

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.

Why this chaos?

After the attacks on DU Charukala Students, it is hard to imagine that DU is still an educational institution. It really doesn't matter whether it is Chhatra Dal (BNP's student wing) or Chhatra League (AL's student wing), bullying innocent students. It is a common phenomenon at DU. Being a student there for two years I have seen enough of shameful acts on the part of our so called student politicians. And surprisingly, we are losing our sense of decency day by day. The language used by the police on the female students was so obscene (as heard on ATN Bangla), that it is not hard to imagine that our law enforcing agencies have no respect for DU as a legendary institution.

And who was the police protecting? the damned bus driver who I am sure doesn't even have a genuine license or the owner's interests? It was a demonstration of common mob psychology after the tragic death occurred.

Gone are the days when student leaders used to fight for the rights of their fellow colleagues.

Actually, in a country where even faculty nominations in the public universities are



PHOTO: AFP



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

controlled by political agendas, how can we think of an institution wholly dedicated to knowledge dissemination?

Former President H.M. Ershad did the right thing when he decided not to have a student wing of his own

party. Maybe, we should have second thoughts on the matter. **Faisal Khair Chowdhury**

Gulshan-2, Dhaka 1212 Bangladesh ***
Once upon a time our country

was called the Golden Bangla but now it has turned into a savage country. The brutality and the partiality of police are

getting worse day by day. Two incidents that happened last Friday and Saturday in Narsingdi and Dhaka Univer-

sity prove the point. The contrasting actions, taken by the police following those incidents, puzzled me very much. The Friday incident in Narsingdi showed that police were standstill when the members of the ruling party went berserk. They even called strike against their own government. The party members created horror in this little town but police didn't take any action against them. But what did we see in DU? The brutality of police, attack on the Charukala, vandalizing of the sculptures and many other offensive things. I cannot find any word to describe this bullsh*it work.

Is this what we call democracy? No, democracy is shaken. Democracy in this country is a one-eyed demon. I would like to call it a savage country, 'cause we've admired the prowess of Rab , 'cause we've delayed the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu , 'cause we've released some 70,000 criminals from jail without any investigation etc.

There is despair everywhere.

Solaiman Palash
East Jurain, Dhaka 1204

Smoking: situation and solution

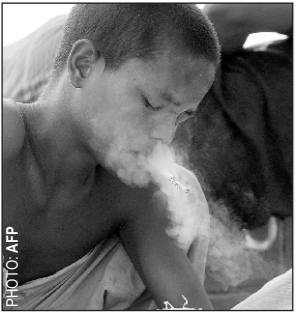


PHOTO: AFP

Our population is very dense and illiteracy rate high. About 80% of the people are involved in agriculture related works and a lot of them remain unemployed or workless for months. Ten to fifteen per cent people are involved in business, permanent services and in active socio-political functions.

damaging role in cases of tuberculosis, blood pressure, chronic bronchitis, bronchogenic carcinoma etc. Most of the people, even the most educated people care very little about the common dangers associated with taking tobacco until they really face them.

Let's shed light on the recently passed Anti-smoking and Tobacco Control Act in our parliament. This law has banned smoking in public places like bus-stations, airport, any auditorium, educational institutions etc. But the point is that these types of places are already smoking free. Because, many anti tobacco organisations like Students Anti Smoking Committee-SASC (the first anti-tobacco organisation in Bangladesh), ADHUNIK, BATA, CAT, ATP have successfully made these places almost smoking-free through their public awareness campaigns and other related activities. So it is necessary to specify the public places more carefully.

We can mention the method applied in Australia for making their state smoking free. They have banned all types of open smoking especially on roads and open places.

Our strategies are as follows:
1. To make countrywide extensive and meticulous tobacco survey.
2. Convincing the government and its various sectors to play a major role in the anti-tobacco campaign.
3. Mass media coverage.
4. School and Local council oriented health education all over the country, especially in rural areas.

Md. Shafiqur Rahman
Former GS, SASC

Performance repeats itself!

