

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.

Medical expertise?



Returning from Valore (Tamil Nadu, India), I wrote a letter three weeks back captioned "whither our medical expertise" and sent for this section, but as the letter was too long I presume that it did not get the nod for publication. I wrote because I was amazed to see the stream of patients from Bangladesh. Are we to take it for granted that our medical care is getting worse? I met Bangladeshi patients daily with wrong treatment or failed treatment they had at Dhaka or elsewhere in Bangladesh. I also went there accompanying a patient who was told by Dhaka specialists that his disease was incurable. But my patient, a boy of 26 years, returned with assurance that he does not suffer from what the Dhaka specialists treated him for. It is Valore Christian Medical College where I met many who suffered from varied nature of diseases, patients of neurological, renal and gastric related diseases being in large number. One patient had wrong sided brain surgery by a reputed

Neurosurgeon of Dhaka and CMC righted it by another surgery. Another neuro patient and his parents, disappointed by the suggestions of Neuro Medicine department of BSMU that the treatment would incur a huge amount of money went there and got treated. To their bewilderment, the cost was minimal. A patient was wrongly treated for TB by a renowned medicine specialist (retired) and as a result he developed pleural effusion and I saw him getting treated there, showing hope of recovery. A child was said to have his both kidneys damaged at RMCH, but CMC found both kidneys fully OK and after carrying out a number of investigations gave the required treatment. The child and its parents had a great sigh of relief and left Valore happy.

The above is the tip of the iceberg. What can we do about it?
Ahmed Niaz
Shekhertek, Mohammadpur Dhaka

SEC's role

Securities and Exchange commission (SEC) continue to advise the public in respect of stock market investments in secondary shares during abnormal behaviour of markets. Unfortunately, SEC is the sole authority to allow Public Limited Companies (PLC) to raise share capital through IPO--initial public offering after proper checking of the documents and probable return on investments. Thus investors are not required to verify the probable performances while investing through IPO as SEC is the wizard in this respect. But thousands of investors in primary shares in PLC's have lost significantly. Thus what is the role of SEC when corruption is to be regulated? Let SEC do something in prosecuting the fraudulent PLC's, while recession compensation package money entitlement to IPO holders need be considered, I believe.
Mahmud Ali
Syddheswaree Road Dhaka

Moral right

Our leaders ignore their moral responsibility so nakedly that their sense of civility can be questioned. I am sure we have at least a dozen cases who should accept the responsibility and relinquish the post either in the government or in the opposition. There is no legal code for trial of moral crime. The incumbent has to take the responsibly and resign. Even if it is not proved yet in the court of law, the incumbent loses his or her moral right to continue. This is what the British Treasury Secretary has done. He has upheld his own dignity and also the British tradition. I congratulate him for his decision.
Quadir
California, USA

Oil slick and Obama!

The US President is losing some of his popularity, thanks to BP's oil mess in the Gulf of Mexico. The recently found oil well has been leaking oil all over the US south-eastern sea and shoreline, for well over a month; with no end in sight till today! BP has managed to unsettle the newly elected Democratic administration, to the secret delight of the Republicans, who are quietly watching the matter. They are forcefully joining in the rightly felt disgust and dismay of the people, directly or indirectly affected by the oil spill! The Republicans are playing their cards in this 'blame game'; and as rightly observed by Obama-- 'the buck stops here'; assuming the overall responsibility! This is a mature gesture from a confident President who does not prefer to "pass the buck on". His statement is the right and mature step on the issue.

The only way out for the President is to realise all the direct as well as indirect costs involved of cleaning up all this mess and bring back the environment situation to normalcy, particularly in the 'Everglades' and coast lines, the 'Sundarbans' of the USA! He should also financially penalize BP heavily for their carelessness in letting the accident happen, for which he will get full public support!

The BP disaster can usher in further political bickering and misunderstanding between the Democrats and Republicans--out in the open! It can also lead to souring of relationship between the UK and the USA, the two nations sharing a common language, culture and heritage! This could well provide a political advantage to China in their quest for world leadership in today's bi-polar world of East and West!

The BP oil disaster could herald a new chapter of geopolitics in the world.
S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Freedom curtailed

Last week(05-26-2010), a curious article entitled "Veiled threat?" grabbed my attention. It's writer, Mr. Ilahi Choudhury, talked in length about a woman's right to expose herself and ridiculed the former Secretary General of Amnesty International Ms. Irene Khan's opinion that a woman's constitutional right consist of covering or uncovering whichever parts of her body she wishes, even her face. Mr. Choudhury insists that a woman should keep her face exposed, regardless of whether she wants to or not, and applauded several European nations for prohibiting wearing of the veil, calling for such measures on a global scale.

It appears to me that Mr. Choudhury is under the impression that we are living in pre-medieval times where men can dictate how women should live. He forgets that in this age of advancement where women are striding with their male counterparts in every field, men cannot decide what women should wear. Neither can men stop women from wearing short skirts, nor can they force a woman to display parts of her body they wish to see.

