

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.

Peacekeepers' Day

The International Peacekeepers' Day was globally observed on 29 May. The day, however, reminds us of the turmoil & conflicts in certain countries, and the measures that are adopted by the UN to tackle them with united efforts of the countries across the globe. A highly commendable move by the world body, and equally unique is the united stand of the peace loving people of the world.



While observing the day, we however recall with all humility and dignity the contributions of our armed forces in this regard. The Bangladesh army joined the UN peacekeep-



ing force way back in 1987, and from that time onwards they have been working with all valour and conviction for the humanity at large.

They worked as a peacekeeping force under the UN in different countries in Africa, and the number of our army personnel is now the second largest, once it was the largest! Praiseworthy is the fact that our army has by now been recognised as a disciplined, skilled and committed force.

We are indeed proud of our armed forces that have played important roles globally and within the country.
Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Bangladesh postal service

We appreciate the advancement of our postal services.

Unfortunately, a few small groups of corrupt employees are still reportedly engaged in illegal opening of envelops. These activities must be stopped.

M. Zaman
California, USA

Public libraries

It is imperative and also a priority work for the government to open a public library in each municipality of the country as a civic amenity!

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information should supply the existing and the new libraries in the municipalities with essential books, magazines, daily newspapers and fortnightly periodicals for the readers and also moti-

vate and increase the number of readers across the country.

Golam Ashraf
Gulshan, Dhaka

Let there be light!

According to the government's proclamations, all shops are to be closed after 7:00pm excepting food courts and medicinal shops. In view of the distressing power crisis, maybe we can no longer afford to work after dusk, and have to reconcile with this setback. But shouldn't we prepare ourselves for such future challenges like the power shortage that we are facing now? Or should we go on just tightening our belts and leaving our future generations groping in the dark at every step of their life? We surely don't want to make the mistake our predecessors made, and therefore want to equip ourselves better. And to that end, maybe including bookshops in the list of allowed shops to

remain open after dusk, could be the first step toward sending the message across all corners of the society, that knowledge is the brightest torch that one can bear to foresee upcoming challenges. Bookshops surely deserve to be kept open (even 24 hours, if possible) as we have a very scanty percentage of well-educated, skilled and morally--upright people in our society. If I am asked personally, I would voluntarily euphemize by saying that in a country like ours, keeping bookshops closed is tantamount to committing suicide en masse.

I would, therefore, implore the government to act to illuminate our bookshops, the houses of knowledge.

Rajib Ahmed
*Lecturer, Department of English
Southeast University*

Reform issue

Reform is the word very much

talked-about nowadays as far as the survival of the biggest (not necessarily the best) two political parties is concerned. Just like many others (at least here in Sydney), I would be very delighted if a third party could continue forever. Often I ponder over writing something to you and the very next day I find that someone has already written it!

I have a small point to make. Why can't we just close all the doors for any person to become prime minister more than twice? Inclusion of such a rule in the constitution will eventually solve many problems.

Can't the government consider my proposal?
Syed Quader
*Programmer, ECD
Infomedia Ltd*

Mugging on autorickshaw

Mugging of autorickshaw passengers has increased manifold in recent times. The muggers target their prey mostly in traffic jams and in deserted areas. The muggers usually work in collusion with the auto-drivers and in some stray cases the crime is being committed by a section of people who are either classified criminals or mentally derailed youths looking for money to buy drugs. It is very unfortunate that despite so many complaints or appeals made through different newspapers the police could not arrest the criminals, even though their number is very negligible. However, considering the modus operandi of the criminals I have a suggestion to make in order to solve the problem.

Most of these criminals are taking advantage of the traffic jam or helplessness of passengers in some solitary street; they just silently board the autorickshaw beside an unsuspecting passenger and then take out their weapons and compel the passengers to pay whatever they have. And that is not the end of the ordeal, they sometimes don't even hesitate to rub a substance made with chili powder and ointment on the eyes of the victims, leaving them in a near blind state.

Now we all see that most of the CNG driven autorickshaws have put grills made of steel on both sides of their driving seat. I don't know what on earth they had put those grills for. Definitely they put it for their own protection. Now if the

same grill is put on the sides of the passenger's seat, I think this would definitely reduce a lot of mugging on autorickshaws.

