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Fine showing

The astounding success achieved by the Bangladeshi sportsmen in the recently concluded South Asian Games is worthy of praise. The sportsmen have showed what patriotism and dedication can do when you are determined to succeed. We should not get carried away with the outstanding achievement by those players and rather sort a way out to nurture them to compete in higher sports levels. Less developed countries are unable to utilise the talent of their strong performers and/or tend to lose them before they blossom fully.

In Bangladesh, we only think about our cricket team and pay full attention to them neglecting other sports. We provide them all the facilities, other sports would not dare to think. Thanks to Mr Salahuddin for reviving football from the brink of extinction and giving the nation a gold medal when it mattered most. In our country, the abun-

dance of talent in different types of sports can be found if we have the vision and a proper infrastructure. The only way we can keep what is ours is not by neglecting them more often than not, but when we begin to nurture them and support them in their quest to become champions.

It is this calibre of athletes the focus of sports federations should be on, making sure they are well taken care of and that they participate in as many competitions as possible, so that they can be in top form for major tournaments.

I hope after this fairytale success the government will seriously look after all the areas where Bangladesh have done unexpectedly well and try to encourage the medallists to perform even better in future.

Badal Hasib
English teacher
SIBT, Sylhet



Man made disasters

Man-made disasters are taking thousands of lives every year. Earthquake, fire, road accidents all those are most familiar words to us. But still we are not correcting ourselves.

Still we are crossing the road recklessly, keeping the gas burner on although cooking is finished, building high rise structure without taking RAJUK PERMISSION (MOST OF THE TIME THROUGH BRIBING). What will happen to us if an earthquake of higher magnitude takes place?

Mehruba Islam
Department of Geography and Environment,
University of Dhaka

Campus violence

Again, we have observed bloodletting on our university campuses and ugly politics in public run universities and affiliated colleges is a sad reflection on the achievement of these educational institutions. No matter what the basis of student politics is, ethnic, political, ideological or religious, regional or even academic, the fact remains that it undermines academic pursuits and discipline in educational institutions.

Student politics poses a threat to the academic discipline in a number of ways and in case it succeeds, it makes the continuation of academic activity almost impossible because of disturbances and strikes on campuses.

The provision of moral and financial support to student leaders enhances the legitimacy of their political role on campuses. Without the patronage of political parties, students' active participation in campus politics would not have been possible. The majority of students are not involved in student politics and are more concerned with academic advancement. The student leaders, a considerable number of whom have adopted student politics as a vocation, look for opportunities to enhance the role of the parties they belong to, even if that means polluting the academic atmosphere.

In many of the government run universities in Bangladesh and in numerous colleges (non-professional, professional/technical) where student politics is in vogue some student groups dominate the show. The irony is that student bodies today are more political and ideological than academic.

The issue deserves a closer look.
Avik Sengupta
Biochemistry, McGill University
Montreal, Canada

Hazardous roads

There are frequent road accidents and physical injuries done to boys, girls and pedestrians at Sher-e-Bangla School/Dawn Garment Factory point on Folder Street, Wari of Jatrabari-Gulistan one way busy rote which abounds with hundreds of motor vehicles and manually driven carts.

Last year on our request Dhaka City Corporation was kind enough to set up a Zebra Crossing on Folder Street, Wari, for the safety and security of school children and pedestrians to cross the road but it has proved to be ineffective and useless as the drivers of all types of vehicles do neither stop nor slow down their speed before the Zebra Crossing and the speed breaker. And so the school boys, girls and pedestrians are compelled to cross the road amidst running of different types of vehicles.

Would the Ministry of Education, DCC, DMP and others concerned kindly look into the matter and ensure safety and security of the school students and pedestrians?

We once again request the authorities concerned to kindly construct a foot overbridge or an underpass on the Folder Street, Wari.

OH Kabir
Wari, Dhaka

Bank services

The telephone bill can be paid in more than 140 bank branches of the country as printed in the telephone bills but Wasa bills or electricity bills or gas bills can be paid in one or two bank branches only. As a result, it is very difficult for consumers to pay bills. When BB governor has time to distribute bank loans to cultivators or terminal peasants, it should be correct to receive bills of various categories in banks.

