

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.

Jute trade



GHODUS ALAM / DRINKNEWS

Jute trade is manipulated by local touts and middlemen while the farmers are deprived.

Farmers grow jute each year with the hope that it would give enough to survive the whole year round but they are never able to benefit from growing jute. They never get proper price. Local touts and middlemen have been controlling the trade and fixing price for both the farmers and jute mills. Touts and middlemen are benefiting out of the trade.

During July to September, price of

jute was 1,200 taka to 1,300 taka per maund which was sold at Tk 2,500 in Khulna region last week (The daily Prothom Alo published the news on 18 March).

Those locals and middlemen are illegally trading jute abroad for more profit. But we should protect our farmers' interest.

The authorities concerned have clearly failed to control the activities of touts and middlemen.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS correspondent
Gopalganj

business. This kind of business is normally small and easily controllable, and is less influenced by external factors, whereas the big businesses as financed by the banks and other Financial Institutions, are subject to the vagaries of many uncontrollable external factors. In such circumstances, it will be totally illogical to penalize the businessmen alone for default of loans, which too by snatching their fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

I hope that the authorities will understand the gravity of the matter and immediately repeal the Artho Rin Ain, or at least the adverse sections thereof as introduced by the last government.

An entrepreneur
One-mail

Billboard tragedy

Following the recent tragic death of two persons due to billboards crashing down on them, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has already taken an initiative to dismantle all the illegal billboards. There are a lot of billboards in Chittagong also, which may cause such tragic death to pedestrians any time.

So, it is the high time the authorities concerned took the initiative to remove all the unsafe billboards across the country.

Habibur Rashid Ismail
Jamea Rahmania Madrassa
Chittagong

Trial of war criminals

Every human being wants to lead an independent life. Every nation wants independence. We achieved our independence through the blood of millions of martyrs. This year the govt has started the trial of war criminals. It will be our achievement.

We want a razakar-free Bangladesh. That is the need of the day.

Rahad Ahsan
BBA
JNU

Making cities look better

Cities in Bangladesh are getting larger every day, so are the numbers of roadside buildings. However, the beauty of a city largely depends on the colourful appearance of its on and off road installations.

On the road, there are thousands of vehicles travelling every moment which may add significantly to the moving scenario. In this regard, the authorities could set a plan to undertake the beautifying scheme of the capital along with other divisional cities. Especially, the vehicles with bad looking dents on their bodies and worn-out paints can be called upon to rework and repaint them.

Similarly, off the road there

are numerous old and non-plastered buildings that look bad. If the authorities take an initiative to resolve the issue, they could take some reasonable steps to do so. The owners of the commercial buildings can be ordered to take appropriate measures while the owners of the residential complexes can be subsidized with financial assistance if needed. The third thing is the elimination of unplanned billboards and replacing them with well designed ones with good impressions. Examples are abundant in America, Europe, many parts of Asia and some parts of Africa also as the author has witnessed.

KMN Sarwar Iqbal
Faculty, Dept. of Mechanical Engineering
IUBAT, Dhaka

Sweepers losing jobs

We are an independent country. We have a flag of our own. That flag reveals our unity and brotherhood. Then why have we failed to establish a just social order? I watched one documentary in channel-1 regarding the backwardness of the sweepers.

The thing that shocked me is that a lot of sweepers are now losing their jobs as "cleaner". As a result, their economic condition is deteriorating day by day. The job is now being offered to others in exchange of money!

The matter deserves a closer look.

Md. Imran Zahedi

Civil Engineer

Our parliament

Parliament is the powerhouse of a democratic country. The persons who come here are very respectable. They are representatives of our hopes, aspirations and future.

They attend parliament to say something on behalf of us. We, the masses, always follow them. Parliament is the place of debating over different issues. But the debate must be rational and decent. All parliament members have to keep in mind that it is not the place of quarrelling and fighting.

From the recent happenings in our parliament, anyone can easily understand how democratic we are as a nation. A parliament member does not know how to honour his counterparts. The Speaker is trying to control these happenings saying something and taking some measures. But the blame game does not come to an end. Some MPs are claiming that the Speaker is not neutral. Please stop accusing each other!

