



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

Cellular phone strike

Citizens Rights Movement called a one-hour countrywide cellular phone strike from 10:00am to 11:00am on 15 May, demanding 50 paisa call rate for all cellular phones. All mobile phone user should support this positive move. A mobile user, Dhaka

and basic issues and allow problems to crop up.

One can stick to the basic or study and educate himself. There are the English versions of the Holy Koran and the Hadith that are available in the market in print, digital form in CD and as audio. Unfortunately, the religious teachers have been misguided by people who themselves do not know much about religion.

Recently, more and more people are indulging in different activities to demonstrate their love of Islam. But they are contradicting the basic teachings of Islam in the process.

We need to educate ourselves with proper focus.

M M Haque
Finance Dept.
Islamic Development Bank
Jeddah, K.S.A

Death of Aurora

The Daily Star has done a very commendable job by running an editorial on Gen. Aurora on its 5th May issue. The day before the paper had described Gen. Aurora's death as " Bangladesh has lost a friend."

In reply an Indian paper (HT 05.05.04) lauded the Bangladesh media for the gratitude shown to the war hero.

In this hour, when India and Bangladesh are at loggerheads, mistrust, allegations and counter allegations are the order of the day. So recalling the past glorious memories of the heydays will definitely help out to ease tension.

I also agree with DS when it says, "It is a shame that independent Bangladesh did not give him due honour in his lifetime. However, we should not allow this military hero to slip into oblivion."

Apart from Gen. Aurora's contribution there were 20,000 Indian soldiers who had laid down their lives in the liberation war. The government of Bangladesh has erected a war memorial at Savar near Dhaka to remember their war heroes (Mukti Bahini & personnel from EPR). Is their any specific mention of the 20, 000 Indian soldiers?

M.K.Barua
Delhi

New BB governor

We heartily welcome the new governor of Bangladesh Bank who has promised to work for the improvement of poor people's lot by bringing a chunk of people under the micro credit network. During the last 34 years since liberation, we had the opportunity of seeing eight governors who played a valiant role in different spheres.

Let us hope that the new governor will succeed in his mission.

H K Das
Maghbazar, Dhaka

News and views

Caracus: The Supreme Court of Venezuela sacked 53 judges found to be involved in wrong doing, denial of justice and corruption.

We would be grateful if our Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Barrister Kamal Hossain and Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud kindly enlighten us on the matter in the light of accountability and transparency of judiciary in Bangladesh.

Chittagong: Illegal blood business rampant at Chittagong Medical College.

Who cares?
Sathkira: Husband gouges out eyes of wife for dowry.

Where are our law enforcing Rip Van Winkles?

Beijing: China plans to build 40 new nuclear reactors in next fifteen years.

Why so much hue and cry by the US?

Sirajganj: Husband commits suicide as he is rebuked by Union Parishad Chairman for demanding compensation money because his wife was gang raped. A good husband indeed. Dhaka: One lakh illegal water connections in city. Is it the efficiency and honesty of WASA officers, engineers and employees? Kabul: Question of permanent US military bases in Afghanistan vexes Afghans. Is President Hamid Karzai happy? Dhaka: DCC's fortnight long cleanliness drive ends. Let us today compare and contrast

Religious issues

I am encouraged and happy to read all the letters on 'religious' issues. Most of the letters are enlightening. Thanks to DS for the space. We, as Muslims, are faced with lots of problems many of which could have been averted easily if we had a good understanding of religion. We seem to ignore very fundamental

Homosexuality

WHO has removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. Bangladesh despite being a part of international community seems to be blissfully unaware of it. Because of the ignorance, people like me who are gays are being discriminated against. The end product of such discrimination is immense mental suffering and physical harassment. The situation gets even worse when I can't express myself to my family or friends. Homosexuals in Bangladesh are shackled to a life of secrecy, lies and even internalised homophobia.

Nagorik
Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

between DCC's fortnight long cleanliness drive and DCC's slogan 'Keep your city clean'.

Kolkata: Nine top terrorists of Bangladesh arrested in West Bengal.

Why the terrorists of Bangladesh always take refuge in West Bengal?

Dhaka: Zia International Airport may be declared abandoned if the high rise buildings around it is not brought down. Nothing can be done unless and until the high rise heads of corrupt officials of the Civil Aviation Authority and Rajuk are levelled to the ground!

OH Kabir
Hare Street, Dhaka-1203

Debate and politics

I enjoy debating. I had started to practice it from my early days. I got the opportunity to participate in the national television school debate competition and eventually became the captain of my school team. At present I am associated with RUET Debating Society. Still now I practice equitation and I am fully conversant with the two forms of debating.

Most of the debate competitions are organised in Dhaka in which

associated with debating in Bangladesh would be benefited.

Now-a-days many young debaters neglect the old format, of debating i.e. following the script. I know parliamentary format is more interesting and exciting. So both the formats should be viewed with equal importance.

