

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.

On a hotter planet!

Mark Lynas is an activist, journalist & author. He made many appearances in the media as commentator on environmental issues. He is author of High Tide & was also selected as a National geographic emerging explorer in 2006. Mark Lynas tried to let the people know the information he could collect which is truly unique, a degree by degree guide to our future on a hotter planet. After reading this book it made me curious & terrified too. Sunday Times commented: "Our future on a hotter planet-six degrees, I tell you now, is terrifying". Lynas says six degrees change in day night temperature will do no harm to the earth. But six degrees of global average change is an entirely different prospect. Six degrees as he said was beginning to feel like a survival manual, full of indications about which parts of the globe might need to be abandoned & which would be most likely to remain habitable. It also came to light that global warming is making the hydrological cycle more intense causing heavier storm & more intense hurricanes to brew up out at sea. He said about the misery suffered in New Orleans three years ago. He felt-like an insight into what the twenty first century may have in store for many of us in thousands of locations across the world as climate change accelerates. It further said that thermal inertia of the oceans would take centuries for temperature to stabi-

lize which amply indicated that we have already reached the point of no return. He also said six degrees might be depressing, the impacts are terrifying but they are still avoidable.

Let us see how Bangladesh is going to be affected. At the first strike of climate change a portion of Bangladesh will go underwater with the rise of sea level, putting millions of people homeless and creating pressure on the left out habitable areas.

MAAlim
Ex. Banker
Indira Road, Dhaka



Women's rights

A recent poll conducted by The Daily Star has illustrated that women's rights are still a contentious issue in our country. The results of the poll reminded me of the criticism that the last caretaker government had to contend with after it passed the National Women's Development Policy. I realize I may be treading on very thin ice by bringing up this topic because of its obvious implications but, nonetheless, I would like to say that equality isn't something that people have to strive for in this age. It should be something accorded to all of us regardless of our sex, income level, or religion.

I wholeheartedly applaud the prime minister's initiative to enact a law that will ensure women's equal rights to their parents' property and hope that her efforts will help to end the discrimination that exists in such cases today.

Ameer Sobhan
Student, North South University

"Little things please little minds"

Yes, one of your writers from UK has rightly and timely quoted the above proverb (DS 28 Dec.) to 'stop name game'. I have had in mind to write at length on the subject but then thought the way the courtiers of the present government are active in collecting and suggesting names, I can not win the race!

Can we not think big and become bigger and richer? I am not talking of becoming rich by the worth of money but to be richer in mind and greater in kind. I ask our leaders and politicians to look around and learn things-- you don't have to go far, just look at Malaysia -- 'where do they stand' and 'who is behind everything' (?) I have hardly seen anything in the name of that great man "Mahathir", who is usually described as great 'M' or "Dr. M". And please do not forget "The Man who Changed the World" (DS 28 Aug), he is, I am proud to say, our friend, the Nobel Laureate 'Dr. Md. Yunus', who is not running for any name plaque but the whole world is running behind him.

I don't want to be a party to any 'body' or 'thing' but as a sensible citizen I have every right to express my mind. Don't play with the names of 'Saints' and don't try to change some one's name (whom you don't like) and rename by a great Saint's name (to please public mind)-- it won't pay at the end. Moreover, international airports are no more ours only, it's internationalised just like the Suez Canal internationalised by the users. We must not forget that name of a gateway

is attached to the prestige of the country, it can not be abolished just by a stroke of a pen off and on. Similarly, nobody should dare to make fun and take off the name of a leader like 'Mowlana Bhashani' from any institution. I did not want to mention specific names-- just not to be partisan, but can't help and conclude today by saying that I felt too much embarrassed by a question of a foreigner. "How could you hijack the name of 'Bangladesh China Friendship Centre' overnight." Should we then conclude that this is the kind of culture we have inherited and no one would hesitate to change any name after the change of any government?

AF Rahman
One-mail

BNP's policy

The BNP's stand against India's proposal of sending security personnel to guard their high commission is quite intriguing. It's also self-contradictory, because they never question the presence of US marine corps at the US Embassy. If they allow the marines why create a fuss about the Indians?

It's their old trick to gain public support by opposing India. But gone are those days. Now we the public are well informed. So, it's not easy to gain any political advantage through such tactics. If they want to gain more public support they must change their mindset.

They must abandon the company of war criminals and religious zealots. They must oust the corrupt leaders who destroyed the reputation of both the country and the party. They must remember that it is 21st century and there's no place for narrow politics.