Even one simple visit to Janata Bank, Moghbazar or Bangla Motor, will testify to the real situation relating to bill payment. Enough has been preached regarding electronic system of payment, E-governance, E-commerce but nothing could change the hardship of consumers. In the name of good governance, a system of compensation may be introduced so that delay in receiving payments over 30 minutes or delay in encashment of cheque above 30 minutes or so, should be compensated by the banks. Let us do something praiseworthy while useless lazy officials should be reprimanded appropriately!
Mahmud Ali
Shiddeswaree Road
Dhaka

A unique country!

I wonder how many countries are out there in the world, where politicians demean, ridicule, criticize their armed forces like they do here in Bangladesh, I guess there is none.

Our nearest neighbour is said to be the largest democracy in the world. Their politicians may have differences of opinion but under no circumstances will they criticize their armed forces, they know for sure it is their strength. In America, most of the presidents were war veterans, this is how they honour their armed forces by sending men in uniform to the White House, which has made them the number one superpower in the world.

Had American politicians been criticizing their armed forces, they would not have been able to achieve this enviable position in the world. It is not merely by honouring human rights and values that they have achieved this position but by their respect for their armed forces. Pretty soon our nearest neighbour would be in a more or less similar position.

By criticising the armed forces, the politicians merely demean their own country. For the greater interest of the nation, the politicians should forgo the culture of criticising the armed forces of the nation.
Saleh Mohammad Ayub
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Sad, indeed

It is very sad indeed to see reports of violence on public university campuses in the country. A university is not merely an educational institute where students go to attend lectures. It is a learning hub where young minds are nurtured and trained to make qualified individuals- something very important for the development of a nation in the global stage. It is very disheartening to see the learning environment of prestigious institutions like DU and RU being damaged through on-campus violence by groups of students affiliated with different political parties. There is a limit to which responsible citizens of a country can tolerate such nonsense, and I believe it is about time the government started taking some serious action against the culprits.

I offer my deepest condolences to the family of the murdered student, and request our honourable PM to take the necessary steps to ensure that DU, once called the "Oxford of the East", and those other universities in the country can regain their past glory.
Junaid Ahmed Yaser Faruque
School of Pharmacy
University of Nottingham

Student politics

Recent activities of college and university students, spanning several months, and all over the country, are the greatest testimony to a SERIOUS RETHINK of all patrons whether or not the students wing of their party should exist.

There has been unified uprising of students on different national issues supporting and bringing about desired results that has directly contributed to our national life, including Language Movement and Independence. If and when such defining issues arise again, they can well organize themselves to bring about and uphold national issues that affect the nation. In today's world it is quite possible, once sincerity of purpose is maintained and leadership is provided, irrespective of petty party lines. They are simply pawns at the hands of the political parties, used for personal and party issues. This they hardly realise, instead at times pay with their lives because of armed encounters.

This issue has always been debated but the 'powerful' patronisation from the highest corridors has always kept them afloat and alive by luring them in different ways, material or otherwise or both.

The Daily Star can please consider sponsoring a debate on this issue that is so much plaguing us, dragging us down to national decay!

Syed Imtiaz Ali
Banani, Dhaka

Justice for the poor

While we were young we heard our elders (Murubbis) saying, "If you want to harm your rival you either convince him to marry a second time or engage him in a court case". This means, if a man brings home a second wife, daily quarrel and loss of peace in family life becomes a routine matter and the man starts living in a hell. Similarly, if a man is engaged in some sort of court case and if it is a 'dewani mamla' (case on land dispute) he is involved in a never-ending problem in his life. I have seen how a man used to travel to the district court every month and return home every time with a new date. We have seen many people die before the case was heard and justice was delivered by the court.

I could not know whether that man got justice or not, but I could know that he had to sell his properties and belongings to foot the bills of lawyers and became destitute.

The above is an age-old common scene in Bangladesh and there is a common fear about the judicial system and the people of judicial department.

The newly appointed 18th Chief Justice of the country must be a man of vast experience which elevated him to his present position. The new CJ has reportedly promised to deliver justice to the poor. We welcome his wishes.

