

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.

Rodent attack in CHT

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is the home to many ethnic communities having rich cultural heritage. Sadly, People of the CHT have never been given due opportunities to develop and have consistently been victims of discrimination in many sectors. To make their lives even worse this year, rodent attack has deprived them of the expected harvest.

As reports have it, a programme to exterminate rats has been launched from February 3. But the fact that no special measures have been included in the programme for the affected areas of the CHT is utterly unjustified. In spite of Devashish Roy's appointment as the Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser and his visit to the affected areas, quick and effective measures are yet to be taken. This is really unfortunate, especially when at least a representative of CHT people is available in the administration and he is supposed to play a more active role now in the interests of the CHT.

This kind of attitude towards CHT people will eventually leave

them with reinforced harsh feelings of negligence. They do deserve sufficient help to face this crisis and need a boost in their fight with abject poverty.

Ahmad Ferdous Bin Alam
Department of CSE, DU

Age limit of 28th BCS

I was very happy to see the 28th BCS circular but when I saw the age limit I was shocked. This circular has been declared after two and a half years. The circular of 27th BCS was published in 2005. Owing to reforms in the PSC and the exam procedure, the circular has come late. And for this reason, almost 50 thousand candidates won't be able to appear in this exam this year.

We hope the PSC will reconsider its decision.

Syed Nihar Mostofa
One-mail

We salute the teachers!

Whatever I may have achieved as a physician in terms of education, finances, service to humanity, I have always felt that, sum total of

all that is credited in my account, will never be equivalent to that of a university teacher. I have pursued studies to earn degrees, I have been reading occasionally to overcome certain professional problems, I have been attending (at times speaking in), seminars, workshops and conferences, to meet requirements for continued professional registration, but, a University teacher produces people like me, earning and discharging knowledge is their day to day work, so are the seminars and conferences. I have seen wherever I have gone and worked, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America they, the University teachers, are at the top most strata of admiration.

Even in Sub-Saharan Africa countries or in the Kingdoms, Emirates or Sultanates of the Middle East, it is inconceivable that such respected people, like the university teachers, are placed under police remand. If our respected teachers have marched to the Shaheed Minar, if they have demanded lifting of Emergency and restoration of democracy, they certainly have committed no crime. Violation of EPR? Our repre-

sentatives, the members of the then Constituent Assembly (of 1972), have not approved suppression of fundamental rights for more than 120 days, because it is unfair and inhuman to prolong that suspension for an indefinite period. Dr. Kamal Hussain can interpret the constitution in whichever way he wants to, but we believe that is the fact.

As for the violence that took place outside the University in August last year, the teachers and the students were not responsible, that was the backlash of wholesale destruction and eviction of way-side small businesses.

We salute Prof Sadrul Amin, Prof Harun ur Rashid, Prof Nazrul Islam, and Prof Neem C. Bhowmik, and all the students who have endured brutality in custody to uphold freedom and dignity. They along with the teachers and students of RU and of other institutions shall be remembered on 20 August every year as our heroes.

The university teachers will certainly be in politics, our politics will be much enriched by them!

Dr. M. Hussain
One-mail

How can one govern Bangladesh?

How can one govern Bangladesh when we find:

- Too much criticism by so-called educated people against any action taken by the caretaker government without doing anything constructive themselves.

- Educated people are saying that previous governments, although corrupt, were better because the Bangladesh economy was growing.

- Poor people, whose concern is day-to-day living, are saying that they do not care about any government as long as the prices of essentials are affordable.

- Poor people are saying that the government without giving priority to their fight against corruption should provide fertilisers and bring the prices of rice, oil and other daily needs down.

But, contrary to the above observations, I was delighted to find rickshaw pullers, taxi drivers and other common people say-

ing:
- The past leaders were corrupt and they should not be allowed to come back to power. We should learn lessons from the past.

- That this situation of price hike is temporary and mainly due to floods and the devastating cyclone and we should have the patience to overcome this.

In the long run, what counts is majority people's decision. If the majority thinks that a bad government which provides food for common people is better than a good one which fails in this mission, then let the majority decide.

