oversee various development activities in remote locations. It will also compensate them to some extent for the lack of other amenities living far away from divisional head quarters. I believe this will result in better performance by these officials.
2) In future, ban or impose punitive surcharge for the import of any SUV

or similar large engine capacity passenger vehicle, with no surcharge if powered by diesel engine.
3) Import hybrid cars and bring down hydrocarbon fuel consumption nationally around 60 percent at least. Government should encourage private importers to go for hybrid cars, SUVs and light vehicles that are already in the market, within the next six to eight months. These vehicles should be given very encouraging import duty structure (5% maximum). The revenue lost in import duty will be more than made up by savings in hydrocarbon fuel import. Overall, it would be a tremendous national saving.
4) From July 2005 budget period or even earlier prices of all lighter fuels should be increased by 5 to 10 percent to accelerate changeover to hybrid vehicles and discourage gas hungry larger vehicles. Similarly, import of all petrol based light vehicles be slapped with a fuel surcharge of say 15 to 20 percent over the existing duty structure to discourage import of petrol driven vehicles.

5) From 2006 budget period the Government should encourage and support the export of all petrol driven passenger vehicles on as is where is or reconditioned basis to discourage the use of these gas-guzzlers, and remove them from Bangladesh.
6) Apart from very little fuel consumption, hybrid cars are practically free from environment pollution; an important bonus particularly for our vehicle crowded cities.
S.A. Mansoor
Gulshan, Dhaka

ACC

Thanks to all the three honourable members of the ACC for their opposing the suggestion to hire experts from the ADB and consultants from outside. Some days back the Honourable Prime Minister also indicated that today consultants are hired to do the work which in the past was done by our own officials holding the ranks of deputy secretary and joint secretary. Hiring of consultants does not confer any

honour on us. Rather it is a shame for us. It throws some of our most intelligent persons and officials out of the arena of critical decision making. If we go on hiring consultants from outside so frequently, a time may come when we shall never be able to stand on our own foot to do important jobs and eventually we will be left only for odd jobs.

The ACC has rightly voiced the feelings of the people of Bangladesh, which has been retaining its top position for consecutive years securing highest marks in the subject "Corruption."

We are a poor country but we have resources. Most people of the country are fair. For a handful of people who indulge in corrupt practices Bangladesh has retained its name at the top of the list of corrupt countries. The ACC has come into being to combat this.

We pray for its success in fighting corruption.

Tapader Md Khalilur Rahman
Rokeya Sarani
Mirpur, Dhaka-1216



PHOTO: AFP

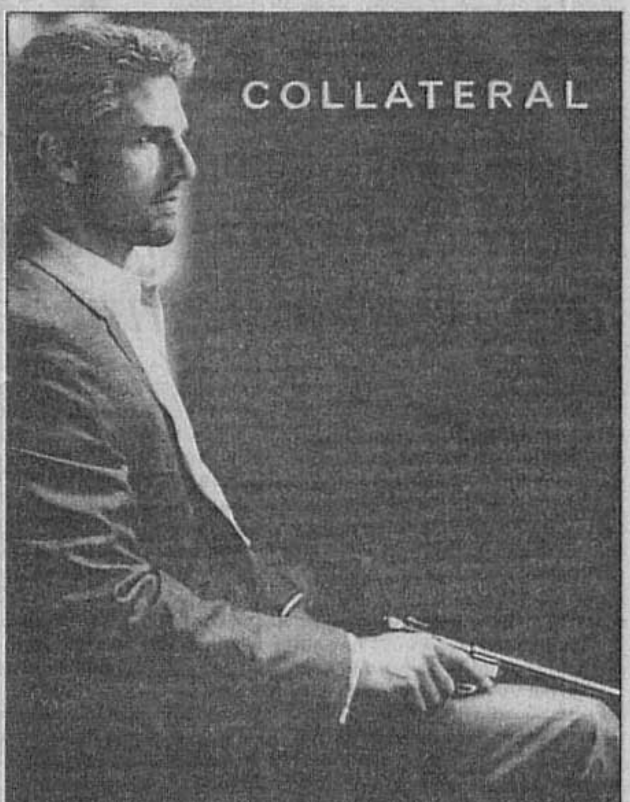
Collateral disappointment!

A few days back me and a few of my friends went to see the movie 'Collateral' at the Star Cineplex in Bashundhara shopping mall. But all our excitement was dampened as soon as the movie started. The sound system was not working properly, the quality of the print was really bad and above all the

authority present refused to acknowledge that there was a problem. They just kept saying that everything is fine. The biggest thrill in watching a blockbuster movie in multiplexes is the surround sound system, but while watching 'Collateral' we could not even hear the dialogues clearly as the volume was so low,

only the front speakers were on and the rest of the speakers were all mute. After watching the flick for a while and groaning in our seats for having paid Tk 200 each for a premium seat, I could not take it any more and went outside to tell the staff present there to do something about the sound, and their reply was most astonishing. They said the volume is very low while the actors speak and it becomes very loud during the action sequences!

Just last month we saw two English films (Alexander, Oceans 12) in Calcutta at the most renowned 'Inox' multiplex theatre, and I don't even want to begin comparing the standard between the two multiplexes. Just because the 'Cineplex' have no competition in the market does not mean they can feed anything they want to the public and get away with it. We were so excited and proud to have our very first multiplex theatre in the country but all our hopes were dashed with disappointments. My request to the 'Star Cineplex' authority would be to please maintain the standard of the print, sound quality.
Wasim, Dhaka



COLLATERAL

Teaching grammar

I thank Bijoy Mohan Gosswami, Instructor, Comilla P.T.I. Comilla for his comments in the Letters to the Editor on 26/01/2005. But please remember that learning one's mother tongue and a foreign language is not the same thing. It is not possible for the children to learn English language just by imitating their parents as you said. Most of the parents are probably not well verse in the language in the first place. You can never disagree with this crucial fact.

People living abroad with little knowledge of English can learn the language easily simply because of the environment around them in a foreign country.

You wrote, "I think as a teacher we should not keep anything in front of the students

that acts as an obstacle (GRAMMAR) in their learning process".

I don't think so. If students do not learn grammar at the earlier stages of life then when will they learn?

Can anyone do well in the English for Specific Purpose (ESP), in TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS etc. tests without learning basic grammar?

So grammar should be taught according to the level of the student. But you must apply good method using sophisticated materials in a nice learning environment.

Of course there is no short cut way to learn and teach English effectively.

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



PHOTO: STAR