

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.

Environmental degradation



"Look after this planet, it's the only one we have". This is a personal message from worldwide fund for nature president, The Duke of Edinburgh.

Long before that came a warning from one of the greatest British philosophers, Bertrand Russell, which reads: "Man even if he does not commit scientific suicide, will perish ultimately through the failure of water or air or warmth". Many more messages & warnings have been issued by world scientists, distinguished persons, climatologists in this respect. Even the nature came out with its fury in different ways like tornado, acid rain, tsunami, flood, earthquake, landslide etc. These types of catastrophes are happening every day in some part of the earth. But we are unmoved & still damaging the only planet we live in.

Destruction of forests, killing of animals, birds & other living species, pollution of rivers, air etc. are going on unabated. The earth is now facing the most dangerous threat from the Greenhouse Effect that makes it warmer thus causing the ice to melt. If it goes on unchecked from emission of gas from hundreds of thousands of industrial plants in the developed countries, it will cause serious damage to the ozone layer.

With the melting of ice, the sea level will go higher by a few metres. If that happens, surely it will happen unless otherwise tackled, the rich countries which are mostly responsible for gas emission from their industrial plants will suffer less because they have money, technology & men to tackle it. But what about the poor countries having none of them?

MA Alim
Ex. Banker
Indira Road, Dhaka

Save the barrage

A 14 kilometre long embankment was built from Zatramora to Golakandail in Rupgonj upazilla in Narayanganj district. It is called the NND embankment. As a result of building the embankment, the lands inside the barrage are now very suitable for building houses and other installations. That is why thousands of dwelling houses were built by the low income service holders, traders and other people inside the dam. Apart from this, many industries were set up in the area. The localities are called Barpa, Satalara khadon, Moikoli, Ariabo, Mashabo and Golakandail. The embankment which was built only by earth filling is, however, very vulnerable. It can be washed away any time during the rainy season. In the rainy season the water level rises equal to the height of the barrage. If it is damaged untold sufferings will be caused to the residents and valuables and essentials will be lost forever. The past governments did not take any pragmatic steps to make it stable and strong.

The authorities concerned should look into the matter.
Afruz Akter (Riba)
Rupgonj, Narayanganj

Financial trap?

Every now and then, the newspapers carry conditional tariff reduction ads from different mobile companies saying "Offer valid until further notice". However, when these campaigns are over, the companies do not go for an announcement in the same "loud" manner, thus leaving the public under the false impression of continuation of reduced tariffs. A financial trap?
CNR
Chittagong

Party reform

The CTG must encourage good politicians from the AL and the BNP to carry out reforms in the parties as soon as possible. That's the only way out!
Dr. Farid Majumder
Darmstadt
Germany

Biman

The news of Biman flyers being stuck at ZIA is not surprising to me. Although we had bad experience with a Biman flight from Dhaka to Frankfurt earlier, we decided, due to understandable reasons, to take the Biman flight again to travel to Nepal.

On the due date when we went to the Biman counter for check-in, to our utter surprise we were told that the flight had been cancelled, the reason being there were not enough passengers. We had our hotel and all other programmes booked in Nepal for a tour!

Most disturbing was that one Biman official arrogantly told us that we could not claim accommodation in a hotel at Biman's expenses. Ultimately, we approached a responsible high Biman official who was very kind and knowing my relationship to someone who was previously in a high position and to whom he was indebted in some way or other, he put us in a hotel. There ended my love for the airline of my homeland!
N.G. Chaudhury
Luxembourg

Black water

I have been following your story on black water in the Sundarbans. It amazes me that no one could give a good explanation for this occurrence. Is there any real biologist in Bangladesh?
In my second year as an under-

graduate student I learned that "black water" is actually called Red Tides and it looks black because of microscopic plants and other dissolved matters. Although, it is mysterious how they survive in an open ocean but a biologist should be able to easily identify them.

The reason hilsa fish and other animals came too close to the shore is because they feed on these microscopic planktons - and they followed the food source.

Al Mamoon
California, USA

In response...

The letter by Sami Abedin from California, USA was filled with some illogical views (I beg apology if the writer finds my language offensive). True, it was a well written letter, but, sorry to say it failed to impress me. Our national cricket team is going through a torrid time. So, the writer thought that calling a moratorium on international cricket would be the best solution to cure the ill.