A country where majority people are without real education will remain in dark and only a few decent people cannot bring this people out of this darkness.....because they are only a few against an ocean of majority!

N.G. Chaudhury
Luxembourg



Sound pollution at DITF

A few days ago I visited DITF with my mother. The fair covers a big area. Moving from stall to stall is actually difficult for the aged. Young people also get tired if they want to visit every stall of the fair. The overall arrangement for the fair was satisfactory

but the objectionable and disturbing thing was the sound pollution created through the mikes and big speakers for advertisement of commodities inside the fair. Even I was facing difficulty to talk to the sellers as I had to shout to bargain with them.

The shop owners expressed their anger as well and informed me that they complained against this excessive harsh sound but the authorities did nothing to stop it.

Masum Ahmed (Munna)
North Badda
Gulshan, Dhaka

Dhaka Metro

I look forward to the days when metro train will be running in Dhaka city and we will be freed, even if partially, from the agonising and punishing traffic jam.

I have been writing about and advocating the metro train for many years. It seems that our dream is coming true!

SNMamoon
One-mail

Graffiti and posters

This is in reference to a news item appearing in your daily recently regarding the proposed ban on graffiti and posters. I would like to extend my heartiest congrats to the caretaker govt. for the bold decision. I had been very vocal on this issue and feel elated that my con-

cerns received due attention. The LGRD has drafted an ordinance proposing a ban on graffiti and pasting of posters on the walls of houses and establishments across the country. In order to keep the cities and roads clean and beautiful, the decision is very timely and has no alternatives. It would be appreciated if the proposed ordinance is extended to cover all the banners, arches and billboards. It would be interesting to observe the implementation of the law through stringent punishment to the violators.

Hope dust doesn't find time to settle down!

Shamim Ahmed
Gulshan, Dhaka

Ekushey Padak

It is good that every year some

people get Ekushey Padak for their outstanding achievements and service to the country or humanity, but it pains me when I see that some Padaks are awarded posthumously. Why the govt waits for their death, or is it given as a solace to the bereaved family? Why the award was not given during their lifetime is still a puzzle to me.

I would not be ashamed even if a dying or a seriously ill deserving person is awarded the Padak during his lifetime, so that at least he dies a satisfied person. I would request the govt to award the Padak to a living person and forget the dead, even though he was entitled to it during his lifetime.

There should not be a posthumous award at all!

Mohammed Alauddin
Green Road, Dhaka

Smoking and heart disease

Nowadays there are many health related programmes on satellite television channels, which are very encouraging. Many physicians come on TV and answer questions of the viewers. However, it is sad to get the wrong information from them. I was watching one such programme and one of the doctors was saying that there was no relationship between heart attack and smoking. This is not true.

From the American Heart Association website, "Many studies detail the evidence that cigarette smoking is a major cause of coronary heart disease, which leads to heart attack." There are numerous articles written in <http://jama.ama-assn.org> on this topic.

Since majority of the people in Bangladesh do not have any Internet access, this information is useless. Their main sources of information are TV and newspapers.

The programme host being a doctor should check the validity of this type of answers.

While many developed countries are trying hard to discourage smoking--raising prices, taxes, and not providing health-benefit to the smokers; talking irresponsibly on TV about smoking is tantamount to misleading people.

Mamun Ahmed
Las Vegas, NV, USA

BCS recruitment

People are posted in government service through BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) exams. It is an old recruiting system of this subcontinent.

At present, it does not play any constructive role in Bangladesh, rather it is encouraging corruption among the people. Fifty-five per cent boys and girls are recruited under special quota.

The matter needs to be addressed to make the system fair.

Sumon Dutta, One-mail

Aamir Khan's masterpiece

Aamir Khan is the most talented and respected actor of his generation. May be his popularity is less than other two Khans, Shahrukh Khan and Salman Khan but Aamir Khan is a superstar in his own right. And he has proved it yet again. His directorial debut "Taare Zameen Par" was the only movie last year, which brought tears in my eyes. Audience became a part of the film while watching it. Many of them felt, it was their story or the story of their children. It educated us. After watching the movie, we do feel there needs to be a change in the education system of our country as well.

