

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.

Islam - religion of peace and tolerance

The word "Islam" stands for peace. It teaches its followers to be tolerant not only to any other religion but also to mankind. The essence of Islam is: never, ever indulge in any extremism not even against the enemy. How could we attack some small group of people (twenty attacks including the recent one on the Ahmadiyyas in eighteen months: The Daily Star, June 26, 2005), while our Holy Quran says, "Lakum di nukum waliadeen" (You perform your religion, I perform mine).



Violence begets violence; on the contrary, love begets love, respect begets respect. If we want someone to follow our religion, then at the very outset we have to make someone understand the beauty, glory and truth of our religion. This is the essence of Islam. It is the best code of life. No external force is necessary to make someone understand what Islam is. The real philosophy of Islam will impress the followers of other religions. Moinuddin Chowdhury Gulshan-2, Dhaka

Save the environment

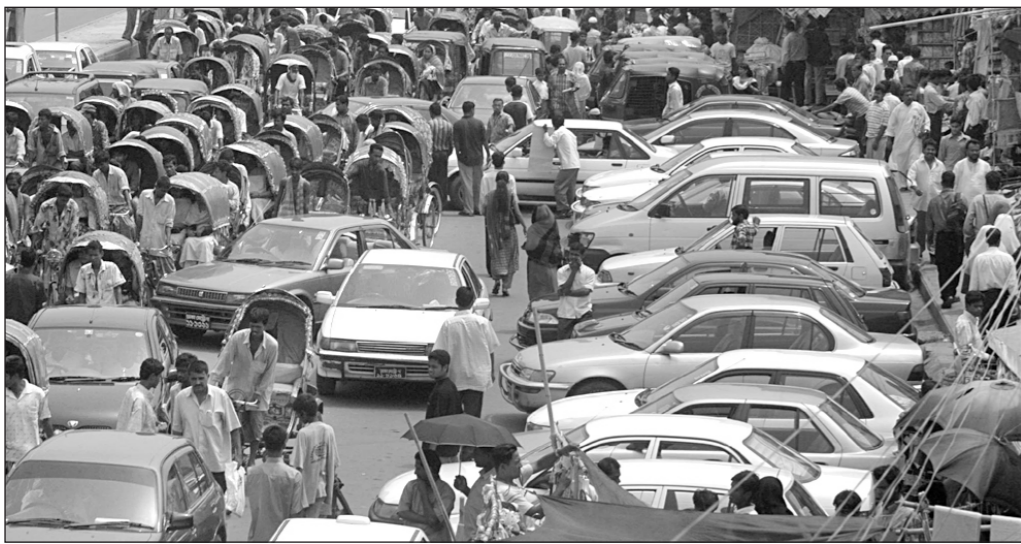
In summer we realised that the weather was whimsically changing. Even if we depict the graph of the statistics of rain, we find temperature is getting higher than previous summer's and humidity is also going down. I think this happens because of the scarcity of trees. As we know, a country needs 25% of its total area covered with forests. But we are nowhere near that mark.

There are many causes for the shortage-- the main cause is that people of the country are unaware of the dangers associated with shortage of greenery.

Shib Shankar Dey, Dhaka University



Making Farmgate area beautiful



Farmgate is the junction of many of the areas of Dhaka city. So the sight of this place should always be nice, beautiful and attractive. But it is a matter of great regret that we are not getting the said area in the above manner due to the presence of unauthorised sellers of different commodities and the bare rickshaws that we find standing in front of Ananda Cinema Hall. They are covering 5 to 10 feet of the main road, causing great difficulties to the pedestrians. Not only that, the footpath of Farmgate area is also captured by them. All of these are creating complications for all levels of people in doing their day to day work. So drastic measures

should be taken by the authorities against them in order to enhance the public facility which is the main target of the government. If the unauthorised sellers are fully uprooted from this area the total beauty of the area will increase to a great extent. Empty rickshaws that stand in front of Ananda Cinema Hall create traffic jam and as a result the private cars and buses have to waste a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes at this point. So appropriate measures should be taken immediately so that the rickshaws cannot stand in the said place. Only this way the traffic jam of this area can be removed. Sharif Badrul Hamid, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215

Pakistani visa

A few letters on the subject have been published in your daily recently. All expressed their concern about the rigid attitude of the Pakistan High Commission in the matter of issuance of visa to Bangladeshis. Earlier, they issued visas very selectively but now it seems that they have virtually stopped issuance of visit visa for seeing relations and friends. When one applies they reportedly refer to their home office in Pakistan. The process is time consuming. In some cases the purpose for which the visa is sought is also lost. This is very harsh and can't be expected from any country in the region. It is not understood when India and Pakistan, the once hostile neighbours who have fought a quarter dozen of full-scale wars are patching up their differences and facilitating people to people contact by liberalising visa formalities, easing communication and even opening up new routes, why others should lag behind.

