

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.

Greenhouse Effect



The world is getting warmer. The increase in global warming is caused by increased amounts of carbon dioxide around the earth. Most experts believe that the Greenhouse Effect is the likely cause of global warming.

What is the Greenhouse Effect? It is the gradual warming of the air surrounding the earth as a result of heat being trapped by environmental pollution. This is exempli-

fied by the destruction and burning down of tropical rain forests, by traffic that clogs up city streets, by the rapid growth of industries, the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in packaging and manufacturing commercial products, the use of detergents such as washing powder and so on. The oceans are also said to be affected both because of human wastes and because of pollution caused by industrial

wastes, oil seeping from damaged supertankers etc.

However, the main pollutant is carbon dioxide gas produced by the burning of fossil fuels and forests, and pollutants such as methane and chlorofluorocarbons. It has many bad impacts.

Mahmuda Khanam
MA, Eng Dept, RU

Opportunity for Kashmiris

In the run-up to this USA seminar arranged by Foreign Lawyers Association (in which as speakers - Kashmiri leaders from both sides of LoC, representatives of the UN, academicians & NGOs from the USA, the Ambassadors of India, Pakistan China, UK, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, are also participating), the EU has expressed concern on the human rights of Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC. The EU believes that a composite dialogue between India and Pakistan (which is nothing but a procrastinating technique of India & Pakistan) will be able to solve the Kashmir problem, especially in the backdrop of impotent & worthless advisory capacity of the UN.

The Kashmir problem can be solved neither by military operations nor by these dialogues (which have brought no good to Kashmiris except some futile media coverage to participating Kashmiri leaders) but only through political settlement for which Kashmiris ought to realise that:-

(1)- Human right is neither an internal matter of any country nor a bilateral issue between two contending countries but it is basically an obligation of international community, through UN.

(2)- In a senseless armed struggle (supported mainly by fundamentalists on both sides of the LoC) the Kashmiris have already lost tens of thousands of their youth. The surviving Kashmiris owe it to these departed souls that the Kashmir problem is solved.

Hem Raj Jain
New Delhi

Nuclear power generation

Bangladesh is a developing country with an abundance of opportunities.

Apart from the natural resources, we have a very vibrant generation of youth looking for opportunities. With the constant increase in the education ratio, and an equally positive situation in eradicating poverty and corruption, we are steadily marching towards a stable economic platform for the country. What we are now badly affected by and will be escalating into a bigger problem in the near future is the shortage of power.

So, we are now very much in need of building a nuclear power station for electricity.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Drive against corruption

The goodwill of the people the interim government enjoys now, which resulted from the disgust against the political culture of corruption and violence, is ever conditional. The people welcome

the action the interim establishment is taking against the corrupt elements.

It is not surprising that some politicians have already started crying hoarse for election. Let them say what they may; the stolen treasure of the people is too important to hide under the abused blanket of democracy. The so-called democracy of loot and plunder has run aground; people would like to see it in the museum as a reminder of the bitter past.

Punishing crime is important but more important is to expand the mechanism for prevention of crime. Violence is the illegitimate child of corruption. Instead of going for the limbs of this hydra headed ogre, the interim government will have to focus on its heart. If the heart is squeezed, the limbs will collapse; the rights of the people will surface from under the debris of corruption linked with the powerful offices.

Someone said politics is a stick in the mud that has been trying to stand in the bottomless pit of corruption. The interim government should drive the piles deep into the hard bottom for transparency and accountability.

The press is the vibrant sentinel of the people. Their loud voice has finally aroused the conscience of the silent ones to go after the thugs stealing people's property.

The purpose of the current government is simple-- to put the governance system on the rail, to bring the eroded good will back to public offices. Let's all join in the fight against corruption.

Sharmin Rashid

Uttara, Dhaka

Daylight saving

A letter from Mr. Salahuddin Ayubi on the above subject has drawn my attention. I would like to point out that this practice of advancing the clock by one hour in the summer is common in most of the advanced countries of the world including the USA and the benefit of this practice is immense; people can start their work one hour before their usual time and finish one hour early. This helps to save energy which we need badly during the summer time, besides giving people enough time to shop before the shopping centres are closed. This change in time can be made in the last weekend of April and brought back to the previous position in the last weekend of October.