Solaiman Palash
East Jurain, Dhaka

Jamaat and a poet

My understanding is, a true Muktijoddha can never compromise with the Rajakars & Al Badr members who were involved with the gruesome killings and rapes of 1971. Came to know from a local daily that Poet Al Mahmud received an award from a reception of Jamaat-e-Islami that was arranged to honour (!) the freedom fighters. I personally feel disgusted that Mr. Al Mahmud had the discernment to participate in a programme like this which was arranged by a political party which does not believe in the very existence of Bangladesh!

Mr. Al Mahmud has not only disgraced himself but has also dishonoured the martyrs & freedom fighters of our great liberation war.

Ishtiaque
Banani, Dhaka

Future leaders

Pakistani President Mr. Asif Ali Zardari has vowed to fight legal battle in the court against a recent Supreme Court ruling. We highly appreciate his spirit and believe that it will be a good end for public view.

In Bangladesh the supporters of the two main political parties have engaged themselves in a battle, not court battle, of exchange of words against each other's upcoming leaders through all media outlets available there. Sometimes, we can even see some top ranking senior leaders of both the parties engaged in the on-going battle. By doing this at such a high level, both these parties are, in fact, popularising their future young heirs of their party founders for public view as "clean, dynamic and popular" leaders for the nation whom they want to leave behind for us after their retirement. This battle has left only one option open for the people to view and judge-- the media, especially talk shows, public addresses etc.

I am sure, both of them are gaining ground in the battle of words but the people are not. Out of the two sure heirs, one has already proved his popularity through a Bhaban while the other one has not yet ventured in public. However, he is being trained and motivated to venture as early as possible. We positively know our future leaders but we do not know much about their characters.

The one who has already proved some of his character-qualities is now living abroad

on bail. He is reportedly a hero of many wrong doings and is accused of many unproved charges. We are surprised while we hear some ministers talking about his wrong doings but the government itself is not pursuing cases against him. This is confusing people. We the general people who do not want to listen to each other's controversial exchanges, want our government to either desist from propaganda or to proceed with the cases, if there is any against him.

We also request the media people, irrespective of their tilts, not to publish unnecessary, unfounded or imaginary stories against anyone.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Underpass at Mohakhali

Thousands of people cross the Airport Road everyday from DOHS Mohakhali to Banani & Mohakhali Bazar & vice versa risking their lives. But the City Corporation is not paying any heed to the problem. May be they are not even aware of this problem. There are underpasses in Karwan Bazar & Gulistan which are serving a useful purpose.

I would earnestly request the Dhaka City Corporation to rise to the occasion & construct an underpass here urgently, to solve a very pressing problem for which they will definitely earn the gratitude of the people of this area.

Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury

Additional Secretary (Retd)

DOHS Mohakhali

Dhaka

Drug menace

Drug addiction is a state of periodic or chronic intoxication produced by the repeated consumption of a drug (natural or synthetic). It is dangerous for health and a curse for society. There are thousands of addicted people in Bangladesh and most of them are young. The young Bangladeshis are addicted to drug because of agony, anxiety, depression, bad company etc. Moreover, young people belonging to the upper class of society take alcohol and other drugs to maintain their status in the friend circles. Day by day, they are becoming more addicted to drugs in order to keep on their friend circle. As a result, whenever the young are being addicted by drug, they can not come back from it, so that they have to face different kinds of problems in life. Verily, drug is so easy to get in our country because its network is widespread.

Frankly, drugs are substances that affect the physical and mental condition of a person. It is making them ill and decaying their physical, psychological capability. Among others HIV prevalence has been rising among the people who inject drugs. The direct consequences of drug addiction are loss of health and happiness, stresses on social and family lives and rise in crimes.

Drug abuse and addiction

have become an alarming phenomenon in Bangladesh. Thus, a plan has to be drawn up in order to reclaim our young from drugs.

Mohammed Jamal Uddin
Dept. of English
International Islamic
University Ctg.

Toward and towards

One of my colleagues while engaged in writing a text suddenly asked me, what's the difference between the words 'Toward' and 'Towards'? In usage these two words often create confusions, which one is correct?

Well, both 'toward' and 'towards' are correct. There is no semantic distinction between the words, the difference is rather dialectal, 'toward' is common in American English while 'towards' in British English. Both the words are being used as preposition.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Chairman
Department of Agricultural
Extension & Information
System
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural
University, Dhaka

Pensioners & red-tapism

The government should open one-stop service centres for old-pensioners, so that they do not have to run from one office and table to another. This is essential in view of the new pension scales announced by the government.