Children are over burdened with studies and they are not able to enjoy their childhood. It was about the dyslexic child but the story is for every child. There is too much of pressure for studies from parents today. They forget that they are just small children. Can't these children enjoy their childhood the way they want?

Even many famous institutions of our country are still giving physical punishment to the students which is unacceptable in this 21st century. I was a student of a well known school and the teachers of this institution claim themselves as the best teachers of the best school. They are giving quality education to their students but the way they are treating their students is hard to believe. They are too harsh. I know a teacher, who cuts the hair of the male students if he finds slightly long hair. Is this the way they want to maintain discipline?

They should watch "Taare Zameen Par" and learn from it.

Nazmus Saqib
Dept. of English
Stamford University, Dhaka

Torture in custody

An editorial on the subject (Jan.26) in a local English daily was very timely, pertinent and necessary. While one appreciates the CTG's actions against corruption, under the same criteria action against alleged torture of victims on detention and remand also needs to be speedily taken. This is a far worse crime than any form of corruption, be it for monetary gain, influence peddling or misuse of power and authority for personal gain; none of which physically harms anyone!

Torture, if it has been practised, is a criminal offence, and if this takes place in a civilised country it is a shame! Torture is a recognised crime, both nationally and internationally and it reflects the worst possible image of Bangladesh, particularly in a non-violent and a non-war like situation. It is the most heinous type of crime, and cannot be condoned by any responsible government, which hopefully the CTG is! It is worse than anything that the CTG is so busy to uphold.

The CTG should investigate and if necessary punish any person who has been responsible for committing acts of torture as alleged by some teachers of Dhaka University and others, with the same spirit and speed like the steps taken against other crimes like corruption, and if needed the persons identified or suspected of committing torture should be remanded, pending trial while investigations are carried out.

Or is it that "What is sauce for the goose, is NOT sauce for the gander"! After all, everyone is a Bangladeshi here. The longer we sit over this matter and ignore it, the more will be the animosity and mutual distrust between different groups of citizens. That will be totally short-sighted in the overall national spirit of unity and understanding; both in the short and long term perspectives. Prompt and early action is necessary in the interest of humanity, law and impartiality; otherwise the CTG's image will get tainted. They should know that one misdeed will wipe out all the good deeds that they have done.

If allegations of torture are not true (hopefully), then the CTG should come out with a positive and firm statement on the issue.

A worried citizen
One-mail

A tribute to Justice Sobhan

I had the privilege of being introduced with Justice Sobhan. The last time I came in contact with him was in the Human Rights Summer School organised by ELCOP on 10 December 2007 in Proshika Centre, Manikgonj. Justice Sobhan went there to preside over the moot court session. When I met him he inquired of my well being addressing me by name. I was astounded a little bit. Because I thought that he might have identified my face but recalling the name would be a remote possibility. I informed him that I was thinking to opt for judicial service. He discouraged me and said, "You are quite perfect for an academic discipline." I told, "You are always campaigning for improving the judicial system, then do you not think that I would be of use for that purpose?" "Good academicians are also not out of the ambit of anti-generic lawyering," he retorted. Such was Justice K. M. Sobhan. I did not contemplate then that we, as a last bite of 2007 (31 December 2007), would lose the star of progressive movement, a relentless campaigner of human rights and a loud voice for trial of the war criminals and their aides of 1971.

I had no scope to see Justice Sobhan sitting at the Bench. But the picture can be visualized from a

remark while he was presiding over a moot court session. After the Counsel for the respondent had finished his submission, the Appellant's lawyer stood and deplored, "My Lord, my opponent counsel has given all his intelligence to mislead this court." Then Justice Sobhan commented with anguish, "Do you think that the court is seated here to be misled?"

The philosophy of K. M. Sobhan was simple---people oriented.