Only accountability, sincerity and hard work of the lower court officials may serve the poor better.
Shafiqul Islam, NY

BCL goes berserk

We are stunned by the BCL activists who drove out at least 500 students from Satkhira City College in connection with admission trade introduced by the BCL for making quick money. Now educational institutions have become battlefields where BCL factions are fighting for supremacy and common students have become victims.

We are surprised by the education minister's comment that it is the continuation of a legacy. How could he say such a thing, this sort of incident never happened before, it is unprecedented.

We demand that the government take immediate actions and give exemplary punishment to the BCL activists; otherwise the backbone of the country will be broken.
Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Violent politics

Non-political students die because of the clashes between political groups where they never have any role to play at all. The tense situation in different educational institutes across the country is nothing but the by-product of dirty politics.

How long do we have to see this? How long will we have to wait for the end of this blood-bath? If politics takes life, then this kind of politics should have been banned long ago.
C.W.R
One-mail

Law and order

For the last few days the fact of life is that law and order situation in the capital, and all over Bangladesh, is fast going down the drain!

Indications are, that even the Hon. Prime Minister has disowned the Chhatra League, which is now out of control of the AL! The lame excuse offered is that it has been infiltrated by Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islam! If the AL cannot control this, then how can they control the law and order across the whole of Bangladesh?

In contrast, we have the Hon. Home Minister, possibly living in her home, or in a dreamland who is parroting daily that law and order was never so good! May be these daily killings are irrelevant, as stated by her. May be by her standard if over 50 people are not killed daily in any educational institution, city or region, the situation is considered normal?

What is the level of violence that defines a deteriorating law and order situation?

Should she not as per norms of democracy, resign her position? Mere 'banaes' and 'aobans' will not do, which she gives at least once daily if not oftener; as foolish people think that there is no law and order! Since she is there, there has to be law and order. Take it or leave it, she couldn't care less! Common sense says that strong visible positive steps are the order of the day. But may be, our Honourable Home Minister "sees no evil, hears no evil", hence does no evil (nothing)!

It is about time that she too was disowned by the AL!

A foolish citizen
Dhaka

Rahim shines

I hope that Cricinfo's recent analysis of batting performance by our top order batsmen in the 9-10 Tests participated since October 2008 caught the attention of our cricket selectors (<http://www.cricinfo.com/magazine/content/story/446095.html>). In descending order, it shows the following averages (runs per innings): Mushfiqur Rahim (40.58), Tamim Iqbal (35.00), Shakib Al Hasan (31.83), Junaid Siddique (23.82) and Mohammad Ashraful (16.84).

The batting technique, temperament and confidence that young Mushfiq is consistently showing should be rewarded by promoting him to at least No. 4. He should be relieved from the duties of wicket-keeping and be treated as a specialist batsman like Kumar Sangakkara of Sri Lanka.

It is time for our selectors to end their infatuation with Ashraful and show him the door to learn how to be responsible. A wicketkeeper-batsman should replace Ashraful.
Engr. ABM Nurul Islam
Gulshan-2, Dhaka



Banners, posters everywhere

There has been a flooding of banners/festoons and posters across the metropolis lately. The mushrooming of these banners and festoons continue unabated, much to the disappointment of citizens. Nobody seems bothered.

These old, tattered, faded and obsolete materials obscure the open blue sky and the greenery thus depriving us of the beauty of nature. These banners and posters make the city look dirty and chaotic. These banners/festoons have encroached every bit of open space and are visible everywhere. Moreover, these banners obliterate the address of residences and commercial establishments. All the more at busy intersections such as Shabbagh, Green Road, Farm Gate, New Market and Moghbazaar, to name a few. The posters are pasted on walls and entrances of important public buildings, educational institutes, road islands and commercial establishments. The messages range from

admission to different coaching centres, kindergartens and schools, movies, restaurants, tailors, Meena Bazaar, cultural events and of course political programmes.

The display of such promotional materials should follow a civic code developed and approved by the City Corporation.

Organisations/Individuals displaying banners/festoons and posters for an indefinite period of time should be penalized. Organisations may display banners/festoons as promotional materials to highlight any event of particular importance only with the permission of City Corporation/local govt bodies. These posters and banners should be removed within a week of such event. As for now, we shall appreciate if these posters/banners are removed immediately. All that is needed is strong enforcement of the law and a pair of scissors.

