



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.

Lives lost at workplace

Lives of dozens of garment workers have been lost in the most tragic manner as a nine-storied factory building collapsed while the factory was in operation. This is not the first time hapless garment workers have lost their lives after being caught unawares- trapped inside factory buildings while fires raged or roofs collapsed.

Assuring that buildings are safe under all circumstances may be too much to ask for, but that they are safe to live and work under normal conditions is not asking for too much.

The owner of the building will need to be taken to task for designing and erecting a building without adequate technical advice, and not seeking government approval for construction.

It is also the duty of the government to ensure that all buildings are safe for the purpose they are used. In Dhaka this responsibility lies with Rajuk. It is not enough for Rajuk to say that the owner did not seek building permission. A nine storied building does not get raised in one day. If within that time surveillance was not possible then institutions like Rajuk which are entrusted with the responsibility to control building construction needs to be reviewed. Institutions change according to needs, new institutions are established. But Rajuk remains the same, in spite of its inability to ensure construction control. Surveillance must be introduced at a more local and community level.

It is time for the government to bring discipline in this area for safety and security of human lives.

Zarina Hossain, Chittagong



Pahela Baishakh



14 April brings a dramatic change in our life: yes, this is the day when the Bengali New year arrives and we call this day "Pahela Baishakh". It is the first day of the Bangla New Year and we, the Bangladeshi people, celebrate this day in various ways- by distributing sweets, wearing new clothes (the girl/women put on saris on this day) holding parties etc. The best and most common thing organised is the "Baishakhee Mela". A lot of things are brought together for the mela.

This leads to another year. Shopkeepers open their new registers and farmers celebrate their New Year by working in the fields. On this day, we uphold our age old cultural tradition in various ways. To every Bengalee, it is a day of joy and happiness. The day comes with the message of hope and promise. It helps us to renovate our lifestyle. It teaches us to forget the miseries of the past and live for a grand future!

Mohammed Fahim Hara
Universal Tutorial
Eskaton Road, Dhaka



Mount Rushmore



Situated in South Dakota, United States, the epic sculpture features the faces of four exalted presidents -- George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. They all represented all Americans and their courage, dreams, freedom and greatness.

In 1927, Sculptor Gutzon Borglum started drilling into the 5,725 feet mountain called Black Hills. It took fourteen years to build these 60 feet high faces and cost \$1 million.

George Washington's vision and courage for an independent United States of America, Thomas Jefferson's dreams of a great, perfect nation, Abraham Lincoln's great feeling that all men were free and equal, and the vision of Theodore Roosevelt to change the great rural republic into world power laid the foundation of the United States of America as hard and strong as rocks. This priceless structure will always represent the dreams, strengths and patriotism that these four presidents had.

Tahsin Hyder
Maple Leaf International School
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Private universities and better education

Our government has approved 52 universities to provide better education in the country. A few months ago, some of them were found having better structural educational facilities than others. Do they provide better education than national or public universities? As I am a student of a ranked university, I realise the point better. The university completes its courses only on papers. But we have to pay the tuition fees of the courses according to their demand.

I think the education authorities should look into all such matters.

Farhana
East Waran, Dhaka - 1219

Cold war (!) and cricket

India and Pakistan are two rival countries in South Asia. Since 1947 high tension is prevailing between the two countries over Kashmir. After their independence they have fought three wars over this dispute. At present, both the countries have nuclear weapons. The two countries are now trying to collect all sorts of sophisticated weapons.

But cricket is playing a constructive role in defusing tension. That is really praiseworthy.

Md. Rezau Karma
International Relations
University of Dhaka

Holiday issue

This is in response to the letter of Mr. Azad Miah (DS, 8th April). I fully endorse the views expressed by him. There is a six - hour time difference between Dow Jones and London Stock Market - no complaints. When a New Yorker starts for office, his counterpart in San Francisco is in deep slumber several time zones away. No inconvenience. The mighty empire of the former USSR had 12 time zones - no hiccup! In Communist China, workers of different factories in the same city follow different 'holidays'. Logic? In an over populated country, if all the town folks turn up for their weekend marketing on a single day, there will be mad rush in the markets.

In these days of FAX, Internet, SMS, SATCOM and Video Conferencing, communication and connectivity should not be a problem at all. Moreover, not many of the international trading are done on a real time basis that one should fall victim to a time trap and lose money.

We should be thankful to Allah because He has given us Friday as a Holy Day!

MZ Islam
DOHS Baridhara
Dhaka 1206

Arms race in the subcontinent

The IAF is the world's fourth largest airforce equipped with guided missiles and hundreds of modern aircraft.

By offering sale of F-16 combat planes to Pakistan the US has not only been successful in creating anxiety and jealousy and enticing New Delhi to procure superior quality F-18 aircraft but it has also diverted India from Russia to the US for purchase of arms worth billions of dollars.