Whenever our cricketers fail to justify their ability, critics never miss the opportunity to denounce them. However, I must request them to kindly go back to the history of cricket before embarking on such baseless opinions as canceling of international tours. Scores like 89 and 62 are not only our disgrace. Look back to 2003; it was a Test match series between Pakistan and Australia. As far as I can remember, Pakistan were bundled out for 59 and 57 in successive innings in the second match of the series before getting whitewashed 3-0. How does that sound for the performance of a top team in the world? Did they go into hibernation for three years?

It's true that seven years is a long time to generate the required level of quality as a Test playing team and Bangladesh failed to

do so. What our cricketers have failed to achieve is maturity, a much required ingredient for surviving at the Test level. But closing the door to international cricket is not the answer!
Md. Sabbir Saadat
European Standard School

Pray for Sabina Yasmin

We need such artistes who play an important role in the cultural arena. Sabina Yasmin is such an artiste whose songs have attracted, charmed and overwhelmed the music lovers. She is sick and is now under treatment in Singapore.

The people of Bangladesh who take pride in her songs are really shocked to learn the bad news. I think the total expenses of her treatment should be borne by the government.

We pray to the Almighty for her early recovery and we believe that the ailing singer will soon be back among us. We miss her!
Md. Abdus Salam
Assistant Teacher
Joypara Pilot High School
Joypara, Dohar, Dhaka



(ESS)
Dhaka

Divorce

From time immemorial, women have been suffering from different types of oppressions in male-dominated societies.

Though our Prophet (Pbuh) said, "Talak is the most detestable of all permissible things before the Almighty Allah," our heroic men (!) are practising this without any hesitation. Shame on the heroes who are making the lives of innocent women miserable. They never think about the fates of their wives.

Men should be discouraged to exercise this legal yet inhuman right.

Rama Islam
Lecturer, Department of English
Metropolitan University, Sylhet

Corruption in police dept.

Kamran Reza's investigative reporting in Star Weekend Magazine (July: 6) reflects all that is bad, corrupt and immoral with our police.

Has the sub-inspector concerned been demoted or removed from police service to set an example? It will indeed be sad if nothing is done.

S.A. Mansoor
Gulshan, Dhaka

Begum Zia

Former PM Begum Khaleda Zia, so long in the doghouse with her party men, apart from the drama of her exit from the country, now seems to have jerked herself up and exuded confidence and self assurance as she spoke to the journalists at the Birdem Hospital (20/06/07). She appeared rather

outspoken about the much-talked-about reforms in her party and looked assured to tell that reforms would be carried out after consultation/discussion with the grassroots leaders. She has thus thrown spanners to the scheme of reforms her once most trusted leaders, now turned most disgusted, are busy to give a final shape to, apparently minus her. In the meantime, she has also given an interview with the US-based Bangla News Media through teleconference when/where she expressed she would disown and dismiss all allegations when the nation would have a talk-free friendly atmosphere. She has now made headlines saying that the reform proposal must come through the meeting of the councilors.

It is indeed amazing that so many of her cabinet members (while she was the PM), her personal secretaries, her lawmakers, her kith and kin including her son Tarique Rahman are in custody with so many charges of stunning corruption, bribery, extortion and even of laundering billions to foreign countries. She was expected to quit politics voluntarily. Some of her own men have been involved in many under-hand dealings of acquiring money and wealth by starkly foul means.

The way the alliance government and the party under her leadership befooled, beguiled and betrayed the nation warrants her to beg an apology to the nation, especially for the offensive criminal acts her sons and Mr. Babar and the likes wallowed in. Look, we were grounded by the sky-rocketing price spiral of essentials and insufferable load-shedding, but she harped on having done sweeping developments in the country and pampered us as having augmented our purchasing capacity. What a filthy hoax!

If she is yet to comprehend the

no substitute

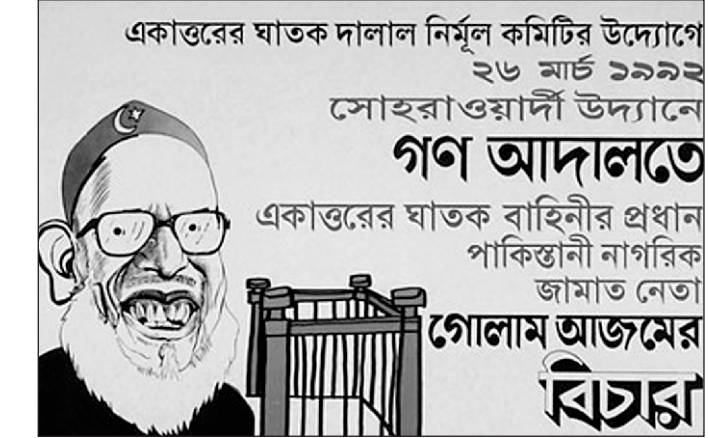
I am a staunch nationalist. I love Bangladesh, its people, climate and culture. I must say that our country has a rich cultural heritage and great natural beauty that's hard to describe. But it is a matter of great regret that the country is still lagging behind others insofar as progress is concerned.