The present situation is not at all pensioner-friendly, in view of outdated rules and regulations, and corrupt practices now prevailing in society.

Some pensioners draw their monthly pension through their bank accounts. Necessary procedural instructions may be issued to the banks, for quick disposal of paperwork.

Alfa Ahmad

Dhaka

Cadet college story

Thank you for the article on Faujdharhat Cadet College "Wistful Memories and Unfulfilled Promises" by M. Rahman (The Daily Star: Internet Edition, December 15, 2009). It starts with his dilemma in joining the golden jubilee and ends with his disillusionment, in his view, in the elite school's apparent failure of fulfilling the expectations of the nation. This is in stark contrast with a piece by another FCC alumnus F. Ahmed, presumably his 6th intake mate, entitled "Faujdharhat Cadet College: Half a Century of Excellence" (The Daily Star: Internet Edition, April 28, 2008) that glorified its 'visionary founder' and 'the legendary founding principal' as well as the accomplishments of many ex-cadets, among other things.

If Rahman is confounded that "FCC and similar boarding schools have simply failed

to live up to the aspirations and expectations of the nation" and whether "the existing FCC structure meets national goals", it may not be difficult to comprehend why. It is because of men like the distinguished FCC alumni and others, who were privileged to get the best pre-college education the poor nation could provide in the publicly-funded boarding schools having a 'colonial ambience' at a nominal cost, yet chose to live in the comfort of the West, whose taxpayers may not have spent a dime on their education.

It may be a smart thing to complain that "the most disappointing thing is the lack of any public service oriented activities by FCC alumni, who were expected to carry the torch of leadership into the broader national arena", but it will certainly be a prudent thing to rethink whether to contribute to an alien society or to the country of their birth. No elite boarding school, like the Scotch College in Australia, the International School of Geneva in Switzerland, the Eton, Harrow or Sevenokas in the UK, the Phillips or the Deerfield Academy in the USA, or the Doon School in India, is funded absolutely with public money, except the military-style FCC and similar schools in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, Bangladesh suffers the most from the emigration of bright individuals nurtured at the cost of taxpayers' money.

Ashraf Z Khan, Ph.D

Morrisville

USA

Afghanpur, not Pakhtunkhwa

Let us strike at the root of the trouble. And the only best way out for resolving our protracted problems is to declare the presently 22 divisions of the country (Pakistan) as provinces and each one has to be declared entitled for equal resources, irrespective of population, topography and area. The root cause for all of our basic tribulations is mis-governance and mismanagement because of incompetence of our elite and unmanageability of our masses. But looters are not supposed to be leaders.

So, let us be confined to this non-issue of renaming this ill fated province of an ill fated country.

So my suggestion is that 'Afghanpur' is more appropriate and more in consonance with the nice people of NWFP, hence I suggest 'Afghanpur' instead of 'Pakhtunkhwa' to be declared the new name of this province. And I have grounds for my suggestion. All of the people of NWFP, including Chitrali speaking, Hindko speaking, Torwali speaking, Gujro speaking, Kohistani speaking, Kalamli speaking and Pashto speaking are of Afghan origin but not Pakhtun in toto. So to have harmony, suitability and acceptability among all the people 'Afghanpur' is more adequate.

Aftab Alam

Advocate (High Court)
President, District Bar
Association, Swat, Pakistan

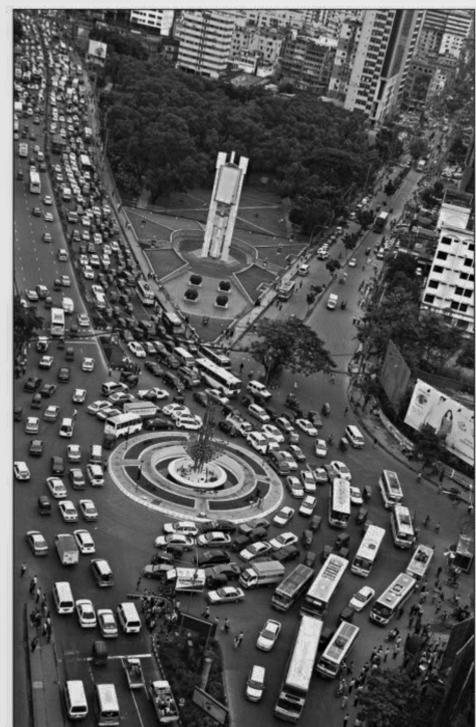
Energy spent, but no power!