In the Lord's Test we have experienced the same drama staged again by Bangladeshi cricketers. Most of the supporters thought the mental boost that Bangladesh achieved by beating Zimbabwe would help them morally to set a good total and fight with the country in which cricket was first introduced. But there was no change. Different kinds of problems plagued our team such as instability of players or no guarantee of them to remain in the team for a long time. Most of the players are suddenly picked for the international level tournaments and after their failure to make an impact, they are thrown away. They don't even get a real chance to show their ability.

Though there are many problems in the team selection and management, it's our team, after all.

We will obviously support and pray for its best performance. **Shoaib**
Dhaka City College
Elephant Road
Dhaka

Electoral process

Reference to your editorial -- HC's welcome directives. These directives, if followed by the EC and candidates, will bring a qualitative change in our electoral proceedings. We all welcome the directives. However, without raising any question on the directives, if acceptable in the eye of law, one could seek a simple clarification from the legal experts, which is: Will there be any need to enact any law in parliament to put into effect the HC's directives to the EC, or the existing relevant laws will be enough to give effect to the directives?

One would appreciate a clarification in this respect. **A Bangladeshi**
on e-mail

Mobile and crime

A local newspaper of Chittagong has touched upon the very important issue of putting controls or monitoring the ownership of mobile phones. In this country, walkie-talkies are banned to prevent usage in organising crimes. But, the unregulated/careless selling of mobile connections have resulted in the anti-social elements getting hold of mobiles and their abuse for criminal purposes. **CNR, Khulshi, Chittagong**

Good luck Tigers!

Bangladesh cricket team is now in England for playing their first ever Test match series against England. It would be a very tough competition for our boys since they are not familiar with English conditions. Our players struggled against Sussex in the warm up match. And the first Test was a disaster. So it is appearing to all the cricket fans that

Dav Whatmore and co have a tough challenge ahead.

But I think we shouldn't fear about what will happen, rather our players should take it normally. Because if they don't allow the pressure to make a demoralising impact on their minds, that would indeed be helpful. On behalf of all the cricket fans I'm wishing all the best to our boys.

Good luck Tigers!!
Nazim Saquib
Notre Dame College

(APA) have rigorously proved it. You should not be worried about us raising a family because the majority are heterosexuals who are potent enough to water the family tree. Not the whole population is becoming homosexuals!

About child adoption, there are ample examples through out the world that single and homosexual couples can make better parents. There is absolutely no solid evidence that children raised by homosexual parents are likely to grow

producing sound pollution in this area. At nights things become worst. Hundreds of Trucks are using illegal hydrochloric horns (As far I know it is illegal).

In the past few years careless drivers in Gulshan Avenue caused a good number of deaths. In front of the German Embassy and Australian High Commission there is no traffic policeman. I am requesting the authorities concerned to take some steps in order to reduce noise

more and more confrontation than co-operation. New events are added every day in the political arena. To avoid a real disaster, we urge upon the government and the opposition to immediately start a dialogue to sort out differences so that a free and fair general election is held on time under an acceptable caretaker government system.

The country needs statesmanship to uphold people's welfare and democratic values.

rights, a vast majority of them have no problems, whatsoever. In our house we cannot watch TV in the afternoon because our domestic help watches Bangla movies!

All said, I think it's time the authorities concerned look into the matter seriously to punish these "employers" who amount to only a drop in the ocean.

Rahat Nilofer, Lalmatia

Mobile call charge

I bought a prepaid mobile phone of a well known company. The package included call charge of Tk 6 per minute at pick hours and Tk 5 per minute at off pick hours. The package also included BTB incoming facility for 24 hours and the outgoing facility from 8:00pm to 8:00am. A few months ago the company launched a new package which included 24 hours BTB incoming and outgoing facility. The package also included call charge of Tk 5 per minute for 24 hours with 30 seconds' pulse facility. I went to the head office of the company to get my cell phone converted into the new one. The officials there then asked me to pay Tk 575.00 for conversion of my previous package to this new one.