For the sake of balance of power in the sub-continent, Bangladesh should also try to upgrade its defence capability by procuring F-16 aircraft.

OH Kabir
Dhaka-1203

Zimbabwe elections

I am shocked at the attitude shown by Dr. Richard J Murphy in his letter (Daily Star 10/04/05) while attacking my write up "Parliamentary election in Zimbabwe" (Daily Star, 05/04/05). The civilised norm of public writing is to analyse and criticise the contents of the writing and not the writer in person. He attacked the writer from the very first sentence.

Only in the second paragraph the learned Dr. Murphy spoke about the

election and complained that in some constituencies the number of persons voting for Zanu (PF) was more than the number registered as voting etc. He failed to mention the names of the constituencies, the effect of such irregularity on the election result and the source of his information.

The number of registered voters in Zimbabwe is about 5.7 million out of which valid cast votes were 2.63 million (46%). The number of spoilt votes were about 55 thousands (2%). The average size of the registered vote per constituency is about 50 thousand. The number of marginal constituencies in which winner/loser vote percentage is below 120% was 12, out of which MDC won 6 and Zanu (PF) won 6. The number of semi-marginal constituencies with winner/loser vote percentage between 121-150% was 16 and MDC won 5 of them. The highest vote registered by a Zanu (PF) candidate among the above two categories was 16412 against MDC's 12163. If his allegation "more persons voting for Zanu (PF) than actually registered for voting" is true, then where these large percentages of votes for MDC come from?

Obviously the allegation, if true, must hold for constituencies in which the winner/loser percentage was above 150%. Only a party with birdbrain will rig in such a way to record votes more than registered to win with margins larger than above, where a lead of 1 vote wins the seat.

We shall see the percentage of voter turnout in UK in May election, but a turnout of 46% in a country with poor infrastructure as Zimbabwe does not substantiate the claim "the fact that most people were afraid to venture to record a vote for the opposition." Moreover, one does not need to identify himself as opposition supporter to vote. Can Dr. Murphy illuminate us when and in which polling booths voters were stopped? The Harare dailies did not report a single case of even fist fighting on the election day.

Yes, Dr. Khan might be myopic, that is why he chose to watch the voting by going to polling booths, to have a close look. I do not know from what distance Dr. Murphy observed the same. It would be interesting to know what are the places where he personally observed voter intimidation and what are the constituencies in which a candidate recorded more votes than registered and how many results were affected by this alleged massive rigging.

I fail to understand what relevance his threatened immigration to Bangladesh, hitting someone's head with a bag of fish and chips, and some people not recognising the independence of the US and Bangladesh has to my writing. I can assure Dr. Murphy that the 140 million large-hearted Bangladeshis would not mind if he decides to immigrate to Bangladesh. Bangladeshis might be poor but not famous for their meanness. Why Dr. Murphy spoke on behalf of all British immigrating to Bangladesh if Mr. Blair wins. Does he not understand numbers? How can he be "all of us British" without Mr. Blair and his party? Does he believe in democ-

rary?

In his letter Dr. Murphy wrote, "But I am sure that a generous soul such as Mr. Mugabe will look after you." I have never met Dr. Murphy and I am sure he never met me either. What gives him the idea that if a person is not Dr. Murphy and if he is Dr. Khan, he will need the care of Mr. Mugabe? Does he judge the financial, physical, intellectual and moral strength of a person by one's name?

I thought the world has been cleared of racists and supremacists. I am wrong.

Dr. Md. Rashiduzzaman Khan
88 Churchill Avenue,
Gunhill,
Harare, Zimbabwe

Mobile operators

We are the puppets in the hands of mobile phone operators.

Four major operators control the market by their own choices. The government had no control over the monopoly business of mobile operators. The call rate is too high compared to even our nearest neighboring country. Most of the

Abu Zafar Road
Chaktai, Chittagong

Appeal from students of Open University

Recently we have passed our HSC examinations from Bangladesh Open University. But unfortunately all the public universities have completed the process of admission. So BOU students have to wait for one more year to get admission in university which surely will waste a valuable academic year.

So I would request the authorities concerned to look into the matter and make some special arrangements so that we, BOU students, can get admission to university this year and are spared the trouble of losing a full year.

Sohel, Mamun and Halim
T & T College
Mahakhali, Dhaka 1212

Help her get justice

One of our Bangladeshi family members moved to the US with hopes of having a better life and is now facing the wrath of the West's

ill-fated family member. Cannot we raise a funds with donation of simply Tk-10/ each and make at least a subsistence amount to aid her bereaved father to support her legal right to seek justice? Cannot our media play a key role to raise awareness and unite us?