From January to December this year, much energy has been spent in talking about new power plants. We have heard of many plans for doubling our power generation capacities within the next three years; but alas not even one contract for a new power plant has been signed till date. Energy of sound-bites and print-bites have reached significant levels, but setting up of new power plants is at zero level of achievement!

The latest sound-bite: that we will have additional 960MW of power by January 2010 is also based on work taken up by earlier governments. This was not taken up after this government came to power on January 6, 2009. Of course we have had grand road shows spending a lot of energy and scarce foreign exchange; but till date, with nothing positive to show! Not even a scrap of paper!

There are pledges galore to increase power generation to

For a modern Dhaka



In view of the pledge of the prime minister to upgrade Dhaka to a modern, beautiful and hassle-free city, ensuring smooth communications both on roads and waterways in and around the capital, I would like to reproduce below a few suggestions I made earlier on the issue of tackling the unplanned growth of the Dhaka city:

1. Decentralisation of the national administration through shifting of major governmental departments/divisions to the divisional headquarters and other convenient locations such as Comilla, Mymensingh and Bogra.
2. Shifting of defence establishments such as army, navy and air headquarters to more strategic locations outside Dhaka.
3. Removal of all labour intensive industries from and around Dhaka to suitable locations spread all over the country. This will ensure more harmonious development of the country as a whole.
4. Dhaka is blessed with four river channels around it. This geographical feature can be utilised to develop a circular waterway around the city.

Nuruiddin Azam
Australia

5000MW by 2011, and to 7000MW by 2013. However, even the ceremonial spading of soil of even one new project, is yet to take place. We only have 48 months to increase power generation to 7000MW! Mind you this is not installed capacity, but power on the grid! Our functional installed capacity should be around 8500MW at least, to ensure reliable generation levels of 7000MW. Will this happen? That is anyone's guess, however for the government, it is an honourable commitment! Will the commitment be honoured? Your guess is as good as mine! Let us all hope and pray for the best!

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Mugda hospital

We need thousands of physicians to provide medical service to the countrymen and to send professional manpower abroad to earn foreign currency the country needs to implement the development programmes. A 500-bed hospital is being constructed at Mugda in Dhaka city by the government. No doubt it will increase health service facilities of the city. Shortage of medical collages in the country is one of the reasons behind scarcity of qualified medical practitioners. Thousands of science students at higher secondary level are interested to get medical education. Indeed, expansion of general higher education increases unemployed educated population, which is at present a mere wastage of national wealth.

Enough space will be available at the Mugda hospital where a medical collage could be set up easily.

The decision makers should consider my point.
Mohammad Tahmid Ashraf
Middle Bashabo
Dhaka

English grammar

I refer to the letter by OH Kabir above (27Dec09). Firstly vowels are required to make a syllable which can be pronounced and it has nothing to do with grammar or meaning of a word. Besides the five explicit vowels of a, e, i, o, and

u: y is recognised as a half vowel for the purposes of creating a syllable for pronunciation. Hence we can pronounce words like fly, dry etc of one syllable and slyly which is of two syllables or syzygy, a word of three syllables etc. However use of y to enable creation of a syllable or syllables is much more restricted than the standard vowels, and syllabic words of this form are well known and are limited in number.

So, y is excluded from the standard list of vowels.
Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

Our duty

The faithful have faith in the Day of Judgement. What we need is to keep on doing good to all.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Jamea Rahmania Madrasa
Chittagong

Right decision

Reference to the decision of Saudi Arabia to launch Islamic TV channels to fulfil world demand. It is a right decision, it is the need of the hour considering the worldwide quest for correct information on Islam. The channels should not only focus on Muslims but also non-Muslims. There are misconceptions about Islam not only among non-Muslims but also among Muslims. A lot of misrepresentation and misunderstanding about Islam has bred hatred, illusions, conflicts etc. If the misconceptions are clarified and Islamic issues are properly understood by different societies, there will be no more confusion and debates on burqa, minarets, beard, halal food and terrorism.

Peace TV, launched by world renowned Indian Islamic scholar, Dr. Zakir Naik, who is also famous for his verbatim quotations of various world scriptures, should be used as a benchmark for quality programmes. The broadcast should be in at least three major world languages, other than Arabic.
Mohammed Sadullah Khan
Riyadh
Kingdom of
Saudi Arabia

Price spiral



Recently, the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) has released the information about price rates during the tenures of past three governments. In 2006, coarse rice was sold at Tk 17 per kg, which became Tk 27 on 5 January.

According to the report released by TCB, we could see the differences in the prices of commodities.

The government should act quickly to arrest the trend.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS correspondent
Gopalganj