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.

Guidebooks



The govt. distributed nearly 19 crore textbooks among the students of primary and secondary levels at the very beginning of this year. Those books were distributed free of cost with a view to ensuring education for all. Moreover, most of the textbooks are now available as online electronic books. It is obviously a praiseworthy action of the present govt. But the fact is that the students aren't interested in reading textbooks. They pay more attention to reading guidebooks available in the market. Hence, the creativity of the students is being greatly hampered. A textbook is a manual of instruction or a standard book in any branch of study. They are produced according to the demand of educational institutions. As the students do not read textbooks, they are not aware of the textual facts and they answer questions incorrectly. Although the govt. banned all kinds of guidebooks and notebooks, the publishers did not pay heed to it at all.

So, I would like to draw the kind attention of the authorities concerned to the issue. Notebooks have to be banned.

Md Jalal Uddin

Assistant Teacher Natore Govt. High School

Damaging hartals

Hartal does not solve any problem. Rather it breeds more and new problems, confrontations and lead to sufferings of the people. Hartal costs a loss of taka two thousand crore countrywide a day. How many hartals have we observed during last two decades? According to a national Bangla daily (Bhorer Kagaj 26/06/2010) the Awami League has enforced 311 days and BNP has enforced 295

The claim of the opposition that the hartal has been successful and the counter claim of the government that the people rejected the hartal is meaningless.

Forgetting and forgiving our past and present errors and bitterness, it is the moral and patriotic responsibility of all of us to pursue, work and build up a peaceful, progressive and prosperous

Bangladesh. We all may take lessons from Chittagong City Corporation election which ushered in a new era, a new horizon in our political arena, amity and understanding among our political leaders

and people. All our political leaders may kindly give up and stop the habit and tradition of calling hartal. As alternative to hartal they may kindly observe Hunger Strike themselves and seek people's sympathy, blessing and support to press home their (political

leaders) demands. Our people dislike, detest and oppose hartal. Would our government and opposition kindly respond to the voice of the people? **OHKabir** Dhaka

Dress and religion

The Daily Star has published at least two letters referring to modesty and dress code for women, which might reduce the incident of teasing (?). The dress code of any nation is inherited by cultural practice and is part of social norms and changing style. It is not necessary to challenge the freedom of choice of an individual as long as it conforms to civility and is publicly acceptable.

In my opinion if we want to follow religion, we will have to be religious in our act and deeds, not in dress or else one can define. I would rather look at Islam as it is, not by any dress code. Dress is a part of our changing culture. We need not put any kind of sticker to deface the same and maintain our freedom of choice if it is not considered a public nuisance.

Let Islam move on its own dynamic power. Fanaticism is creating destructive forces not liked by many today. In the process, Islam is victimized. Follow the Islamic way of life, if you can follow it truly. We might have noticed that the dress code prescribed in those letters is a matter of social behaviour which is often refined and developed through liberal education also. There is a co-relation

between education and development including religious values and ever changing dress code.

By the way, people of my age might remember that we (not generalized) used to wear "Dhoti and short" in British India, irrespective of religious faith; and now we are gradually moving into western dress depending on social mobility of an individual. It might not be wrong to say that evolution of dress code is more linked to socio-cultural change and not based on religious belief. Finally, I support social freedom and freedom of choice for wearing dress as long as it is socially, culturally and publicly acceptable.

Quadir California, USA

ERL's expansion

costs

The report on the matter was published in most dailies on 11th July. The cost figure was month, hundreds of Israelis indicated at around US\$867 million in total, covering both foreign exchange needed and also the equivalent local taka, that is needed. This comes to Taka 606.9 crore (based on 1\$=Tk70). If we consider a liberal interest rate of say 5 percent for financing this expansion, based on repayment period of say ten years, the additional cost of refining will be around 20 paisa per litre on the total refining capacity after expansion to 4.5 million ton annually!

issue, related to product pricing, can also be taken up alongside the additional refining cost. This is related to the subsidy, provided by the government. I believe there must be no subsidy for motor spirit, aviation turbine fuel and furnace oil. These products are used in industry and other modes of transportation used normally by well-off people, who should not be provided with such subsidies through fuel prices.

