

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.

Humanitarianism



According to Michel H Hart, the most influential persons in history, from Hazrat Muhammad (SM) to Michelangelo, worked for humanitarian cause. We were born in this earth as humans. But the level of our human

qualities and realisation is well below the desired mark. So, can't we work for humanity and prove our worth as human beings?
Muhammad Yasir Arafat, Chittagong

GPA-5

Saturday, July-9, 2005. When the results of SSC were announced we saw a lot of students gained the top ranked score which means the GPA-5. The number is 17,276 which is a record in the history of grading system in Bangladesh since 2001.

In 2001 the number of GPA-5 holders was 76. In 2002 the number was 327, 1,392 in 2003, while it was 8,700 in 2004. Now the number of GPA-5 holders is 17,276. The number has increased due to the addition of the benefits of additional subject which was started from 2001. But in the public exams of 2001, 2002 and 2003 the students who sat for the SSC did not get the benefits of additional subject. I would like to ask whether the students who achieved GPA-5 before 2004 and who gained it in the year of 2004 & 2005 are equal in merit. Of course not.

People may argue that the students passing in different years participate in tests in different sessions for their admission. But I want to say that the students who don't get chance in desired subjects for higher studies have to sit for the test next year with the juniors. So, I believe that a difference should be made between them. But how can it be possible? Well, there are a lot of specialists employed by the govt. in the Ministry of Education. If they think about this they can find a way out.
Md. Nazmul Hassan Razu
Notre Dame College, Dhaka

Where is their security?

A news item published in the Bangladesh Observer on July 5, 2005 has made me very sad. It has been reported that while looting in a bazaar at Hathazari upazila in Chittagong, robbers stabbed to death the night guard, Sheikh Ahmed, when he resisted them and hearing the news his uncle rushed to the spot and seeing his nephew lying in a pool of blood, he died of a heart attack. We often hear about security guards being murdered by the miscreants when they are on duty. How pathetic, they lose their lives while guarding the lives and property of others.

They take this job to support their families but sometimes that ends in a tragedy and the families plunge into deep despair. Who will give security to these people who are at the mercy of criminals?
Nur Jahon
Chittagong

Failing in English

To fail in English in the exams is a common problem. Most of the students cut a sorry figure in English. And this unexpected and shocking failure is increasing day by day. In fact, there are many reasons for it. However, the main reason is that English is a foreign language. Many students are scared of it. They find English difficult and hardly relish the idea of practising it every day. English is taught or read to pass the exam only. And many students memorise various topics without understanding or thinking about them. As a result, they forget their memorised answers at the exam hall. So they fail. Moreover, sometimes unexpected and difficult questions are set and most of the students fail to answer them, as they don't know grammar. Besides, in our country

most of the teachers teach their students in Bangla and they always urge them to memorise every lesson or topic so that they can do well in the exams without facing any unexpected questions. But that doesn't help the students learn the language.
Susanta Paul
University of Khulna

Misuse of mobile phone

There are millions subscribers of cellular phone in our country. Among them a large number of users are women. But it is a matter of sorrow that some mischievous people are abusing mobile phone and it is a matter of shame that female users are the victims. Every day they receive a lot of disturbing calls and messages from many unknown numbers. Most of the time the language of these calls and messages are wicked, teasing and annoying. Sometimes, they use very obscene or filthy words and also threaten the girls. A few days ago, I was stunned to get a message from an unknown number. Its language was so indecent that I cannot express it. Only the girls who have similar experience would understand the problem.

What does it indicate? It indicates that the young generation of our

country is getting perverted day by day.

We should always remember that mobile phone is a device for necessary use, not misuse.

Munmun Ali
Islamic University, Kushtia

Djuice ad

I have seen Grameen's new Djuice ad on TV. I am sorry to say that the ad is very boring. It is about a man showing his negative attitude and singing the song "Jakaa-na-khaa". It fails to create any impression on us except that it is a futile attempt to deviate from the trodden path. Originality and creativity are not easy to achieve!