What Pakistan is doing for Bangladeshis? It is disallowing their entry to Pakistan. We appeal to them to lift the visa restrictions. Md. Abbas Ali, Mohammad Noor Ali Rampura, Dhaka

Niko

I fail to understand how many more gas fields need to go up in flames, how much longer the flames need to rage out to make the government terminate its contract with Niko. Only in Bangladesh could a company get away with such incompetence, shamelessly survive the scandal of offering kickbacks and still offer no apology, compensation or even pretensions to do otherwise! Niko is an environmental, financial and social havoc for the country that should be kicked out of Asia before they set ablaze the next gas field! Ayesha Farzana, Dhaka

I'd like to see arrest warrants issued against the management of Niko, both local and Canadian. We may never be able to extradite the latter but if a case can be made then the warrants should be issued as a matter of principle. I'd also like to read in your newspaper a full investigation "without fear or favour" of the circumstances in which Niko was given licence. What are their credentials? Why are they here? Rasheed Khan, Banani

Luxury

Most of the filling stations in our country are embellished with massive lighting system. It is nothing but just luxury in our poor country. We have to suffer much for load shedding. On the other hand, filling station authorities embellish their stations with huge lighting.

They don't try to understand that when a vehicle needs fuel, it must look for a filling station to get it. But that doesn't have to be full of lights! Senjuti Shuvo Ahmed Dhaka College, Dhaka

Soybean oil cartel

It looks like 'weak' Bangladesh is under the grip of the powerful West soybean oil cartel (report in DS June 27). Malaysia has rebutted the planned 'scientific' propaganda against palm edible oil. The weak country faces preconditions to Western aid packages, with the UN agencies looking rather helpless.

The pattern of control of economic and trade tools and methods is not secret, including sales of hi-tech military hardware (F-16s and other weapons and units to same Asian and other countries).

'Poor' Bangladesh has to be on the guard not to fall an easy prey to these rich predators, and she has to formulate her own independent foreign policy stances. Are we importing more than essential volume of soybean oil? The traditional Bengali diet of mustard oil has declined drastically, for reasons best known to the policy makers. Similarly, the import of powder milk has declined from Tk 400 crore per annum to Tk 200 crore, and now in the new budget import levies

have been raised, as our dairy, chicken and fish farms have developed fast in a healthy manner. Foreign traders should not wholly dictate what we eat! A Mawaz, Dhaka

Harry K. Thomas's observation

I completely agree with Harry K. Thomas's observation that, the image of the United States notwithstanding, there is no shortage of recruits: people are still lining up for visas. But the same observation can be made of any successful criminal organisation.

I don't think the Mafia has ever had any shortage of recruits. And the mothers of the Mafia people are, no doubt, just as proud of their sons. Iftekhar Sayeed Dhanmandi, Dhaka

Why and for whom this extra charge?

A common word of our finance minister (FM) is 'Free Market Economy'. Any price hike in the market is explained with this popular term. For a consumer, free market economy usually brings the prospect of buying goods in cheaper price due to the competition in the market. But in Bangladesh things are always reverse. Bangladeshis people never had the opportunity to get this advantage. There was only one exception, the mobile telecom sector. Though late, still we started enjoying the facilities of the 'free market economy' in the mass communication sector. Due to the huge competition, as a user I had wide options of choosing my operator. I could switch over to different operators basing on the best possible price suited for me. Suddenly this flexible environment for the consumers has been taken away by the decision of the finance ministry, charging Tk 1200 for the SIM card as revenue. The finance minister tried to support this act with some ridiculous logic. He explained how the mobile phone operators had been enjoying various facilities in doing their business in Bangladesh. He mentioned about the licence charge from which companies were exempted. It might be a policy failure for which the government was deprived of revenue. From his statement it is apparent that imposing extra charge on the SIM card may compensate for revenue deficiencies. My question is, can he ensure that the mobile companies will pay this SIM card revenue, not the subscribers? The simple answer is "no".

Then why the ordinary customers will have to bear the expenses? Citizens have been made the victim of the government's policy lapses. Ahmed Iqbal Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Humayun Ahmed

I am simply shocked by the letter of Tasmeen Hossain published in The Daily Star on June 27, 2005. I am disagreeing with her evaluation of Humayun Ahmed. You have raised a question about his contribution to our society. What can a writer do for the society except writing? Humayun Ahmed always kept us alert about our society through his writing. He has penned more than 500 novels and roughly 100 dramas.

Moreover, he has made some extra-ordinary films for us. So, what kind of contribution do you expect from a writer? Secondly, you described his wedlock with Shaon as a bad example! It is a totally private affair between Humayun and Shaon. We should not blame them, rather we should take it easy. Fuad Hussein Fida, Dhaka

DNA database for criminals?

Prof. SAM Khairul Bashar raised some very important issues of biotechnology, particularly bioinformatics in his article published in The Daily Star under the above title. As a student of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology

department of Dhaka University, I agree with him. Prof. Bashar has clearly mentioned the importance of DNA testing for identifying the criminals in the society. It is very important to form DNA database for identifying the criminals in the society. It is also important to form DNA database for detection of diseases of the common people.