Md. Taherul Islam
MSS student
Institute of Social Welfare & Research
University of Dhaka

Wasa story

I have been reading the news about the Dhaka Wasa supplying stinky, filthy and contaminated water to the city dwellers for the last few days. But Wasa denies the allegations against it. Therefore, a parliamentary standing committee has taken some steps in this connection to have a good result immediately.

It is seen that city dwellers are collecting water at midnight from two pipelines given by Wasa. The scarcity of water has become acute because of corruption in Wasa, DCC and Rajuk. So, the standing committee also blasted them.

The illegal connections are not yet disconnected. Wasa has to perform a lot better to cater to such a huge population.

Raijul Islam
One-mail

Education minister's comment

This refers to the comment of the Education Minister that the government will not tolerate any kind of anarchy in the public universities. Those who create disorder and hamper peaceful environment in the universities in the guise of studentship will be resisted with an iron hand. The minister was addressing a press conference after discussion with the vice chancellors of different public universities and chairmen of the University Grants Commission on improving the standard of university education. He added that stern actions would be taken against those involved in killing, tender manipulation, extortions, seat business and admission trade. The minister called upon the university authorities to take tough action against those involved in crime.

When asked if politics will remain in the universities, minister said a consensus among the political parties and the public opinion were necessary in this regard and there should be organisations that will work in the interest of students and institutions. No one will be allowed to make confusion in the name of religion. He also urged the law enforcement agencies to be alert and active in tackling criminal activities in universities.

As a student, I strongly support his observations. I would request our higher institutions' chiefs-- where diverse persons and perspectives are valued, where students can engage in cultural centres, human rights initiatives, community outreach opportunities and other experiences and where graduates will be well prepared to serve in the increasingly diverse workplaces of the future-- to make determined efforts in this respect.

The minister's comments strongly encourages the participation of students who differ by age, colour, ethnicity, gender, origin, race, religion etc. To get the right word in the right place is a rare achievement. To condense the diffused light of a page of thought into the luminous flash of a single sentence, is worthy to rank as a prize composition just by itself. Anybody can have ideas--the difficulty is to express them without squandering a quire of paper on an idea that ought to be reduced to one glittering paragraph. A short saying often contains much wisdom.

Gopal Sengupta
McGill University, Montreal
Canada

What a relief!

Our heartfelt thanks to the government for abandoning the Day Light Saving plan. We are feeling very happy and relieved. When DST was introduced nobody liked it.

For a few months we enjoyed the timing we were used to, then the government announced that on April 1, 2010 the hands of the clock will go forward by one hour. People were shocked. So, the government's decision not to advance the clock anymore is wise, we are glad that the future generation will be able to measure night and day as their predecessors and hope that in the future no government will ever change it.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

New leaves

The city is coming to life again...trees with new leaves. In spite of traffic jams, the newly grown leaves can make a person a little happy that still we have some greenery! This will inspire us to plant more!

Mehruha Islam
Department of Geography & Environment
University of Dhaka



A.M.AHAD / DRINKNEWS

Wastage of power

I have seen an advertisement in your paper from electricity authorities. They have asked people to avoid extra lighting. I live at Nikunja-2 and normally use the airport road between 8:00--9:00pm every day when I return home.

A few days back I could see a huge lighting at the Army Golf Club. We have 6-8 hours of load shedding in our area every day.

What is going on?

Mithu
Nikunja-2
Dhaka

Mental health

Mental health is deeply influenced by climatic factors. It is now apparent that extreme climatic events can cause significant psychological stress with long-lasting effects on anxiety levels and depression. There would be more devastating permanent mental health impact on the survivors like a child. UNFCCC 4th report on global warming stated that there is a direct association between the presence of major mental illness like acute psychosis and schizophrenia in tropical countries. Extreme climate change events like heat stroke which manifest as delirium and other neuro-psychiatric syndromes characterized by altered consciousness to agitation, restlessness, unconsciousness and even death. Major population displacement after an extreme climatic event would cause social disruption, unemployment, social conflicts, mental unrest and economic burden and uncertainty as we see in Haiti following a massive earthquake. All these factors are associated with increased prevalence of mental disorders like anxiety, depression and stress disorders. Besides, increase salinity of water in the coastal area would hamper food production which results in malnutrition and child developmental disorders. Natural disasters have shown to result in increased domestic violence due to frustration and anger. Flood and drought cause food scarcity, hunger and malnutrition. Drought contributes to mental agony and depression among farmers due to financial hardship which increases suicide rate among them. According to DoE, the annual incidence of mental disorder was 22431 per year which was higher than that of Dengue (3305 per year).