I dream of a modern Bangladesh free from poverty, diseases and superstitions. I want Bangladesh to emerge as an industrial giant; so that its economy may compete with that of the most advanced nations of the world.

I'm sure most Bangladeshis share my views.
Sumaiya Amin
Dept. of English Language and literature
ISU, Chittagong

BTV

I enjoyed the lively interview of the former US Ambassador, Ms Patricia Butenis, on June 22, 2007 in the "Shomoyer Kotha" aired in BTV. It was quite a break from the usual boring BTV stuff and I also enjoyed the next discussion on price hike of essentials in the same programme. The quality of the stage, the information content, the analysis of the subject - everything seemed too good to be true for BTV. The host Sayeed Monir Khosru (hope getting his name correctly) is well conversant in both Bangla and English. He has a professional approach and both the programmes were of high standard. Those of us who have access to cable channels hardly watch BTV due to the lacklustre nature of its programmes. The political parties over the years have made BTV their party mouthpiece. We want to see more such quality programmes in BTV as the caretaker government has stated its desire to give autonomy to BTV and Bangladesh



War criminals

Bangladesh became an independent and sovereign state through a historic war for national independence. More than 30 lakh people sacrificed their lives for this independence. Obviously, the year 1971 was the most critical juncture in the history of the nation. After that we had a new dream, a dream to make a socialist society through a democratic process. But we failed. A military takeover made everything wrong. Then the regimes of Hasina and Khaleda started. They

looted the country. The year 2007 is another critical juncture for Bangladesh when a caretaker government is trying to restore the derailed train on the right track. They are trying their level best. But I believe it will never come back on the right track until the war criminals of 1971 are punished.

Is it possible to rebuild the nation without bringing them to justice?

Jewel Rana
Student of Agriculture faculty
BAU, Mymensingh

to invite trouble!

Our great leaders made too many mistakes in the past. They kept those Pakistani loyalist in the administration. Therefore, today we see Rajakars' sons and daughters representing Bangladesh.

At present the caretaker government's achievement is not significant. The caretaker government's real test will be held on the poll day.
Sumon dutta
On e-mail

For a better electoral system

There is lot of wastage in our election system. If those can be avoided, the country can use that money for meeting other crying needs. I think the following steps can help improve the efficiency of the electoral system.

1. Right now a candidate for MP election is allowed to run for five seats. This should be reduced to one seat. This will help the country to avoid the costs of by-elections.
2. All major elections should be held at the same time and duration for all electoral bodies should be also the same (either 4 or 5 years). Now, we have separate elections for Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad (not held for a couple of years), Pourashava, City Corporation and Parliament. If Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad, Pourashava, City Corporation and Parliament elections are held at the same time, this will save the country several billion taka. If an adequate number of security personnel is not found, the election can be held on 4 or more days. To ensure transparency, the counting can be

held at the same time when elections are complete. This will also help the country to focus more on the economy than having different elections every 2-3 years.

3. Currently, if an MP or any other elected person dies or is unable to perform his/her duty or forced out of position by law for different reasons, a re-election occurs. This is costly for a country like Bangladesh. So a less expensive system of replacement should be found.

4. If a candidate dies before the election, the election for that seat gets postponed in Bangladesh. It is costly for the country to reprint the ballots and run the election separately. The election should be held without her/him.

5. The deposit money to run for any election is very low. The amount should be raised so that only serious candidates seek election.

6. All posters, leaflets and big gates should be banned.

7. No election meeting should be allowed on public road(s). This will help economic activities to continue as usual even during election time.

8. To increase transparency of the system, all candidates should declare her/his own and family assets, debt report and funding process for the election.

I think there might be more ideas for having an efficient electoral system. Hope the EC and the government will take such steps as will increase the efficiency of the electoral system as a whole.

Ishak Zaman
MI, USA

Greeting with "Kadam"

I had an appointment with a VIP. On the way at the Bijoy Sharani traffic point, I saw some street children selling kadam flowers. I was delighted to find kadam making its place among Rajanigondha, Golap etc.

I bought some kadam flowers to greet the man I was going to meet. Well, it was heartily accepted and appreciated!

Professor M Zahidul Haque
SAU, Dhaka