On the face of it, it appears

to be fairly reasonable, how-

ever, another very important

Subsidy may only be considered for high-speed diesel and kerosene; which is mostly used by rural people, for irrigation, farming and household lighting. Under the same logic; we should do away with providing subsidy to natural gas. Its price should be in line with the available heat basis per unit of gas (based on calorific value), with traditional liquid fuel or coal. The low price of natural gas should be rationalized upwards step by step, say by 10 or 15 percent increases yearly over the next five years or so. This fuel is used mostly in urban areas, where the people are comparatively much better off in many respects compared to our rural fellow citizens. Same is the logic for industrial usage for heating or power generation, as it adds to the operating profits of the industries owned by rich people. Engr. S.A. Mansoor Dhaka

Load shedding

Load shedding is a serious

problem in Bangladesh for a long time. Students are facing a lot of problems as even the IPS is not being fully charged. As a result, when load shedding is taking place in different sectors of Uttara, the IPS is running. The buildings using generators are not in a better condition. The generator is consuming a lot of oil. Oil is a non renewable source of energy which is quite costly. Samiha Raida

The Aga Khan School, Dhaka

Role of Israel

For many Israelis, the very thought of non-violent Palestinian protest goes so far against the grain as to be incomprehensible, lethally suspicious, a violation of a bedrock narrative.

In many cases, Israeli media have actively ignored or obscured non-violent Palestinian protest. Last and Palestinians marched together through the streets of Silwan, East Jerusalem, protesting a plan by Jerusalem mayor Nir Barkat to evict Arab residents and raze 22 houses for a settler-oriented tourism

project. At a time when use of overwhelming force has cost Israel dearly in its world standing, what will it take for Israelis to rethink the idea that what they have can only be maintained by force? A new kind of leader. A Gandhi, a Dr. King. The only

way the Palestinians will ever get their independence is with the help of outsiders. The US never could have won its independence if it hadn't had the help of several other European nations, particularly France.

Ted Rudow III, MA On e-mail

Clinton's mission

The 12th July last marked six months since a devastating earthquake shook the coast of Haiti. Former US President Bill Clinton who is also the President of Clinton Foundation recently visited Haiti to see for himself the situation and to supervise the relief and reconstruction works undertaken by the Clinton Foundation and other international agencies there. President Clinton in a recent e-mail wrote:" Despite the challenges, I remain committed to helping the people of Haiti build back better. Through the Clinton Foundation, as the United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti, and now as the co-chair of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission along with Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive, I will continue to strive to help the Haitians build the nation that they desire and deserve."

It may be mentioned here that the Clinton Foundation has already provided the equivalent of \$23 million worth of assistance to the people of Haiti. In addition, the Clinton Foundation has facilitated over \$100 million worth of commitment to help rebuild Haiti.

The Clinton Foundation needs more contributions from people all over the world to help reconstruct earthquake devastated Haiti. Being a supporter of the Clinton Foundation I would sincerely appeal to everyone to contribute generously to help the Foundation realize its development goals in Haiti plus in ensuring human welfare in every nook and cranny of our globe.

Professor M Zahidul Haque Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University Dhaka

Richest Indian in history!

Who was the richest Indian in history? According to Forbes magazine, it was late Nizam Osman Ali Khan (1886-1967), the ruler of the princely state of Hyderabad, whose wealth, in the purchasing power of the inflation-adjusted US dollar terms of 2008 would have been the stupendous sum of USD 211 billion dollars. The world's richest man living, Bill Gates pales in comparison, as he is worth only USD \$56 billion, about one fourth of the Nizam's wealth. By the same yardstick the personal wealth of the present King of Saudi Arabia was a plain USD

30 billion. Further According to Forbes Magazine which compiles a worldwide list every year, in 2008 US dollar values,

the combined wealth of the first 40 richest Indians in 2008 was just USD 139 billion dollars, not even two third of the Nizam's wealth! In fact Nizam Osman Ali Khan was the richest Asian / Indian in history and ranked as the fifth richest man in the world in the recorded annals.

Today 62 years after Indian Independence, we have an avalanche of information about the Nizam, collected by research scholars and historians and it is interesting to consider, as to how he got his fame as the richest Asian/Indian in history.

It is interesting to note, that when Mir Osman Ali Khan became the ruler of Hyderabad in 1911, the state treasury was nearly bankrupt, his father Mahbub Ali Pasha being a profligate. But that was only the finances of the Hyderabad state; and the personal wealth of the Nizams accumulated through six generations remained intact.