Humayun Hyder
Zigatola, Dhaka

27th BCS

The new PSC Chairman in a recent TV coverage assured that justice would be done to all the candidates selected in the 27th BCS.

I sincerely hope that the government will live up to its promise.
Professor M Zahidul Haque
SAU, Dhaka

Musharraf's candidness

If political mobilisation and statements of various Kashmiri leaders (whether Muftis or Abdullahs or Yasin Malik or Mirwaiz Umer Farooq or Syed Ali Shah Geelani etc.) during last one month are any indication, then Kashmiris seem to be getting restless for an early solution of the Kashmir problem which has already taken the lives of 80,000 Kashmiris (as per EU report).

But on the contrary, the most important development is:-

(i)- The President of Pakistan (during an interview telecast widely by Indian electronic media) said that despite asking everybody concerned nobody could give solution of Kashmir problem, hence he put forward his formula (joint control, demilitarization, making different zones etc.) in order to invite response and suggestions so that some solution may ultimately emerge out.

Mushrraf's candid acknowledgment that nobody has solution to Kashmir problem is quite understandable. The following points must be considered.

(1) The unanimous resolution of the Indian Parliament apart from the position of the Indian Constitution ordains that the entire Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) including PAK is an integral part of India. Hence any dilution of sovereignty or territorial integrity of India on J&K is simply not possible.

(2) It will be foolishness to expect Pakistan to forget PAK which is under its uninterrupted possession for the last sixty years.

(3) The international community will not brook any military solution of Kashmir problem by India or

Morality and politics

Badrul Ahsan's essay (May 16) did not mention morality as such. However the cowardly or maybe greed-driven swing in our politicians' principles is a shameful example before us. No wonder, after Bangabandhu, there are no more principled politicians in our political arena today! Everyone talks of people's welfare but acts only for self-welfare!

In contrast; look at Blair; once he realised that he was a hindrance to the party's progress; he stepped down! Can one imagine this happening among our ministers? Possibly the solitary exception was the state minister of power in the former BNP regime. I wonder if there is any other example in the last say ten years. Another such principled person was the Late Tajuddin Ahmed, in the first Bangladesh cabinet. He stood for his principles against the total hold that Shiekh Mujib commanded in those days! He had the courage and the guts to stand by his beliefs; and he was morally right. Neither a popular orator, nor a magnetic personality, yet I firmly believe that Tajuddin Ahmed was the solitary morally courageous



politician in the last half a century in Bangladesh! May Allah rest his soul in peace.
S.A.Mansoor,
Gulshan, Dhaka

Pakistan, given the fact that both are nuclear powers.

Hence it is clear that the present political arrangement of India & Pakistan cannot provide any solution to Kashmir problem.

Hem Raj Jain
New Delhi, India

Abhor the corrupt

They reduced our capability, destroyed our economy, undermined the national security, played dirty politics to achieve their goals, killed our conscience, kidnapped our freedom and made us a helpless, hopeless nation.

To get rid of these curses let all of us hate them. God bless our motherland.

Shaon, Osaka, Japan

Human-animal embryos

Last week the British government, in violation of European law, overturned its ban on the creation of human-animal embryos.

The draft of the Human Tissue

and Embryos Bill would allow scientists to create a chimeric embryo by injecting cells from an animal into a human embryo, and a human transgenic embryo by injecting animal DNA into a human embryo. The first somatic cell nuclear transfer is named after the chimera - the fire-breathing female monster of Greek mythology who had a lion's head, a goat's body, and a serpent's tail.

On a biological level the pre-natal being is not like any other tissue: it is human with its own DNA indicating that, as a human, it has the same fundamental and moral right to life as any other human being. The proposed therapy performed on early human embryos is immoral because it alters forever the basic genetic constitution of the person and all of his or her future offspring.

Amazingly, though embryonic stem cell experiments have failed to produce a single, unqualified, therapeutic success, even in animal models, supporters of the embryonic model continue to laud their

unproven and currently unethical methods and ignore the fact that adult stem cell therapies are being used extensively today in treating diseases.

We must help those who are suffering, but we may not use a good end to justify an evil means. Human beings are not raw materials to be exploited or commodities that can be bought and sold. To suggest otherwise is to endorse a macabre interpretation of progress. Pure and simple this latest method of genetic manipulation is nothing more than Frankenstein science.

Paul Kokoski
*Hamilton, Ontario
Canada*