Such ads can only dampen our interest in watching television.
Md Toufiqur Rahman
Rothkala, Kishoreganj

Motor cycle on footpath

Motor cycle on footpath is a very common sight these days. However, this is strictly prohibited by the law and traffic managers should not allow anybody to ride motorcycle on footpath.

The matter deserves immediate attention.
Samsur Rahman
Dhaka University

No dress code!

Bangladesh is a strange country no official formal dress code! How's that?

In hot sticky tropical climate, tie and suit are popular. Even shoes and socks impede air circulation (protection from cold weather).

Those who govern do not talk about it. The topic is not taboo, but there are other preoccupations!
AZ
Dhaka

Minister for district

The government has appointed a minister for every district with a view to co-ordinating works of the district and to seeing the real picture of the roads, schools, colleges and other important things in the district. Accordingly, he/she issues DO letters to the ministry concerned to do the work, but it is very sad that those DO letters are being rejected in most of the cases. Consequently, development work as well as other works are being hampered and ministers' commitments are not being honoured.

The government should look into the matter.
Mr Rustam Ali
On-email

Protect our resources

Throughout the history of human race, major advances in civilisation have been accompanied by an increased consumption of energy. Today, energy consumption appears to be directly related to the level of living of the populace and the degree of industrialisation of the country. The countries that have had abundant supplies of energy available to them have achieved substantially high rate of industrial growth and a corresponding increase in the gross national product.

We know, our country has huge reserves of natural gas. This is our source of energy. We use it for various purposes to develop our country. But it is a matter of regret that gas is being lost to incidents of fire at the gas fields.

The people of our country are now panic-stricken. The government should act sensibly and try to prevent wastage of national resources.
Md. Khairul Alam
RUET

Dollar crisis

It has been learnt from the reports published in the national dailies that many banks are refusing L/C opening because of the very high price of the dollar and also because of its non-availability.

In a free economy it is usual that there will be imports and exports which determine the demand for and supply of international currency and that there is efficient currency management by the regulatory agencies.

There remains always the responsibility upon the authorised dealer to see that L/Cs are opened at competitive prices of the import goods and the imported goods are essential for industrial or commercial uses and those are not considered unproductive. Banks should discourage L/C opening purely on profiteering basis without considering the impact of imports on the national economy. Their fund management should be very efficient.

The remark of the Hon'ble Foreign Minister a few days back that "there is no dollar crisis and that the problem is created by those going for over banking/scrupulous transactions" is really praiseworthy and a timely warning for all.

Therefore, it is necessary that the authorised dealers in foreign currency follow the national objectives & guidelines in conducting foreign trade transactions and foreign currency utilisation to stop unethical deals.

Md Abdul Malek
Gandaria, Dhaka

Use of coal and gas

The Energy Advisor GoB has a point in suggesting (DS July 5) extensive use of gas cylinders for supplying gas to homes for cooking (it would also cover the remote rural areas). It is expensive to lay gas pipelines in all cities, (people in Bogra and Sirajgunj are hesitating to go for expensive installation charges for laying pipe connections to homes).

There should be provision for local assembly of gas cylinders in lakhs of units (including mini and portable ones for easy transportation on rickshaw by female members of the household); and network of distribution and filling stations are required at least up to district level in the first phase. The users would come and take it, making the network simpler initially.

The use of more coal has also been advocated. Bangladesh is lucky to have both natural gas and coal in plenty (notice the predicament of India and China). We are sitting over the issue unnecessarily. In the absence of a clear policy on efficient use of our energy natural resources, the foreigners will grab it by hook or by crook (watch Iraq: next target Iran, and control of CIS region).

The politicians indulge too much in crude local politicking, and try to live comfortably on 'tender manipulations' (i), and not public service to the voters. Reduce duplication in the too-powerful PMO (DS report, July 5).