The authorities concerned should consider the matter in all seriousness.

Engr. Shah Alam Khan
Dhanmondi Residential Area
Dhaka

Lawmakers or lawbreakers?

The BTB revenue department has revealed that 111 MPs of the fourth JS during 1988-1990 did not pay more than Tk 1.1 crore in telephone bills. As many as 315

lawmakers of the fifth and seventh parliaments failed to pay Tk 6.6 crore in telephone bills. Are they lawmakers or lawbreakers?

Even for a small amount of money the BTB does not hesitate to disconnect telephones of common people, not even caring about serving a prior notice.

Why a different rule for the MPs?
Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Polythene bags

Nowadays we watch the joint forces conducting operations for seizing polythene bags. Already, the joint forces have seized huge quantities of polythene bags from different places. But the use of polythene could not be stopped. Producing polythene bags is a punishable offence, so enforce the ban. We know 'ethelyne' is the raw material for making polythene bags.

Why is the government not stopping import of ethelyne?

Uzzal Kumar Dutta
SSB Hall, JU

The interim government

Our old politicians should retire or go for hibernation. The state of emergency and the present government should continue as long as needed. The Bangladeshis living in the USA are happy and optimistic about the future of our homeland.

This government is far better than elected one-party autocratic corrupt governments that ruled us for 15 years.

Ashraf Chowdhury
Ore-mail

Fire in BSEC Building

On 26 Feb 2006, a fire broke out in BSEC building that gutted 2 private television transmission stations and one newspaper office and some other business offices as well. We witnessed the whole-hearted efforts of fire fighting by different agencies namely Fire Brigade, Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Air Force. Watching the live coverage on Bangla Vision, it became evident that we don't have the adequate and appropriate apparatus to fight fire if that breaks out in a high-rise building. Many people were stuck on the roof. Thanks to Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) helicopters that rescued a few people. But it also had to abandon its operation as fire was spreading due to its rotor wash. The hydraulic crane of the Fire Department could reach up to about 5 or 6 stories only. Dhaka is said to be the concrete jungle with abundant high-rise residential buildings. People will have no choice other than jumping out in the event of fire in such high-rise buildings. In respect to BSEC building fire, had there been a helipad at the rooftop of the building, BAF helicopters could rescue

all of them without any difficulty. Another revealing fact was that the building did not have any fire exit.

In the context of this incident, the government agencies concerned should think of making it mandatory for all high-rise buildings to have fire/emergency exit. Civil Defence should acquire modern cranes and other apparatus to fight fire and rescue people from high-rise buildings in case of fire.

Nahid Islam
Halishahar Housing Estate
Chittagong

27th BCS exams

There are so many brilliant students who appeared in that exams but could not qualify as the selection process was not fair.

The government should, therefore, cancel the whole thing and hold the exams once again.

Mrinal Sarkar
Assistant Teacher (English)
Khagrachhari Govt. Girls' High School

Hazards of drinking

Teenagers who drink heavily are risking permanent damage to their brain functions, scientists warned.

Alcohol has been shown to cause significant ongoing memory loss in youths. This could extend

into adulthood because drinking interferes with a critical stage in the development of a young brain, doctors said. Young smokers are also more forgetful. UK researcher Thomas Heffernan, who studied 100 students aged 16-19, said: "Heavy drinking and smoking in the teenage years may impede the important development (of the brain)."

Mohammad Shariful Islam
University of Ballarat
Melbourne, Australia

Congrats, cricketers

Heartiest congratulations to the Bangladesh cricket team for defeating the star-studded mighty India by five wickets in the World Cup. The way our teenager batsmen thrashed the Indian bowlers was really fantastic. Bangladesh outplayed India in every department of the game-- be it batting, bowling or fielding.

Now the cricket world should realise that Bangladesh cannot be treated as minnows any longer. The victory was not an upset, but a well-deserved one. That said, the cricketers should not get carried away by it.