S. M. Masum Billah
Lecturer of Law
Northern University Bangladesh
Karwanbazar, Dhaka

Preventing cancer

We can prevent cancer epidemic in many ways but at least three things we can do:

1. Stop using plastic containers for eating and drinking.

2. Start using solar energy as much as possible, instead of using power generators.

3. Avoid adulterated foods.

Dr. Mahboob Hossain
Department of Pharmacy
The University of Asia Pacific
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Indo European origin

This is indeed a most interesting subject and I congratulate you on publishing the review of the book, "The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture" by Edwin Bryant (19 Jan 08). Another authoritative book by the archaeologist John V. Day entitled, "Indo European Origin: The anthropological Evidence" published by the Institute for the study of Man, Washington D.C discusses in scholarly detail with full references this topic and considers various scientific techniques like genetic and anthropological study of modern humans as well as remains found in various ancient gravesites in Europe and Asia, archaeological and linguistic evidences etc. and is a gold mine for researchers.

I was thrilled to learn that the

word 'Aristocrat' comes from the word 'Aryan', and that the Greek language evolved after about 60 generations of Indo European (IE) people moving into this territory and Latin came into existence from the same root after about 75 generations.

The book mentions two distinct probable origins of Proto Indo European (PIE) homeland. One is Anatolia where agriculture was first developed about 12,000 years ago and with the population explosion that could be supported by agriculture these people slowly moved in all directions carrying their language and culture with them, the process known as 'deimic diffusion'.

The other probability is that the PIE homeland was in the Kurgan steppes, and that these people were pastoralists (and not farmers), and that they spread out by 'Elite domination or folk migration' of small number of people. Evidence cited for this is the bigger physical structure, fairer skin, eyes and hair of ruling classes and folk heroes as depicted in folk myths. A scientific evidence is the spread of a gene which allows adults to drink milk without any ill effect which is common in Indo Europeans but rare amongst Africans and Chinese.

The other possibilities for the PIE homeland are too vague. Some claim it was in the Balkans, others that it was in North European regions bordering the North Sea, some even suggested they came from space! In such cases the IE language was thought to be spread by 'contact induced language shift' without any actual migration of domination e.g. say by mere trading.

Many key words in the IE language family like, horse, wheel, disease etc can be traced by philologist to have the same root.

The book does not present any overwhelming scientific evidence (although it discusses many) for selection of a definite PIE homeland. Neither does it mention or compare the various written

scripts and alphabets in languages like Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, German etc or pass any opinion as to when the oldest phonetic alphabets were formed and how! It only concentrates on spoken languages.

This is indeed a fascinating subject for all of us. If we can trace our ancestry and prove that the origin of mankind is one, then surely we have a great incentive to live peacefully side by side, irrespective of any man made differences which arose subsequently.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

5-day working week - a luxury?

Bangladesh is passing through a critical period of major reforms social, political, economic, moral, and cultural. It is time to review the 5-day working week imposed by some previous political regime; for more output, every minute of each hour, as our systems losses are very high, due to politics of patronisation. It lowered social discipline, and established black spots for lawlessness, and other undesirable activities in public life. How to focus on clearly defined national goals?

We have to work harder, with more dedication, and less pen-pushing. One and a half weekly holiday is a standard practice globally. Besides we are not in tune with the Global Village advantages, as our weekly holiday starts on Friday.

Can we afford the luxury of passing two whole days away from public duties? The proposed decentralization of power away from capital Dhaka needs a lot of homework and practice, before we could return to the routine levels of new expertise of neutral governance, not shadowed by political pulls.

Let us work five hours more per week for our own benefit, in the long run.

AMawaz, Dhaka

Obama's background



What prompted me to write this letter is the report I found in Internet about the Muslim background of Obama, the Democratic Presidential candidate.

Obama's middle name is Hussain, his father is a Kenyan Muslim. But

Obama himself is a Christian who attends a Church named United Church of Christ in Chicago.

Still, the people there seemed to be a little apprehensive about Obama. If Obama gets nomination

from Democrats, the Republicans will try to exploit it a bit. This is politics, same all around the globe!

Md. Mishfaq Ahmed
Dhanmondi
Dhaka



Police reform

Police reform is indeed a very good idea of the present caretaker government. Police have lost their image. The police law was enacted during the British period in

1861. It is not befitting for the present time. So, the police law must be modernised for developing a fully-fledged service oriented institution.

We believe the present reform proposal would restore the image of the police.

Nurnobe
Chittagong University