Awareness needs to be increased among illiterate and poor people, especially along the drier western parts of the country, to combat heat-stress related health disorders. Universal accessibility to and equity in health care to the rural population, government's financial allocation for health, community based health services, privatisation of medical care etc. are some adaptive measures to mental health.

Md. Humayun Kabir
Dept. of Environmental Science
Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences
University of Chittagong

Boundary walls

Historically, traditionally and culturally, the people of our land tend to demarcate their premises with walls made of bricks. These walls invite graffiti and writings of all sorts ranging from political slogans to promotion of noodles and detergents in the form of posters and stickers. The city

and its surroundings appear dirty, narrow and suffocating. People feel encouraged to... against the walls. The anti-social elements find easy refuge within the premises.

Alternatively, the brick walls should be replaced with iron grills. This would allow unobstructed view of the premises within and outside. The city and the neighbourhood will appear clean and tidy. There would be less cost involvement with regard to annual maintenance. Just imagine, how dirty and suffocating the entire High Court premises/ Suhrawardy Uddyan /Prime Minister's Office would appear had those been walled with bricks. If the PM's Office can be demarcated with iron fences, any other buildings can follow suit. Similarly, the public buildings (barring those necessary for security reasons), residential colonies, educational institutes and hospitals should be fenced with iron grills. Replacing the walls from the Parade Ground along the Rokeya Sharani would greatly improve the entire landscape. It would be easier to keep the premises clean from both within and outside.

I would therefore, request the city fathers to look into the matter seriously.

SAhmed
Gulshan 2
Dhaka

Religious gurus

One of the sons of a close relative of mine in Bangladesh was a college drop-out. Before finishing his graduation he stopped his studies. We know him as a vagabond. He had long beard and long hair and was roaming about with some other bearded and long haired people. Now he reportedly has become a pious pir. According to his mother, he has reportedly earned some divine power. Not yet married, he wears lungi and easy shirts and roam about in the remote areas of the country.

By his divine powers, he reportedly cures incurable diseases and treat patients by blowing air from mouth and using herbal medicines.

He reportedly gained so much divine power that he can now connect spirits of dead pirs which he occasionally does. His mother very often speaks with dead man over cell phone. By virtue of his divine powers, he is now a popular pir and has a lot of disciples around him. I hear, some retired high officials come to him and take his blessings.

Definitely some Bangladeshi people believe him and his powers. If we believe such a man and his divine powers why should we not believe our talk show participants who teach us the history of liberation war and many more theoretical arguments in support of their claims. The controversy of declaration of independence is a hot subject at the moment. Here no theory is needed to believe who called it first, simply let us believe that he or she has called it first and establish it by teaching our people.

If some people believe that a dead man can speak over cell phone with a living man why can't a man declare liberation of a certain part of a country without creating the atmosphere and massive awareness among the people of that area?
Shafiqul Islam, NY

Digital

load shedding

The present government wanted to make a Digital Bangladesh but what we find is digital load shedding all over the country and it is intolerable at Dhaka. The prices of essential goods are skyrocketing; corruption has increased dramatically; law and order situation has deteriorated significantly; human rights are at stake and government offices are not functioning smoothly!

Shamsunahar
Futtala
Khulna

War crime!

On March 22, 2010 The Daily Star published a report 'Hapless freedom fighter lives at cremation ground'.

Not only freedom fighter Mr. Abdul Karim is sitting in front of his hut erected on the corner of a cremation ground at Shyamkur village in Moheshpur Upazila of Jhenidah district but also there are so many freedom fighters who are living in bad condition in the independent country. We do not know about them.

But, unfortunately, so many war criminals still live happily in the country.