Shoeb
Green Road, Dhaka

Punish the killers of Kibria

We the people of Habiganj and greater Sylhet have been very much shocked at the sudden and unexpected demise of our beloved personality SAMS Kibria who was the pride of Habiganj. He was very talented from his boyhood and he topped the list of the CSS exams held in the then Pakistan. He held many lofty positions during his lifetime and was a renowned diplomat and an internationally famous economist. Though he spent a major part of his life in foreign countries, he could not forget his motherland, his relations and kin and kin for a moment. We think he

I completely agree with Ms. Wali who wrote about improving our English pronunciation. It's a big problem in our country nowadays. In my opinion, this happens because of our lack of opportunity of practising English in day to day life. Most of the people of our country don't use English and thus the pronunciation remains bad. The English medium schools are playing a good role in this regard but everybody cannot afford to enter an English medium school. Also there is lack of quality English medium schools in most of the places outside Dhaka and Chittagong. As people don't know what is the appropriate pronunciation of a word--they laugh at those who speak English in correct pronunciation. When I was in class eight, most of my friends could not pronounce all the words perfectly. But fortunately we got a native American as our English teacher in class nine. Things changed dramatically within a short time. Most of my friends started speaking English properly as they had to communicate with our foreigner teacher in English both inside and

About supporting Pakistani cricketers

On April 9, 2005 a letter was published in DS in which the writer (Hasnat Ahsan) implicitly opposed the support for Pakistani cricket team in our country on the basis of the fact that "some Pakistanis" brutalised a huge multitude of our countrymen in 1971. It appeared as if he was particularly disturbed by the fact that a considerable number of university students and 'ladies' in our country support Pakistani cricketers. It's undeniable that the genocide, which the 'Pakistanis' carried out against us, is unforgivable. It was not merely a nightmare. It resembled the extermination of Jews by the Nazis during WW2. However, I think the writer should understand that 'a country' could never be held responsible for these sorts of inhuman atrocities. Usually, a few sordid men or a particular



group carry out these crimes against humanity. Actually these people do not belong to any country. They are the enemies of their own country of

birth and also of the entire human civilisation. The Nazis were responsible for the Holocaust but that doesn't mean that every German is a barbaric

prepaid mobile service has no land phone access.

Now it is time for the mobile operators to reduce call rates and extend card validity as the state own BTB has launched its mobile operation at a much lower cost. The four private operators have already taken some steps which are good for the subscribers such as reducing the call rates and extending validity, but still not good enough for general people.

Subscribers don't want lower Sim card prices, they want cheaper call rates because they buy Sim card only once but they have to buy prepaid cards frequently.

S.M. Jashim Uddin

misperception of our holy religion. The Bangladeshi teenage girl is suffering for her deep faith in her religion and is now under the custody of FBI, allegedly for plotting suicide bomb attacks in US soil. Her helpless father could not even seek the services of a lawyer. Personally I know my friends and relatives living in the US with intense fear for their every move and act, that may be considered as a terrorist act in no time by the phobic society. They will not move a single step for her aid which might be closely monitored by the law enforcers there.

Now it is our turn as a citizen of a sovereign nation to stand beside our

was the leader of all the diplomats during 1971 who boldly resigned from Pakistani diplomatic missions and vehemently protested the Pak atrocities.

We believe that he joined politics after his retirement only to serve the nation from the core of his heart and he as the finance minister did a lot for the country. He was always close to his near and dear ones.

We demand exemplary punishment to his killers, irrespective of their political and social identity.

A Citizen
Let's be smart

A bizarre cultural adventure

Until recently, there was no penalty for showing smutty. Bangladesh is famous for its rich tradition and culture, but these days our media stars are blindly following vulgar short dresses and trends highlighting sexuality. Is this wise? Does one become modern by wearing a short dress? Rubbish. Modernity can only be achieved by having a free mind, a pure soul and fine thoughts. We Bangladeshis should never forget our cultural heritage; we should fight against spreading indecency. If we can defeat vulgarity, then other countries will follow our example.

Will our directors make better films?
Thuihla Mong, University of Rajshahi



outside the classroom. And the students stopped bullying those who pronounced English correctly. The total situation changed for the better.

So, everything depends on practice. If we get enough chance to communicate in English and have the opportunity to learn the perfect pronunciation, I believe that people of Bangladesh will get smarter in the true sense. I think the education authorities have a role to play in this respect.

Shoab M. Siddiqui
Dhaka City College

Fruit punch

It is very heartening to see development in the field of aerated water in our country. Thanks to the era of globalisation and favorable regulation of World Trade Organisation (WTO). The cultivation of pineapple and mango in Bangladesh is steadily increasing but it needs further attention and care.

Beside brisk selling of carbonated water in the market across the country by several soft-drink bottlers, the juice producers can pay more attention to the mango and pineapple growers, and help them to supply more and better quality pulp which would facilitate production of 'fruit punch' drink for healthy living.

Golam Ashraf
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