

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.

Rental power plants



LITON RAHMAN / DRINKNEWS

The very purpose of the rental power station is to provide electricity within a very short time mainly during the irrigation season. With this in mind, the government has decided to install 250 mw diesel fired four rental power stations within three months.

It is learnt from newspapers that for purchase of rental power PDB has to incur a loss of about taka 17 thousand crore by which three 500mw coal fired power stations can be built. A total of 530mw new rental generation, if available, cannot also meet the total requirement of irrigation which is about 1500 mw, but it may ease the power generation scenario of the country at a high price to serve 40% of population having access to electricity. As there is no dedicated electricity distri-

bution system to supply power to irrigation pumps, the high cost rental power will be mixed up with low cost /quality electricity and will be consumed in a fashion 'business as usual' for domestic purpose, foiling the basic spirit of purchasing high cost rental power.

After the irrigation season is over, naturally, the rental power will continue generation for normal use at the prevailing tariff adding further loss to PDB.

Like previous years, the better solution to meet the irrigation load is to divert power from town to village to run the irrigation pumps for harvesting bumper crops to earn food security.

Md. Delwar Hossain
East Rampura, Dhaka

least at night there should not be any such work.

We want to study without any disturbance. So, I am requesting the authorities concerned to look into the matter and take some corrective steps.

K Rasna
SSC candidate
Agrabad Girls' School
Chittagong

Science education

For science in Bangladesh to be put on a firm foundation, it is important to cultivate a love for it. This can happen only when knowledge, rather than imposition, becomes the end-product of enquiry by a curious mind. Children should be encouraged to conceive and design experiments.

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Biochemistry
McGill University, Montreal
Canada

Low net speed

Three mobile operators now provide Internet services. But the net speed is not as good as expected. On CU campus there are nine residential halls and approximately four thousand students live there. Almost all the students use Internet.

We, the students of Chittagong University, want to have good net services from the mobile operators. We hope the higher authorities of AKTEL, GP and CityCell will solve the problem related to net speed on CU campus as soon as possible.

Md. Amanullah Khandakar
MS, Chemistry
Shaikh Abdur Rab Hall
CU

Health cadre anomaly

I have been working at the health directorate for the last 19 years. I started my career in an international organisation and then I joined the BCS health cadre. During this long 19 years, I found a number of idle service rules. The most debatable one is Senior Scale Exam. During the BNP regime, they exempted the health officials from departmental examination and foundation training for confirmation of the job up to 10th BCS, and this time, those who got the auto-confirmation are going to get a promotion without appearing in the Senior Scale Exam. This is quite bizarre that the ministry is not asking for their exam documents.

Can a government promote some people only because they are senior in their joining dates while some others who are following the service rules are not getting their due reward? May I draw the attention of the health secretary to this matter.

Anonymous
One-mail

A role model

Rabeya is a poor physically challenged woman in her twenties. She lost her feet in an accident. She could take to begging but her self-respect did not allow her to do so. She managed to have a sewing machine and has been sewing clothes alongside the wall of the Banani Jaam-e-Masjid. She does the sewing relatively at a cheaper rate than those done in established and posh shops. She thus helps herself and others.

I knew her when I got some

of my dresses mended. I saw in her eyes courage, determination and a strong will to survive. She is a role model for all the people in general and the physically challenged people in particular, since a good number of people are found to be begging. Society should come forward and help such self-motivated persons financially and by giving them skill development training free of cost.

There are other examples of such persons who earn their living and are not begging. If the number of such persons increases it surely will help minimise the number of beggars.

Abu Imran
Dhaka

Are they journalists?

A number of journalists work in each public university. Most of them are students and work for some daily newspaper. In SUST there are many student journalists, most of whom have no knowledge of journalism and they are not familiar with ethics and rules of journalism.

The most dangerous thing is that many of these journalists have political backgrounds or connection with politics. That's why they provide unfair and biased news. Sometimes students and teachers become victims of their animosity and jealousy.

These journalists must learn how to do their job honestly.