A Maher
Dhaka

National University

We are third year students of the English Department under the National University. We got our 2nd year results a few days ago.

We have a subject named "Introduction to English Language study" in third year course. This subject appears to be rather vague. The topics of this subject are very complicated. Even our teachers are not sure what they should teach. The authorities of NU are indifferent to the issue.

I would like to draw their attention to the problems that we are facing.
Zahid Mollik
Tangail

Modonaghat Bridge

I am an inhabitant of Rawzan. So, whenever I go to my house I have to go across the Modonaghat Bridge situated at Hathazari. The condition of the bridge is miserable. It is a real problem for us.

So we would request the authorities to solve the problem as soon as possible.
Md Maksud
IUC

Attacks on journalists

It is disgraceful to have witnessed so many terrorist attacks on working journalists of Khulna. Fifteen of them have died in the last few years. It is sad that journalists who have been totally committed to focusing all wrong doing through their reports became victims of those ruffians.

This cannot continue for an indefinite period of time.
Rezaul Huq
Lalmatia, Dhaka

Chhatak is burning

When Rome was burning Nero was fluting. Perhaps in the same tune we can also say "when Chhatak is burning our government is fluting". It is a matter of great regret and disappointment that, when the entire Chhatak gas field is being burnt to ashes causing colossal national loss besides widespread destruction of properties and causing environmental hazards, neither the Prime Minister nor her Ministers nor a Parliamentary Team, nor even the local MP visited the spot to coordinate or support any effective step to control the situation. It appears the government is rather willing to let the gas field burn out, rather than take any step to save it. It is very painful for us when we see that amidst such a national disaster the Prime Minister led by her senior Ministers and the MPs did find time to lay floral wreath on the dead body of a terrorist party cadre who was accused in several murder cases, including the murder of a police sergeant!

It proves that a party cadre, even if he was a criminal, was more important to the ruling party than the welfare of the country and its people.
Mohammad Ruhul Quddus
Dhaka

Today's teachers

Teachers are called the architects of a nation. They are considered the second father of students. Our parents and grand parents told us how the teachers of their times were and how they taught them at school. They helped them understand any subject. But today's teachers except a few are totally different. Their activities and behaviour smack of commercialism. They force students to join the batches of coaching classes. They merely attend the classes and avoid classroom teaching.

Teachers of leading schools earn over one lakh taka per month. Can you imagine! Students allege that they are deprived of marks if they don't attend their coaching classes!
A reader
On e-mail

Is it discriminatory?

I am a regular subscriber of The Daily Star. Recently my attention has been drawn to a letter in which the writer has criticised a Bangla ad telecast on the BTV. In fact, much has been said about the subject. The dispute is revolving around the use of the word 'chelera' in the advertisement. One has pointed out that it is a discriminatory word and it is biased towards the male. Another person has supported him. Etymologically speaking the word 'chelera' in Bangla doesn't mean only the boys. Because in spoken Bangla 'chele' means both 'beta chele' (male children) and 'meye chele' (female children). Moreover the motto of the advertisement is to delineate that drastic development in medicare facilities has happened in our country and so we don't need to go outside the country for better treatment. Improved medicare service is available in our country too. Without being too much obsessive with words we should rather grasp the theme that it wants to express.

People who are working in the judiciary know that in Section 8 of the penal code 'he' means both 'he' and 'she'. That means the word 'he' includes the male and female persons. The penal code came into operation in 1860. My personal opinion is that we must give up an idiosyncratic attitude towards everything and must grasp the real meaning of a word or term by reading between the lines.
Babor A Mir
Barisal

Stop wanton capture of brood fish

The capture of a 'katla' fish weighing 29 kg reported on 12 June 2005 in different newspapers should not be considered a success. Rather, the fisherman and other persons who were involved in capturing the fish must be brought to face the Fisheries Act. I think that the incident hurt every concerned person very much. A few days ago news on this subject with my opinion was published in a Bangla newspaper titled "Determination of genetic condition of katla fish using DNA micro satellite marker". People should know the fact that the egg laying fish (brood fish) in natural water bodies are the important

Optional retirement

Congratulations to the government. Finally it has declared the new pay scale in light of the recommendations of 6th Pay Commission. Although the recommendations of the Commission have not been fully implemented it has come as a great relief to the government officials because the price level of daily necessities and cost of living have increased a lot since implementation of the 5th pay scale and they are failing to cope with this situation.