Mr. Choudhury thinks women living in Europe are truly liberated. Perhaps he is unaware that in the early 1600, a number of European leaders gathered for a meeting in which they wanted to agree on whether women should be classified as animals or human beings, and until 1850, women were not permitted to speak inside churches. Today, these very European nations are passing laws one by one on what sort of clothes women can wear, on security grounds. Soon they may start making laws restricting women to wear only certain colour in the name of security or God knows what! Male chauvinism is spreading throughout the world like wildfire. Women should continue to fight for their freedom and equality.
Humaira Abdul
Pearabag, Dhaka

Lord's Test

At the end of the fourth day at Lord's, Bangladesh were 328 for five. On the fifth day they were bowled out for 382 before lunch. This is simply unbelievable. Leaving aside the two bowlers, the Bangladeshi recognized batsmen, who so easily tumbled to the average English bowling attack in less than two hours on the final day of the Test, are no less experienced and talented players. Each of them has played many Tests by now. Then what made them play like novices at a crucial

time when draw was inevitable with only their being able to face the English bowling for two more hours? How will we explain their failure to do so? Did any or some of them capitulate to the English bookies?

An enquiry is needed to be conducted to find out whether match fixing has played any role through any of our players in determining the result of the Lord's Test between Bangladesh and England.

In the last Test of the home series against England, Bangladesh players had played in the same manner they played in Lord's this time. After ten years of having Test status, our cricketers go on performing so poorly, and so stubbornly. They don't want to learn from experience.

We hope and pray none of our players and officials are involved in match fixing, still we need a neutral enquiry to get the real picture. It's hard for us to reconcile with the fact that again and again an inevitable draw turns into a shameful loss.

If our players were not talented we would keep mum, but when they are talented then why should the nation suffer humiliation in international cricket again and again for their reckless performance on the field?
Faruque Hasan
Uttara, Dhaka

Coal issue

This has reference to the letter published on The Star Friday 28th May 2010 on a cover story of the same magazine 'The case for Coal', and my letter in response to the article. I

would like to thank the letter-writer for taking up this point. It's a positive sign that many wise people will come up with fascinating information, logic and ideas, but I think, extraction and burning of coal has a relationship with unsustainable development which is essentially a political problem, and the language of politics is here symbolic. Just because an act is symbolic doesn't mean it is empty. The only way to truly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to take the pressure off global warming, is an international regime that puts a cap and a price on climate pollution. And the only way that will happen is if the academics, development experts, scientists, economists, corporate leaders and politicians around the world, not here only in Bangladesh, become convinced that sustainable development is an issue that matters to people, one that will make them change the way they live, the way they 'buy' and 'sell' their lives, and vote. Opposing the idea will take us nowhere.

Without defining what sustainable development is, it can be said that sustainable development path is not a fairy story as the climate change is global as well as local, and the pressure is on us to do the right thing. If saying 'no' to coal and commenting in DS makes that political support, well, visible, then this discussion will have been worth it.

The sustainable development movement is reaching a delicate moment, so the confrontation emerges. We're well past the point where going

green is novel, where just doing our bit to save our future generation should deserve endless praise, not opposition. We've become inured to the existence of global warming, to its inconvenient truth, yet we sense that the solutions we've been given, change a light bulb, change lifestyle, fall far short of the scale of the problem. We risk green fatigue because, after all, what can we do about it? But this is the moment when we need to keep pushing in every way we can.

The technologies and investments that will help us decarbonise energy should be developed fast, but they need a push, not obstruction, and that will only happen if we keep sustainable development near the top of our political agenda.
Sirajul Islam
Pisciculture Housing Society Shyamoli, Dhaka

Rogue nation

Israelis have done it again. The commandos of the illegal state of Israel this time indiscriminately killed unarmed aid workers on international waters mostly from their friendly nation of Turkey. World conscience is shocked at this inhuman act. But their main mentor superpower USA will not stop their unconditional support to Israel.

President Ahmadinejad of Iran once in frustration vowed to wipe out the illegal state from world map. Time is coming when many others will think in that line.
M.S. Huq
Uttara Model Town Dhaka

Groundwater level

Thanks to Wasa that they have taken up the pilot project for recharging the under groundwater. The groundwater level of Dhaka goes lower by about 4 meter every year. The causes are:

- (1) Too many deep tube-wells of Dhaka Wasa and private parties.
 - (2) Low recharging of the underground water.
- Measures for raising groundwater level:
- a. Private deep tube-well should be discontinued.
 - b. Wasa should reduce taking water supply from underground. Take up projects for surface water.
 - c. Recharging should be increased.

During this rainy season, steps should be taken to get the benefit of rainwater.
S.A. Miah
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Mohila madrasa

Mohila madrasas, and religious educational institutions, are very new in Bangladesh. If one travels from Dhaka to any direction through the highways he will find roadside signboards of mohila madrasas at almost every 5/10 minutes' intervals. This proves that suddenly hundreds of such madrasas have been established in the country.