Now it is time to punish them.
Rowshan Ali
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Boosting capital market

It is known to people concerned that the capital market in Bangladesh has been developing rapidly but is suffering from tremendous short supply of stocks to invest. In addition to that in principle the government has accepted the policy of private, public partnership (PPP) to accelerate economic development. A mentionable amount has been allocated for PPP in the current national budget but even with the passing of nine months, the government could not make any investment. The government can address the problem by converting the Progoti Industries into a public limited company (PLC) and dispose of a portion of shares to public.

The Progoti Industries should be converted into a public limited company to boost its performance.
Md. Ashraf Hossain
Central Bashabo
Dhaka

Artho Rin Ain

The Artho Rin Ain 2003 was introduced by the past BNP/Jamaat government as amended law of the Artho Rin Ain 2001. It has some provisions that violate the fundamental rights of citizens guaranteed by the country's Constitution.

The Artho Rin Ain 2003 is meant for the borrowers of the banks and other financial institutions, and such borrowers are mainly the business people who are pivotal in wheeling the growth of the economy and carry the credit of being the country's largest employers, largest contributors to the exchequer, largest contributors to the foreign exchange vault, etc. As such, this harsh and unfriendly provision in the Ain is very much painful and regrettable, and it is unimaginable that such a law can be designed and passed in a democratic country, fully protecting the interest of a class of people and totally ignoring the interest and fundamental rights of another class.

I appeal through you to the authorities, especially the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh, to withdraw those sections in the Ain, introduced by the past BNP/Jamaat government, which are contrary to the Constitution, as it is the present government's firm commitment to establish the rule of law and guarantee rights of all classes of people, irrespective of their cast, creed and profession.

It is very common in society that one's life-long hard-earned savings, pension money, gratuity money, etc. are invested in business but the entire money is lost in that

every traffic law. While we often observe the traffic officers on duty are busy stopping private cars to 'check' documents; they somehow always manage to overlook the rowdy and unruly actions of the bus drivers. There seems to be an understanding that "you don't bother us and we will take care of you" between the bus drivers and the traffic controllers.

Now, as usual, I feel despicably helpless as to whom we can complain and go for justice. Do we not live in an independent country with a 'democratically' 'elected' government? And is the government not 'for the people, of the people and by the people'?

I urge everyone to please take steps to curb

the bus drivers' actions and be united against them. Help a fellow citizen when hurt by any bus driver's reckless driving. Protect the interest of the public by stopping any fleeing bus from the scene of an accident. Force the bus driver to stop only at bus stops and not anywhere and everywhere they feel. Let us show our strength. Surely, I am not urging you to fight.

And to the dear law enforcers: PLEASE ENFORCE THE LAWS.

And to the Daily Star: Please keep writing and keep pushing pressure on the authorities to be decisive and take the right actions even if they are not the popular ones.

Rahat, Malibag, Dhaka



PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV

Reckless bus drivers

I would like to thank The Daily Star for its recent articles on the recklessness and carelessness of the bus drivers in Dhaka. As in many other cases, I feel good that even in our society we have the writers in DS to be on our side, the public.

Now, before I move on, I want to inform the readers that recently my car was hit by a bus on the airport road and as usual the bus fled the scene without any regard for me or the law. Surely, I could rely on the police not to come to my aid. The bus was coming so fast that it failed to slow down as I was slowing at the turn right after the Radisson Hotel before reaching the rail crossing going towards Banani. I can only think of the horror and get sickened and disgusted by the utter ruthless behaviour of the bus driver. He did not even bother to slow down, let alone stop after hitting my car from behind which broke the entire back of the car including the rear window and threw the car to the side of the road from the right most lane. So, I know first hand how it feels to be neglected by the bus drivers who seem to have the highest power in the city. The question is: who is giving them this power?

For some unknown (as in almost all other cases in our country) reasons, the bus drivers in Dhaka city seem to have been given a 'life time permit' to drive at will with no regard for human life whatsoever. How long will we be waiting and how much worse do these irresponsible, uneducated, rude, ill-mannered (I could go on and on) bus drivers (how are they getting the driving licence?) have to get for us to take ANY action against them? It almost seems as if the bus drivers are above