We have many organisations that work with debate, debaters & debating. Allegedly, some of those organisations are subject of political influence.

I think debate is an art that comes from heart & mind & thoughts where political influence should play no part.

Sadat Shahriar
EEE, RUET, Rajshahi

Killing in crossfire

Thanks to the government for taking cognisance of extra judicial killing in crossfires, allegedly by Rab. The government is perhaps going to initiate an executive enquiry by a magistrate. A question has already been raised by the Human Rights groups about its fairness. I fully share their views. I do it because the issue of separation of the judiciary

government structures. Think how you can strengthen and empower the elected local government institutions. Perhaps donors should pay more attention to local government development. One should be careful about the negative impact on local government institutions due to over emphasis on the development of non-government organisations.

If I have heard the news wrongly, I stand for correction.

ABangladeshi
On e-mail

The disabled

I have just discovered that a bright boy in our school who needs a wheel-chair cannot accompany his form to the Planetarium because there is no ramp and no disabled person's toilet. All over the world, modern buildings for the use of the public are usually built to be wheelchair friendly - and, if they are not, it is regarded as a scandal! Shopping malls, government offices, places of recreation and entertainment should all be accessible to families and friends of the disabled. The facilities needed are quite cheap to design and build

in the daily activities of their society. Many have money to spend and do (or have done) jobs and pay (or have paid) taxes - so why shouldn't they enjoy public life?

Bangladesh has a long way to go and will continue to proceed very slowly unless people in all sectors of society do a great deal more 'pushing'! Architects and planners have both to push and be pushed! Don't wait until there is a disabled person in your own family and, suddenly, your eyes are opened and you become a campaigner for facilities for the

one you love. Moreover, one day, you too may need them.....Well, how would you get to your favourite shopping centre with an injured hip? **Angela Robinson**
Lalmatia

"Smartness and eloquence"

Thanks to Mr. Mansoor for reading my letter (3rs May), though not carefully. As he was totally intrigued by my letter, I've something to say about it. I said before that we should not compare our country with Japan or China as those countries are economically and financially far ahead of us. They can dominate the world. But the reality of our country is not like that. Every year many people of our country go abroad for job or studies. Isn't it better to train them for keeping pace with those foreign countries? Only for that reason, people have to sit for IELTS or TOEFL which include an oral test. Even to have a good job in our own country, we need good command over English and right pronunciation. I never opposed-learning English or grammar. But when people get adept in English, why not use right pronunciation instead of speaking in our own ways and creating some new language like Janglish (Japanese+English) or Benglish (Bengali+English). Ours is a poor country. Most of the people are illiterate here. So we really have to educate them first, but when people learn English as well as other subjects, what's the problem to pronounce appropriately? I really can't understand.

Thanks again to Mr Mansoor as he asked me to supplement my knowledge through internet. But I really can't find any relation between eloquence and supplementing knowledge through internet. I never said that good pronunciation is everything to be smart but there is surely a relation, and I gave the practical example of a real life situation in my last letter.

Shoib M. Siddiqui
1st year student
Dhaka City College
Dhaka City

Dav Whatmore

The public perception of a hero can change very quickly to utter disgust, if there is suspicion of something going wrong. When it comes to our national cricket coach Dav Whatmore, it certainly is the case. I respect our former under-19 coach Andrew Mckenas for citing personal reasons and moving back to Australia to be near his young family. At least he has got some honour and integrity that I can side with.

But Dav has completely shattered the high standing with which average Bangladeshi fans revered him. If he wanted to be the coach of India or any other country, then he is most welcome to do so. But forcing the hands of our Cricket Board to include the "exit" clause in the new two-year contract is totally unacceptable. On top of that he has just signed a commentary deal with the BBC (notwithstanding that this may be a breach of interest). Unlike anything done by a current national cricket coach, this must be first of its kind in cricket history.

M. Rubaiyat Kibria
University of Sydney, Australia

I would like the education ministry to consider this idea. **Toufiqur Rahman**
Oklahoma
USA

University bus

For me, bus journey has never been pleasant. But when I got admitted into Dhaka University and started commuting by its bus, I found it much more enjoyable. If it is late, I get frustrated but as soon as I see the red bus, I run to board it.

The whole trip is so full of fun that we don't know how the time passes away. Here everything becomes a great source of merry making.