Iqbal Ahmed
New Eskaton, Dhaka

IMEI number

I frequently hear from my relatives, friends, and also read in the newspapers about stealing or mugging of mobile phone sets. As far as I know, every GSM and UMTS mobile phone has the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number unique to the phone. This 15 digit code is usually found printed on the phone underneath the battery and can also be found by dialing the sequence *#06# into the phone. This IMEI number is used by the GSM network to identify valid devices and therefore can be used to stop a stolen phone from accessing the network. For example, if a mobile phone is stolen, the owner can call his or her network provider and instruct them to "ban" the phone using its IMEI number. This renders the phone useless, regardless of whether the phone's SIM has been changed.

Therefore, it is recommended that every mobile phone-owner record the IMEI number of his/her phone and keep it. If the phone is stolen, he or she should simply inform the network about this number for making the set useless for others.

This way, hopefully, the thieves and muggers will be discouraged and the rate of stealing or mugging of mobile sets will decrease.

Jewel Gomes
USA

Concentration of political power

I am writing with reference to "Seeking the lost grail of good governance," by Muhammad Zamir (March 24).

The writer has rightly lamented the rise of corrupt politicians and rapid decline of good governance since independence. The main reason behind such catastrophic decline has always been the monopolisation of political and administrative powers by a powerful political leader and his close coterie of family members and political flunkies. People of Bangladesh became the victims of their political masters and their close family members. As long as an inner circle of family members and friends had the support of the leader, there was no escape from corruption and cronyism which

New era in Bangladesh

The caretaker government has set a new era of corruption free politics in Bangladesh, which everybody should highly appreciate. People of Bangladesh should have patience and must cooperate with the government and its law enforcing agencies. People should remember that every good thing has a price. The changes that are being brought to the country are for the welfare of the people. There is no selfish stigma attached to these changes, as they are purely done out of patriotic feelings and responsibility to the country and not done for the interest of a particular party or community. So let us all be united and tolerant.

If we learn to endure the pain and sufferings today, we surely will have better days for our future generations. If we all become selfish, blood of our martyrs who sacrificed their lives for this beautiful country will be wasted. On the other hand, the government should not crack under any foreign or local pressure and should finish its unfinished tasks that are due and pending since ages. We all should remember that Bangladesh may be a poor and underdeveloped country but it's a free and democratic country and therefore we are free from any foreign dictatorship or pressures. All the foreign countries that have diplomatic relations with Bangladesh should not and must not interfere in the internal affairs of Bangladesh or create pressure on the caretaker government or try to divert people's interest in a different



direction.

We all want a peaceful and truly democratic Bangladesh. We do not want Bangladesh to be on the top of the list of the corrupt countries.

Mohammad S Jamal
Scarborough, Canada

spread all over the nation.

As a result, democracy became dysfunctional and change of government only meant the change of the governing family. This is why it is extremely important that no single individual and groups should control all the levers of power. In the United States, the separation of power between legislative and executive is supposed to provide necessary checks and balances. But when the same political party controlled both the White House and the House of Representatives, checks and balances became ineffective as evidenced by the Republican Party's control of the White House and Congress for the last six years, leading to a disastrous war in Iraq. As Lord Acton once remarked: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

To stem the concentration of power, the caretaker government must ensure that no single political group gets monopoly over political power. All the major political parties should have a say in governing and no family should be allowed to dominate the political process. All political sons and daughters must find their ways through their individual efforts. In the United States, Hillary Clinton is trying to get elected on her own merits and being the wife of a former president may not help her in the long run. In Bangladesh, the family members of the political leaders become instant leaders even though they have little to show.

The caretaker government must not allow such monopoly of political power by family members without any qualifications. And it must find a way to end partisan bickering among political parties. Some kind of power-sharing may help to end this virtual paralysis when opposing political parties refuse the election

outcomes and continue to disrupt the country after the election.

Mahmood Elahi
Iris Street, Ottawa
Canada

Dismal state of PSC

Your editorial of 24 Mar. 07 has been a timely delineation of the picture prevailing in the PSC. May I add a few words about my son-in-law's plight with your demand of investigation and punishment for the culprits.