I paid the money on 24.02.05 and got connected with the new package. But after a few days I noticed that they were charging the same call rate. Why should this happen?
Dr. Prabir Mohan Basak
Police Hospital, Barisal

Conservation of energy

Energy conservation and renewable options should be looked at. Lot of time, money and politics are now being involved in the energy sector of the country. I do support that more electrical generation plants need to be in place but I also would like to suggest for the government to do a feasibility study on conservation of energy and renewable energy source. One of the best ways to save energy would be adoption of energy saving bulbs (one 13W energy saving bulb can produce enough light as a 75 to 100W bulb depending on the brand) in all government offices and NGOs, as well as promoting energy saving bulbs to the common masses. An energy saving bulb manufacturing plant could be built and subsidised by the government to make them readily available at an affordable price to the general public. If they can be made affordable then lot of people will use them to cut electricity bills. In advertising boards, traffic lights etc LEDs could be introduced. Though energy saving technologies will have more initial cost but this will save a lot in the long run.

The prospect of renewable energies such as wind and solar power should also be looked into seriously.
Dewan S Arefeen
University of Toronto

Mili, Mina and many more

We are continuously failing to protect our children. Those of us who are parents perhaps can easily understand the immense horror of knowing that someone is out there who can rape and brutally murder your child and the law enforcing agencies are too incompetent to arrest the culprits, let alone bring them to justice. How can we tolerate such crimes? How can we let these slip away to oblivion? How can we exact justice for them? We

must not stop talking about this. Just imagine the statistics of one report that collected "reported information" in a single month of August 2004 which showed 217 young girls were tortured, of which 50 were killed, 42 raped, 34 badly injured, 29 kidnapped, 18 sold into prostitution, and 13 attacked with acid.

How long will this situation continue?
Dr. Kazi Mahbob Hassan, University of Melbourne



Dhaka

Dear homophobes

It's not at all astonishing to see Rubaiyyat's homophobic approach to my letter. Homophobes have always defended their stand (in vain!) with the worn out logic of family and religious beliefs.

Homosexuality and family bondage have co-existed from time immemorial. Homosexuals never denied the very facts of fundamental family structure. We are an integral part of the family as sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and so on. Thereby homosexuality is not a disease and eminent scientists, psychologists, world-renowned organisations like WHO and American Psychological Association

an abnormal way. As believers we don't want to tread into religious beliefs, which are truly very personal, and hopefully you will also think about it carefully.

When the whole world is at the verge of accepting homosexual marriage, how medieval it is to question the existence and acceptability of homosexuality!

Dear homophobes, we do not need help, you need awareness.
Nagorik, Dhaka

Noise and rash driving

I live in Gulshan-2 residential area. Gulshan-2 is a diplomatic area. But unfortunately these days it does not look like a diplomatic zone. The reason is hundreds of vehicles are

pollution and road accidents.

I believe the authorities will take some steps if they have any concern about citizens.
Rashid Ali
Gulshan-2, Dhaka

Reduce call rates

Most of our cell phone companies spend crores of taka in advertising.

But why can't they reduce call rates which will benefit millions of subscribers?
Pranto Pran
Sreemangal

Acceptable system

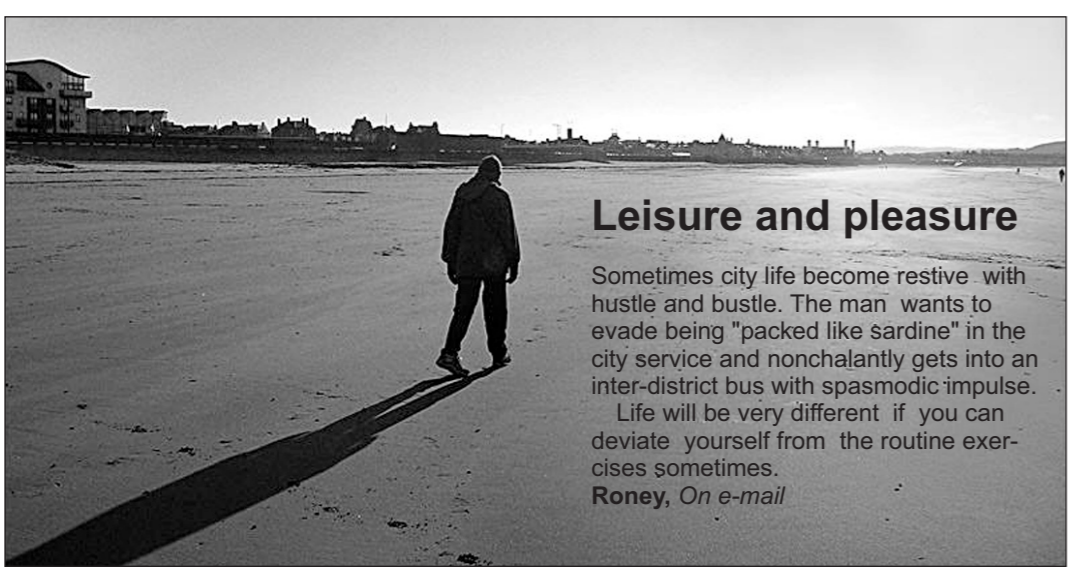
One cannot but be concerned about the future of democracy in Bangladesh. The government and their opposition are getting closer to