Mithun
BBA, Dept. of Finance
University of Dhaka

Madrasah Education

I cannot but wholly agree with what Mr. Ashah has said in his letter on "Madrasah Education" published on 11 May'05. What pains me most is the fact that no government has ever shown the guts to decry the Madrasah Education as a retrograde one and advocate its total abolition. Sometimes the people at the helm of the political parties talk about modernising 'Madrasah Education', but those who know how and by whom these so-called institutions are being run do not take much time to get disillusioned to agree that there is practically little or no scope for modernising this unproductive type of education, so well pictured in "Tareque Masood's" "Matir Moyna". However, the reason for the political parties not to take any drastic step against Madrasah Education is not far to seek, their disinclination is well-matched with their policy of patronising many other unproductive things in society. **Sultana Rahman**
D.O.H.S., Banani
Dhaka

welcoming and jovial politely ushering passengers to the next available counter. My suitcase was already on the carousel as I stepped into the luggage hall something that I have come to expect only at super efficient Singapore. Customs was simply a matter of putting my luggage through their scanner. Then I stepped out on the street and saw one person receiving me as he stood by the gate where cars have to wait for arriving passengers. My car came inside the enclosure and we drove out no hassles, no gymnastics, no complaints and certainly no harassment!

As for being seen of, I have long come to accept with grace the need for curt goodbyes by the curbside at ZIA given the limitations of this country and in the interest of maintaining smooth flow of traffic as well as for the ultimate benefit of my fellow air travellers. Quite frankly, I have experienced just as chaotic scenes at London's Heathrow and New York's Kennedy these are all simply facts of modern day travel.

On a separate but related note, I was already speaking with the person receiving me even before getting out of the aircraft thanks to the local GSM networks that my US mobile phone was able to latch on to. I wondered if my experience was at all different from arriving in London, Washington or San Francisco.

Bangladesh appears to have changed a lot it's all very exciting and I can already feel the buzz it's good to be here!
Sabbir ABashar
Gulshan 1, Dhaka

Ahmadiyyas - protests and rallies

The recent rally by the leaders of the

International Khatme Nabuwat Andolon in Bogra to call upon the government to declare the Ahmadiyyas as non-Muslims is absolutely horrible. Religiously speaking, no one has the right to call others non-Muslims as long as they believe they are. Also, we have no right to judge others' faiths. That is for God to judge and doing otherwise is actually a violation of our religion. On top of that, Islam teaches tolerance and this is a blatant representation of intolerance among the illiterate and the bigoted in our country.

Socially, this terrorising of a sect is disastrous to the stability of our country. The government should not only ignore their claims but should also take steps to control the situation and pay more heed to the threats of bloodshed they have been chanting at these rallies. These "mullahs" should be imprisoned for causing tension, unrest and terrorising citizens.

No response from the government will lead to continual persecution of the Ahmadiyyas. The banning of Ahmadiyya publications was a sign of intolerance and also a violation of freedom of speech.

We can only hope the government will not accept the illegal demands of the bigots.

Zeenat Z. Syed
UPS eDeployment

Religious issues

I am encouraged and happy to read all the letters on 'religious' issues. Most of the letters are enlightening. Thanks to DS for the space. We, as Muslims, are faced with lots of problems many of which could have been averted easily if we had a good understanding of religion. We seem to ignore very fundamental

Zia International Airport

This is in response to the letter by C. J. Kabir published on 1 May, 2005. I returned to Bangladesh on 30 April for a short business trip after nearly two and a half years wearing anything but rose coloured glasses bracing myself for a lot of disappointments. Contrary to the experience of Mr Kabir and Ms. Robinson, I had a very positive experience at Zia International Airport within 30 minutes of touch down. I was sitting in a car admiring the beautiful view obviously sculptured for the Saarc conference that is yet to be along the Airport Road as I drove to my parents' home.

As I stepped into the immigration hall, I was wondering if I had arrived in the wrong country it resembled Singapore's Changi or at least Bangkok's Duang Mong airports I had passed through days earlier on my way from San Francisco. Whereas there were only two or three counters back in the winter of 2002, I was greeted with no less than a dozen passport control counters open for Bangladesh citizens. The staff were very helpful,

Computer literacy



We can improve our computer literacy in our schools by introducing old computers that have a lower speed (100-900MHZ) compared to the current ones. These computers are probably the cheapest if available. They are worth less than \$100 in the US. If the government could purchase these computers and place them in all villages and districts of our country, it could help the young generation attain a good computer literacy. It would also improve their linguistic skills. The government can perhaps introduce computer courses that would be made "required" in our curriculum. This way even the poorest rural area

would have access to today's information technology. The schools throughout our country could communicate, share information, display results of the examinations of its students through a website.

The students could also gain programming skills necessary for software development. It would change the social behaviour of many as they would know how to better organise things, create a better plan, model real-life situations on the computers. I promise you, over a small period the whole IT sector of our country could be raised to a level where India currently stands. This would also invite

FDI such as call centres, to provide customer services for goods manufactured by different companies abroad. The software market could be boosted up which would eventually increase our GNP. This development of computer literacy would be very cheap since old Pentium-1 is available for less than \$100 here in the US and even some of them are just thrown in the dumpster. And considering the number of public schools in our country, the cost factor could be significantly low.

I would like the education ministry to consider this idea. **Toufiqur Rahman**
Oklahoma
USA