My son-in-law qualified in BCS written exams. Since I was a middle ranking civil servant, my daughter and he came to me with the good news. They informed me that they have got a 'source' and if they pay Tk.400,000.00 he would be selected in his desired cadre. They requested me to either pursue the PSC for his selection or allow him to pay Tk.400,000.00 to the source. They informed me that they have got assurance from the source that if he is not selected the source would pay the money back. What they had to do was to give them half the said money as advance and half after the results are published. I didn't believe the story and branded that as baseless.

My in-law didn't get the selection that time. I consoled myself thinking that it might happen to anybody. Then the next year, for the second time, after getting the chance in the written exams again, they came to me with the same proposal. They also informed me that some of their friends, who paid the said amount of money to the source, had got selected. My daughter told me that I didn't have to pay anything for them; just they were seeking my advice and recommendation. "Getting a civil service post can't be possible in lieu of money," I opined very firmly. I declined to request or suggest them to pay money, since it was not ethical and realistic. This time I could read the annoyance and frustration on their faces.

The result was the same. They have stopped coming to me. Where to complain about this misery I don't know. The government should look into the matter to save the civil service from total ruination.

Monzur Rahman
Rajshahi

McKinnon's comments

I am very surprised that you have given so much prominence to the comments made by the Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon with regard to the lifting of emergency in Bangladesh. Commonwealth as a colonial institution is a dead duck waiting to be devoured. Britain having strangled this institution long time ago kept the skeleton as a museum show piece for the Africans and the Asians, at best it is an expensive club for the ruling elites. The Commonwealth Secretary General should not meddle in the internal affairs of Bangladesh. He should speak out against the illegal war in Iraq and fight the draconian laws passed by Mr. Howard to gag free speech of the Islamic organisations in Australia.

Dr. Fakhruddin should do what is best for Bangladesh, that is to provide space so that it can breathe freely without being strangled again by the devilish characters who had been devouring the country since its independence. The West never likes a developed, decent, economically independent and powerful state emerging in South Asia.

A citizen, On e-mail

Encroachment on narrow lanes

There are so many houses in lanes and by-lanes of the capital city. Those shouldn't have been there for the sake of discipline and habitability. These are not the old houses of old city but new ones, came up only a couple or a few years back on so called DIT/Rajuk-passed plan! I shall not point it by name, but it won't be hard to find such 6/7-storey buildings on only 1/2 katha plots along just a 10/12 feet wide lane. How can you raise such a tall building on such a narrow lane not leaving an inch of space on any side for at least some semblance of natural light and ventilation? Without provision of sufficient natural light and ventilation a house is no house but a suffocating cell. Outside, the narrow lane just appears incapacitated to take load of the multiplied number of dwellers along its sides, not to speak of bearing the burden of an increasing number of vehicles. The service lines are also made incapacitated, just cannot take the load, especially sewage and water, for too many users. This is under no circumstance any ideal condition for living. Then why are we going for such construction with only one lift for say, four flats on each of the seven floors, and a narrow staircase, often kept dark? You cannot get optimum utility of the same during emergency situation, for instance, fire, tremor etc.

Moreover, these structures have just violated construction rules and encroached upon the blank space of neighbour and/or road. Some have encroached on road just from the ground floor; some have started it from upstairs expanding the structure on road. Such top-heavy structures not only become hazardous themselves but also create hazard for neighbours blocking the space left for natural air and light.

Don't these buildings deserve partial demolition as those on the main road, where action is being taken?

Manik Chowdhury
Wari, Dhaka

English question paper of SSC exams

While reviewing my grand child's question paper of the ongoing SSC examinations, I noted with great surprise that the question paper on English First Paper contains serious mistakes with regard to wrong punctuation, misspelled words (i.e. Stratford), improper capitalization of initials, and wrong use of articles ('and' in place of 'an'). The most serious mistake was the wrong punctuation of the last sentence in the first paragraph of the reading test ("others ... numbers."), which makes it an ambiguous sentence.

Most young examines will be confused in understanding the meaning of these questions and writing the correct answer. Some of these mistakes could have been corrected at the examination hall, but I do not know whether this has been done.

These mistakes have probably occurred due to the negligence and oversight or not doing careful proof reading of the script during the printing stage. I would appreciate if the examination authorities review the undesirable lapses and prevent their future occurrence.

Nazma Ahmed Kona
Dhaka