Arefin
SUST, Sylhet

Hawkers and traders

On January 27, a violent clash took place between hawkers and traders in the port city. The shop owners demanded eviction of the hawkers from all sidewalks of the city. They said that Tamakumandi lane and adjoining areas have been occupied by a number of hawkers who set up makeshift shops on sidewalks blocking the main entry to the market. And that was the issue behind the clash.

So, a permanent solution to this problem is the demand of the shop owners, hawkers and the customers as well.

Mamun
Dept. of Geography and Environmental Studies
University of Chittagong

What can I do?

It was 20 August thirteen years back. We came from Riyadh to spend 45 days here. I saw my husband distributing chocolates to everyone in my in-laws' house. He looked very happy. He told his beloved mother that he was tired of living abroad and this time he would stay back.

He did stay back, but not alive. Sleeping in the grave, he must have felt the humiliation and injustice done by his family to his wife and children. Yes, he should have felt it. My husband constructed a red two-storied house in north Shyamoli in his father's name. One fine morning, when my father-in-law became paralysed, the family members transferred the whole property to their names. All our money earned in Riyadh was spent in constructing this house. Me and my husband literally carried bathroom fittings and decorations by hand all the way from Saudi Arabia for this house. On 27 August 1997, just 7 days after our arrival my husband died of a massive heart attack.

I tried to get justice in many ways, but unfortunately I could not retrieve this share

of our property from the grip of my husband's family. Where is the law to protect the rights of my children?

Dr. Nagma Shamim
Medical Officer
Paediatric Cardiology
PG Hospital
SWID, WVA

A tragic death

I am trying to write something with a dampened heart. My heart is dampened but my wrath gushes forth. Every death is heart-rending but deaths caused by fellow human-shaped animals are thousand times more so. One soul has just passed away. His soul is just out of his body but it is intact. It is intact to curse us, curse all the people of this country forever. We are all responsible for this death. We are all active participants in this murder. Neither I, nor anyone else, can shrug off the responsibility of this heinous homicide.

He was a boy from an extremely impoverished family. He had to endure threats of being thrown out of room. He had to suffer daily humiliation only because he was not a political student. He had to respect political "Big Brothers". Every episode of his life has ended.

How many lives do you want to claim? How much blood of

your sons do you want? Are your educational institutions imparting education or teaching us violence only?

Our VCs and other leading teachers (?) are politically appointed. The teachers are not respected by any more. We are greatly ashamed of introducing ourselves as students of this university. Time will come when university teachers and students will be spitted on.

Sarwar Uddin
One-mail

Rape victim

I am writing to you after reading a story reported in The Daily Star on 24 January 2010 about the case of a 16 year old girl who was lashed 101 times after becoming pregnant through being raped. I work for Equality Now, an international women's rights organisations that works on violence and discrimination against women and girls all over the world. We are a not-for-profit charity organisation and take no funding from any government. Your report mentioned that a human rights organisation, led by a lawyer has raised the case. We are planning a visit to Bangladesh in the next couple of weeks and would very much like the opportunity to meet with the human rights organisation and the advocate.

We wonder whether the

readers can help us through providing information regarding the human rights organisation and the lawyer. Any help would be much appreciated.

We look forward to hearing from all of you.

Anber Raz
Programme Officer for Asia
Equality Now
London
United Kingdom

Death penalty

I am referring to the letter published in The Daily Star dated on February 3, 2010 by Mr. Tayeb Husain from Lund, Sweden.

I don't agree with him as he opposed the death penalty, whatever crime an offender may have committed. He also commented, "It is inhuman, uncivilized and unacceptable by any human norm."

I just want to say that when an offender is involved in a crime like murder, he or she did something inhuman and uncivilized.

Death penalty is the ultimate punishment that any criminal gets.

This is not inhuman and uncivilized, rather those who say that criminals should not get such punishment are being soft for no good reason.

Md. Abdul Wahab
BBA
Independent University,
Bangladesh (IUB)

Over population

Bangladesh is a small but the highest populated country in the world. More than 15 crore people live here and 1.5 crore in Dhaka city. It seems that every day is a 'haat' day in Dhaka.