Research is going on in the developed countries for utilisation of molecular biology but the scope is very limited in Bangladesh due to lack of financial resources as well as skilled human resources in this field. Nurat Rahman Dhaka University, Dhaka

An unacceptable picture

A couple of months back I wrote that no terrorist would be found in the country who is not patronised by any of the political leaders tacitly or explicitly. Sagir, according to press reports, was a notorious killer. After

team to lose for five more years. But the most important thing is to keep up the tempo of playing big games and narrow the gap of losing. There ought to be less interference from the non-playing officials and, most importantly, the media needs to be corrected. There is a saying, 'If you don't have anything to do, please don't do it'. That is our appeal to the press.

Please do not drive the players crazy by praises, interviews. Help them with positive and corrective advice. Thus a losing team will learn and start to win. After all, it required all the famous teams many years to see the light of a 'win'. SN Mamoon, Dhaka

Importance of English

Ours is a developing country. We are not Japanese, we are not economically and technologically developed. We need to learn English for our own interests. English is the only way that can keep us connected to the international world.

our authorities should know that the big bunch of executives that multinationals and even some local conglomerates employ to work in Bangladesh have a feeling that they are indispensable whereas local BBAs and MBAs equally qualified remain unemployed. And as you know some multinationals are busy in making quick bucks by dumping their produces made and packed in India, instead of making them locally; this doesn't show any love for our country! A F Rahman, On e-mail

Mobile owner identification

While we read in the DS of 27 June an article titled, "Shouldn't we create a DNA database for criminals?", we cannot help but wonder about the large proportions of indiscriminate issuance of mobile-phone ownership, specially in case of the pre-paid connections, which is really a pressing issue. Even in our neigh-

Our cultural heritage

I read the 'culture' page of The Daily Star regularly. As culture reflects the way of living, eating, talking and learning, it has a broad and wide meaning. It comprises of music, literature, drama and other aspects of fine arts. The true picture of the country is projected in its culture. In the creation and propagation of culture, patronisation plays a vital role.

Bangladesh has a rich and distinct culture and tradition, which are rooted in its soil. We have a rich heritage of music--classical, various folk songs, spiritual songs, songs of Tagore, Nazrul, Hassan Raja, Atul Prasad and above all modern songs. We are gradu-

ally losing the good things that once formed a part of our rich cultural heritage. The traditional dress of Bangladesh is saree for women and panjabi and pajama for men. But it is sad to notice that the people nowadays are greatly influenced by the Western ideas of fashion. There are many young boys who follow foreign film stars; young ladies want to stay miles away from sarees.

The young generation do not like our native music or musical instruments but love to listen to western music, and do not know their own singers. Engr. Mohammad Ariful Islam BSC in EEE



Attention: Wasa

It is over a couple of months that we, the people of Khilgaon, either have to buy water for drinking or have to drink dirty water supplied by the Dhaka Wasa. Sometimes this water contains so offensive smell that we cannot use it for our daily activities such as taking bath, washing, cooking etc. Condition of the whole area is almost the same. There is no reply from the Wasa though they were informed many times. In the mean time, we got water through a pump machine. It became inactive one year ago and now the Wasa is supplying water from Sayedabad Water Plant. If fact, the water that comes from Sayedabad is unfit for use.

But we don't understand why the Wasa does not replace the inactive pump.

Golam Rosul Maruf Khilgaon, Dhaka

his death the top BNP leaders rushed to the hospital and condemned the killing. That is not the end, on the next day the national dailies of the country published photographs of political leaders offering fateha.

This is a political culture that has to be ended for the benefit of all. Anis Rahman University of Dhaka

Bangladesh cricket

It doesn't matter whether Bangladesh team wins or loses in international cricket. A win certainly excites us. On the other hand, a 'loss' sends the whole country into depression. But reality calls for pragmatic approaches.

They ought to keep on playing in the international level in right earnest. A twenty-member squad may be selected and they should be allowed to play at their full potential-- uninterrupted by praise or criticism. We expect the

Those who will suggest you not to learn English language, know for sure, they are your enemies.

Our workers go abroad and unfortunately they get less wages than Indian workers only because of lack of knowledge of English.

We can't speak English, we are being beaten in the job field. Still some people say that we don't need English! Remember that some people always want us to lag behind.

It is high time we became aware of our own needs and realised the necessity of English language. It is no more a matter of smartness only, it is the matter of "ruti-ruji". Cantara Wali Ruhi Dhaka University

India's position

Mr. Sumon Dutta wrote (DS July 01, '05) that in his view "Indians have much respect for Bangladesh". I cannot quite agree. One small thing Mr. Sumon and

bouring country, all the Mobile Service Providers follow the system of demanding photo-id (as opposed to photo only), i.e. driving licence, passport, etc. to issue a new SIM. At this stage, our government should compel all the mobile operators of the country to review all such connections by setting up separate teams, if necessary, which

these companies can easily afford as they are earning huge revenues. And after that, each Mobile Phone Company should reconfirm to the Home Ministry on such Identification status.

At present, when a miscreant makes a threat on a person's mobile the respective company's enquiry hotline says they do not maintain the particulars for pre-paid numbers or that, they will only give out such particulars on request from the police! CNR, Chittagong