However, implementation of the new pay scale will increase the revenue expenditure of the government in a big way. And it will indeed be a great burden on the government exchequer. In this context the government will have to explore the avenues of reducing expenditure on these accounts. Reducing the service period for optional retirement may be an option in this regard. At present a government servant can retire after serving for 25 years in the government. After serving this period most officials attain the age between 50-55. Thereafter they have very little energy and enthusiasm to venture into new areas. But if the service period for optional retirement is reduced to 20 years, a good number of government officials may be willing to go for optional retirement. This will significantly reduce the government expenditure on account of pay and allowances of the government officials as the government will be then able to recruit new staffs and officers at a much lower pay. Also the government will have to pay less on account of pension. Further it will help to reduce the already existing unemployment



problem to a great extent.

In this regard, there is fear that if the old officials are allowed to go earlier then the government will be deprived of an efficient and experienced administration. But such fear is unfounded. It can be reasonably expected that today's youth will be more amenable to the idea of modern administration and as they have greater exposure and computer literacy they will be able to perform in a better way. In view of these realities, it is imperative for the government to seriously consider reducing the age of optional retirement.
A Kamal, Firingi Bazar, Chittagong

biological resources. Approximately 99% fish seeds are now being produced in the hatchery. But the genetic quality in hatchery produced seed is decreasing day by day due to inbreeding depression and negative selection. However, if a stock is genetically deteriorated, then it is not possible to increase its production by supplying adequate feed or improving culture systems. As the genetic variability of the natural fish (river) is relatively high, it is possible to improve the genetic quality of hatchery produced fish through selective breeding programme. Parent fish derived from hatchery could be partially replaced by wild fish. Halsa river and its branches are important breeding ground of Indian major carps (rohi, katla, mrigal etc) and the fishes of this natural water body are genetically more sound than

hatchery produced fish. Unfortunately, wanton capture of brood fish especially in the breeding season reduces fish seed production at a rate of 25-30% in the Halsa river that may adversely affect the total fish production in the country. So it is essential to take necessary steps for implementation of rules to stop capture of brood fish from natural water bodies. The government should declare some natural water bodies especially the Halsa river and its branches as "sanctuary" for fish.
Md. Shahidul Islam
BAU, Mymensingh

No more lip-service



PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh observed the World Day against Child Labour in a befitting manner on June 12. To mark the day with due fanfare many seminars and symposiums were arranged across the country. Many legal experts and human rights activists participated in the conclave to give their opinions and suggestions to eradicate child labour. Statistics show that 12.90 lakh children are engaged in hazardous child labour in Bangladesh. Most of them are forced by acute poverty. They work in garment factories, tannery, construction sites etc. They work hard in a risky condition but are paid nominally. Besides, many children are working as domestic helps. They are not counted formally. They are the worst sufferers. Most of them are tortured in many ways. They are sexually harassed. Sometimes they are physically manhandled for trivial reasons. They are bound to accept this ordeal only for survival. We are shell-shocked when we find that a 10-year girl has been crippled by her employer for breaking a simple glass. Such incidents take place in the affluent and so-called educated families. To abolish child labour from the society the people should be mobilised, poverty has to be alleviated and more employment opportunities need to be generated. The government should enforce the existing laws to penalise the culprits.

Harsher laws can be enacted to end child labour, if need be.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen
Dept of English, DU