The respected politicians should take this issue seriously and act very quickly; otherwise this city will not be liveable anymore.

Bakul Chandra Kabiraj
University of Dhaka

Stipend programme

The government's primary stipend programme definitely encourages students to be more serious in study and it also reduces the dropout rate.

These meritorious students get a very negligible amount of money. So, enhancement of stipend amount is necessary to support the pupils financially.

The government needs to review the matter and enhance the stipend amounts which may be re-fixed at Tk. 1,500.00 once a year and Tk. 500.00 per month for students under 'talent pool' scholarship and Tk. 1, 200.00 once a year and Tk. 400.00 per month for the students of 'general category'.

Tahrima Ashraf
Middle Bashabo, Dhaka

"Terribly Terrified"

Tony

AP's London headline news, published in most local English dailies on 30th January, was about Tony Blair's lame excuse for the illegal attack on Iraq! It was a case of putting up fabricated reasons for justifying the attack, while there was no WMD (weapon of mass destruction) anywhere in Iraq! The whole affair was the result of sinister reasoning manufactured by two "B" grade

leaders, Bush and Blair. They have engineered the killing of thousands of innocent Iraqi women, children and elderly civilians; possibly more than the civilians killed by UK & USA in World War II.

Truth be told, this was all the result of their greed for Iraqi oil that led to this illegal war and the violent destruction of innumerable lives and property. "Terribly Terrified" Tony, in his own words at the inquiry, where he is now trying to defend his illogical reasons for an illegal attack on Iraq says, "it was inspired by fears of another, even deadlier terror attack" after 9/11! What an irrational excuse offered for the death and destruction of many Iraqi men, women and children as well as the many British and US service casualties!

Historically speaking, Britain is fortunate that Tony was not leading the country when Nazi Germany had conquered most of Europe and was planning to invade Britain in the 1940s. It was fortunate that Winston Churchill was there. Had "Terribly Terrified" Tony been there he would have died of a heart attack, given the daily air attacks on London and other British cities.

It goes to show, how much destructive it can be when two "B" grade leaders take the helms of government across the Atlantic!

These two should be tried for war crimes, because they started a war without any reason!

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Islamophobia!

The unending burqa controversy deserves a thorough study about the subject. Geerth Wilders, an anti-Islam protagonist, has clearly stated that he has problems with Islam. Like him, many have problems with Islam. The fear

of Burqa, Minarets, Quranic verses, beards and anything related to Islam is nothing but a symptom of Islamophobia. Another factor which contributed to this fear is that Islam is spreading faster than any other religion.

A proper understanding of Islam will help resolve the issues.

Mohammed Sadullah Khan
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Cancer treatment

A news report published on 31st January in a Bangla daily that in Bangladesh at least one and half lakh cancer patients die each year is very disturbing. We also came to know from the news that about ten lakh people are suffering from cancer in the country now.

The number of cancer patients and cancer deaths make it clear that our medical treatment for cancer is simply not working.

For more than 16 crore people there is no full-fledged cancer hospital. The condition of our health department is frustrating.

Most of the cancer patients are bound to go abroad for their treatment. But the treatment abroad is so expensive that the poor patients can't afford it.

The authorities should ensure sufficient medical services for cancer patients so that they could get proper treatment here.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS correspondent
Gopalganj

Construction noise

As my SSC exam is going on, I cannot concentrate on my studies because of the construction works going on beside my home day and night. This type of horrible noise is really a big obstacle for students like me who cannot bear with it. There must be a rule for construction works. At

least at night there should not be any such work.

We want to study without any disturbance. So, I am requesting the authorities concerned to look into the matter and take some corrective steps.

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Bangladesh Bank governor, Dr. Atiur Rahman, forecast that Bangladesh could achieve the middle income status by 2013 in terms of per capita gross income. Eminent economist, Dr. Debpriya Bhattacharjee viewed that it would take decades for Bangladesh to graduate from LDC status.