This new trend proves that many more will come up in near future and may be at some stage most parents will send

their girl children to the religious schools / madrasas instead of schools and colleges. This I believe is a strategy of the so-called Islamic forces who want to keep our girls and women away from modern education.

As a Muslim, I am not against Islamic education but I believe education only on religion is not a complete thing to sustain in this world. Now both men and women must work and earn their livelihood. The new education policy tabled by the present government should come into force as early as possible, so that all our men and women get equal opportunities insofar as education is concerned.
Shafiqul Islam, NY

The human factor

Dr. Saadat Husain (Chairman, PSC) has provided a tutorial to the political pundits and the bureaucracy, in his in-depth article 'The devil is in the details' (DS of 4/5/10).

Publicising a new project is not enough. The bugs are in the implementation details; and in the unwanted and negative human elements prevailing and interfering at about all the vertical and horizontal levels, in the LDCs. This is mainly due to the immature political culture prevailing at the governance levels; with short-term subjective outlook.

I recall that while I was on active service decades ago in Dhaka, as a senior engineer, I used to place one of our engi-

neers on duty at the Secretariat, to assist the Secretariat officers in quick upward movement of the files. He explained the technical implications to the Section officer concerned.

This brings us to the point of still using pen-pushing methods in our Secretariat - a legacy of the British Raj period (remember the Writers' building in old colonial Calcutta?).

Dhaka (and Islamabad) is a new federal capital, starting with zero institutional support, unlike New Delhi. This weakness in the foundation of public service has resulted in political indiscipline we see today. Misuse of power and authority is rampant. The political PR (public relations) has to be improved. There is a tendency to go for mega projects, (with the back doors wide open and crowded). In metropolis Dhaka, for example, the majority of the residents use rickshaws; but there are road restrictions; and there are no lanes for bicycle. Hundreds of expensive high-rise flats have flooded the city; whose clients and sponsors depend on black wealth.

Unless Dhaka is decentralised, the mega city is sure to die out. The farmers in the rural areas are keeping us alive, but they have no social status, due to marginal living conditions. The dynasty rules have glaring weaknesses; but it continues today, even after decades.

The politicians have to wake up!
A Mawaz
Dhaka

Fatal accidents



The high rate of fatal accidents in Bangladesh is cause for alarm and is unacceptable. The adoption of Road Safety Strategic Action Plans is a welcome move towards improving road safety. On the other hand, 90 percent of the driving licenses in Dhaka city are fake. Traffic management and law enforcement agencies are most visible in the streets of metropolitan areas. While much of it can be attributed to dereliction on the part of the traffic police, it is also true that vehicle drivers as well as pedestrians contribute in no small measure to road accidents. Most vehicles do not obey traffic signals or wish to be regulated.

A vast majority of pedestrians do not like to use over-bridges or under-passes built at a huge cost to ensure their safety. Police may have given up the idea of enforcement. Road accidents are rooted in slack laws and lack of vigilance by the government agencies.

Under Bangladesh Penal Code, a driver may be imprisoned for up to seven years for reckless driving that leads to a death. But almost no driver or vehicle owner has faced punishment for such accidents. An effective law is essential for promoting road safety. Bangladesh is ranked as one of the most accident prone countries in the world.

Rowshan Ali
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Terrorism

In India, in almost all parts of the country the main source of transportation is railway and a large portion of budget is spent in this sector. Recently, a massive train accident claimed over 80 lives and injured around 200. In Midnapore, a district of West Bengal, a train derailed as fish-plates were removed from the tracks causing the accident. A suspicion arose that the Maoist insurgents were involved in this carnage. It indicates that the sub-continent is used as 'transit' for terrorism. Last year, India experienced a deadly attack and such a major and minor offensive activities are happening round the year.

Bangladesh is also getting volatile as the religion-based vested parties are regrouping to carry on their subversive activities.
Budu Das
Student
Department of English
Govt. City College, Chittagong

Road accidents

A student, aged 20, of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, was crushed under the wheels of a bus on 27 May. Following the incident the fellow students of the deceased went on vandalising vehicles.

Regrettably, it is now a common scene that whenever an accident takes place, the agitating people start destroying everything. The drivers and the people need to be conscious while driving vehicles and running on the roads to reduce the number of these types of tragic accidents.

We express our deep sympathy for the family members of the deceased student.
Habibur Rashid Ismail
Chittagong

Environment

Environment is the burning issue for all of us who are a little bit conscious about

future. Our first and foremost duty is to involve the school goers in raising consciousness. They are the group who can create awareness among their parents, siblings and other family members. To implement this, school based activities should be promoted. For example, the school should include curriculum on how to keep the environment clean, how to conserve it.

They should not litter plastic bags, cans here and there. In addition to these, the mass media should come forward. Different types of advertisement, drama should be displayed.

Although most of the people of our country are illiterate but if we the educated, privileged work together to teach them about environment, it would be a great achievement.

Mehruba Islam
Student, Department of Geography & Environment
University of Dhaka