A Bangladeshi, on e-mail

Domestic helps

Mistreating domestic helps has become a common phenomenon, so much so, that news involving such incidents make headlines (rather unusual because such occurrences are stray). My question is: why are the culprits not punished? Or are there no laws against such inhuman acts? Your paper did a cover story in one of the SWM issues. But never have I read anything regarding the rehabilitation of these unfortunate victims. Nor was anything reported about bringing the culprits to book, for that matter!

I might as well add that hundreds (if not more) of domestic helps find jobs, get married through their employers. And talking about their



Leisure and pleasure

Sometimes city life become restive with hustle and bustle. The man wants to evade being "packed like sardine" in the city service and nonchalantly gets into an inter-district bus with spasmodic impulse.

Life will be very different if you can deviate yourself from the routine exercises sometimes.
Roney, On e-mail

A tragic death and its aftermath

The tragic death of a female student of DU has saddened us. Unnatural death of a promising young student is always shocking. Shamme Akhter Happy of Dhaka University lost her life on Saturday, crushed under the wheels of a bus driven by a reckless driver. The aftermath of the tragic incident sparked violent student protests. Students went on the rampage, damaging properties, which is also not acceptable. Regrettably, some inept handling by the police compounded the whole situation in the aftermath of the accident.

On Sunday we had to see another episode staged by the ruling party's student front where the rampaging activists along with some JCD leaders-turned-teachers attacked the protesters to free the VC and the proctor from confinement inside the Institute of Fine Arts. The protesters, mostly female students, were demonstrating against the police atrocities on the students in the wake of the death of Happy. How a VC seeks help from a student organisation to free him and his associates from the confinement? He

could seek help from the police. Another shameful act is that some teachers joined with the JCD in the attack. Unfortunately, relying on the blessings of student organisations for survival has been the practice of our VCs. For the sake of the universities, VC should act as a neutral guardian. Otherwise, we will have to witness more and more such barbaric and shameful occurrences.

Mallik Akram Hossain
The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

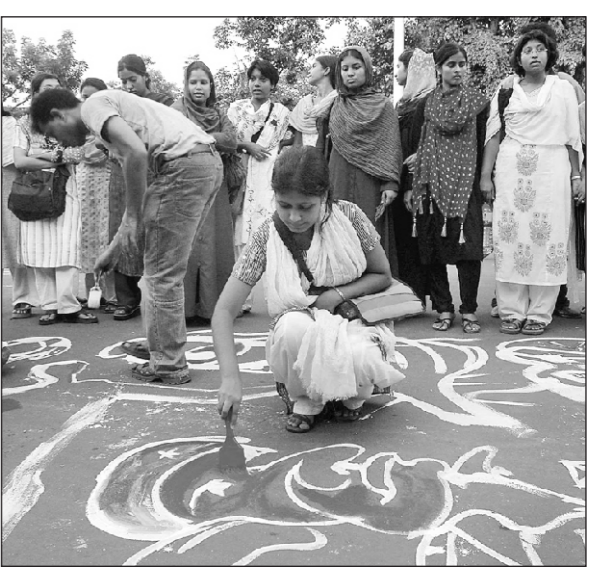


PHOTO: AFP