World Bank, IMF and several other think tanks have their own different projections about this subject. Without going into this polemic, as an elderly conscientious person I would like to express humbly my own views about it



languishing under abject poverty.

The World Bank President very recently sounded a danger-alarm that the much touted 'growth' has actually more widened the divide between rich and poor all over the world.

A UN Dhaka-report on world situation 2010 stated that it is time to change the conventional approach of the term 'growth' attributed to any particular country. For instance, the publication said despite registering steady economic growth the number of poor people in Bangladesh has increased from

through this column.

I think the much talked about statistical economic data like GNP, GDP, Per capita income, CPI, Inflation, Deflation etc. etc. never ever reflect the real economic well and woe of every single citizen of any country of the world.

In support of my contention let me cite two very best examples instantly.

First, in terms of economic indicators growth-wise America is considered to be the richest and biggest economy of the world; despite the fact that the country has a huge number of population deprived of balanced food, standard health care, proper shelter, good education and the like---the basic demand of human life.

Secondly, India is considered to be a global icon of miracle-economic growth; yet, after 62 years of its independence the country has 30% people

44.2% in 1981 to 50.5% in 2005.

It will be appropriate and connotative to brand and measure growth if and when we find an ordinary person in remote corner of Bangladesh is able to eat full, drink pure, wear at least coarse, afford basic health care, own a modest shelter to sleep, send his/her progeny to school and fulfil other fundamental aspirations of human life.

Therefore, I would request all financial experts, regardless of geographical divide and denomination, to please put together and devise a wholesome, all inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic model to usher in a new dawn of hope and fulfilment for the mankind.

SASamad
General Manager (Retd)
Janata Bank
Dhaka

Save Botanical Garden



COMMONS WIKIMEDIA.ORG

Every day we hear about incidents that make us very unhappy. The latest one is the permission given by the state minister for environment to set up a dredge pipe through the National Botanical Garden to fill a land for a housing project, though the immediate past state minister did not allow it because it would be harmful to the Botanical Garden.

How could the minister give permission to such a project? Has our country become so poor that for a paltry sum of Tk 7,500 rent per day the minister did not hesitate to take the decision? Or is it because leaders of the ruling party are involved in it?

It is the government's duty to allow people to live in a healthy environment, not to destroy it.

The government must stop it.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Valentine's Day

On 14th February, Valentine's Day was observed throughout the country especially by the young people. Sometimes this day is also called "Single's awareness day". In North America school-going children too distribute chocolates, cards among each other to observe the day. So, why should we remain behind? With the passage of time, this day has become very much our own.

Pradip Das
CRP, Dhaka

Some suggestions

It looks like Severe Traffic Jam has become a daily affair & it seems no foreseeable solution is there. In my opinion, of course there are a few measures which will reduce traffic jam if immediate action is taken.

1) After converting to CNG, private car owners & their families are roaming around the city 4/5 times more, caus-

ing extra movement of the vehicles. This I am observing among my friends & relations. It is depleting our only source of cooking gas.

2) Bank loans to buy cars must be stopped as it is encouraging people to buy cars, increasing the number of private cars on the road. Instead an efficient public transport system should be planned.

3) Rajuk should force land owners to make guest car parking inside the premises of multi-storied buildings by making at least 4 to 8 guest car parking depending on the area.

Along with this, I have some suggestions to our govt. regarding the female travellers who are the worst sufferers. The department concerned should & must immediately arrange a lot of public buses on all routes in the cities to minimize their misery. Also, all other public buses should have designated ladies' seats as it was during the pre-

liberation period.

Sharif Alamgir Hossain
Retired airline official
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Whither "zero tolerance"?

For the last one year, we have been listening to the talk of "zero tolerance" to BCL extortionists by the Honourable Prime Minister and her top brass. We only hear repeated stern warning but see no substantial positive changes; rather the situation is going from bad to worse day by day.

Does the government have no control over the Chhatra League stalwarts, or is the government dependant on the goons so heavily that they can afford to ignore all warnings?

A democratic government should understand that the assistance of the extortionists would not benefit it.

Kassaf
Purana Paltan
Dhaka