Shamim Ahmed
Gulshan 2, Dhaka

Language issue

I thank Syed Badrul Ahsan for his article on 'Bangla...the way it was'. I assure him that it is just as painful to me to hear so much English being spoken badly in Bangladesh as it is for him to hear Bangla spoken badly! There is, indeed, the danger of developing a mongrel language that is not worthy of either because, in neither, is the art of true literacy taken seriously....

Since the mobile phone arrived, an alarming number of bosses run their organisations from their mobiles, rather than by written memos and meetings with agendas and minutes. Thus they strike terror into the lives of staff by making them remember snatched mobile conversations that suddenly invade their lives (usually when they are doing something unrelated to the topic raised) and thus prevent them given the

considered opinion that would have been possible if they had been given time to think about it via a written memo never name the value of properly run meetings for shared discussion. Moreover, heads of organisations tell me that they have to write their own letters as so few of their office staff can do it - in either language! Even teachers are sometimes so nervous of their ability to write accurately that they lapse into meaningless phrases at report time and fail to write accounts of important incidents in pupils' folders.

I assume that most of our readers will agree that we should share the noble aim that both languages should be written as well as spoken well. One small section of the problem is that there are in existence a few Bangladeshis who are snobs about English. Their children are in English-medium schools and they actually turn up and say that

they do not want their child to read books in Bangla but only in English! I am glad to say that they are a very small minority and the Heads of the better schools are quite capable of trying to convert them from this obsession, and, failing that, of suggesting that they might try and find a school which agrees with them and admit their children there....

In any language, I suspect it is not until a pupil gets a good teacher in the literature of the language, that they start really enjoying it. The study of grammar alone can be intensely boring, especially if it is taught using only the sentences in the books and with no opportunity to practice what is learnt using the students' own words, thus releasing the wonderful Bengali creativity and sense of fun that badly taught language study too often suppresses.

Angela Robinson
Gulshan, Dhaka

Traffic mess

Good Heavens!! 10 lakh motorised vehicles (MVs) on Dhaka's scanty roads with a capacity of 1.5 lakh MVs only (DS Headline, 7 Feb)!! And I have been quoting a figure of only 4-5 lakh Gas Guzzling Monstrosities (GGMs) for the last 30 months.

The Traffic Controllers are smart to throw in the towel. Without back-bone, will, inclination and adequate manpower, there is nothing they can do but join the band-wagon by wasting hundreds of crores of the taxpayers' money in installing ineffective hi-

tech toys, cameras, multi-coloured lights and dividing Dhaka into multi-coloured zones with different holidays, all designed to create chaos where there is only confusion now. All these are 'catered to easing traffic jams', while those directly responsible to the voters confine themselves to uttering impotent 'stern warnings' at regular intervals. No tangible solution is forthcoming.

In between, we have the quasi-experts of the STP brigade with their regular Short, Mid and Long term plans for propagating freeways, subways, metros and other ways for which we neither have money, time or political will. One such, "Fixing Dhaka" (Tanwir Nawaz,) in DS 4 Feb comes with the usual formula for 5-20 years freeways, subways, metros and other TPs, without even mentioning the dreaded word "RICKSHAWs THAT CARRY MORE THAN 55% OF PASSENGERS AND GOODS IN DHAKA TODAY. Yes today, because that is when the 1.5 crore Dhakabashis are in a FIX, and need FIXING not 5-20 years hence. Or about the crores of pot-holes, that need FIXING? Or DE-FIX the free parking on the roads? Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud has already UN-FIXED the freeway/subway as anti-people (DS 10 Feb).

At this juncture, please allow me to inject a note of discord. The existing global 1.75 billion motorized vehicles spouting millions of tons of fossil fuels into the air have already substantially contributed to upset the Earth's delicate environmental balance. They should have been fringed in a decade ago. Our future has become as fragile as that of the dinosaurs, just before the meteor hit Yucatan. The future (there is one) holds promise for only clean sources of power sunlight, wind, tides, water all free and sustainable. So experts, please put your BMWs in your pipe and smoke it.
Sikander Ahmed
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