Osman Ali Khan was the man who had everything. In his 82 years, he ruled a state of 18 million people, bossed a brilliantly uniformed army of 22,000 men, had a stupendous fortune in his sprawling King Kothi palace, of diamonds, rubies, sapphires, pearls and lesser gems are stored in treasure rooms. The meticulous Time news weekly on Feb 22, 1937 published that the total value Nizam's wealth that at the peak of his "earning" period in 1936, to be \$2 billion. \$5,000 (\$ 7,50,000 in 2008 dollar values) was his approximate daily income in 1936, his jewels had an estimated value of \$150,000,000, and he had reputedly had salted down \$250,000,000 in gold bars and

his capital totalled some \$1,400,000,000.

Mir Osman Ali Khan, who

had been conferred the title of His Exalted Highness by the British ruled over Hyderabad state which at that time sprawled across 2,23,000 square km or the present size of Great Britain and his private estates (jagirs, also called sarfi-khas land) accounted for a significant 30 per cent of this land mass or he owned nearly as his personal property 75 thousand square kilometers..the size of modern Assam. Further, the most important fact was that he did not have to pay any tax on his vast income.

Rajesh Koul Uttara, Dhaka

Veil

The PCP article (18 July) is very lucidly and cogently written. I congratulate Engr. Nurul Islam for this. As mentioned by him in final analysis, the full veil is not an Islamic requirement but has developed as a survival technique for women in a predatory society ruled by ruthless warlords in the Middle East. Engineer Shafi Ahmed London, UK

Language and literacy

Till now I had no concrete idea about the meaning of illiterate. The other day at a public place somewhere in Houston, Texas, I happened to notice a person staring at a notice board trying desperately to figure out what the sign says.

The notice written in English was very simple and easy yet the fluent English speaking person could not

figure it out. Though I come from a country where the rate of illiteracy is even higher than the United States and I had come across people a number of times back at home those who can not read or write, yet only this time I realized the real meaning of illiterate. As I was under the impression that all English speaking people

must be literate. I have no shame in admitting that the person I am referring to speaks much better English than I do as it is his mother tongue. It is in no way my intention to portray America where illiterate people live. America is considered the world leader yet it has people who are illiterate.

Probably Bangladesh is the only country in the world whose leaders are the worst deliverers in international forums in English language. This puts the nation to shame. I would rather request these leaders to follow our great national leader Bangabandhu or the Chinese leaders while delivering in International forums in their mother tongues instead of an alien language in which they do not excel and be proud of doing

We have to remember that the leaders represent the nation. There are many a people in Bangladesh who can deliver in English at par with any native English speaking leaders of the world, but they are not fortunate enough to represent the nation in such forums.

There cannot be any alternative to learning. The Holy Quran very correctly says "Learn from cradle to grave" Saleh Ayub On e-mail



A.M.AHAD / DRIKNEWS

River pollution and factories

In our country both the state & individuals establish industries & business houses of various trades.

I came to Dhaka from Canada to see my parents. I had to go to Chandpur to visit other relatives. I chose waterways, as road journey causes irritation due to traffic jam, sound of hydraulic horn and black smoke.

When we reached Sadarghat terminal and got into the launch what I

found is anybody's guess. I was sick and coughing.

I had to inhale the obnoxious smell of the river Buriganga. The main causes of river pollution is industrial waste and chemicals.

The authorities concerned appear to be ignoring the issue. Nafisa Elham

plants along the river

Buriganga are unable to

treat the thoroughly pol-

luted water of the river and

as such, some residents

cannot use its water for

drinking purpose. The

situation is worsening day

by day. Unfortunately, how-

ever, no clear steps appear

to be in sight for addressing

the problem. While insuffi-

cient water supply in the

capital on one hand is caus-

ing immense suffering to

the city dwellers, the spread

of water-borne diseases is

gradually becoming a

health problem on the

other. Every day hundreds

of patients, mainly chil-

dren, are being admitted to

the ICDDR,B in the city with

The hospital is now

unable to offer fair treat-

ment to a huge number of

diarrhoea patients coming

from different places. We

also have a responsibility as

global citizens to do our

best for a solution to this

burning issue. Let's stop

polluting the rivers with

polythene bags and others

wastes and start conserving

water. Together, we can

Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

make a difference.

Tanha Kashfia Kate

waterborne diseases.

Saskatoon Canada

Water crisis

Severe water crisis has

made things go from bad to

worse for people in Dhaka

city. With all the frequent

power outages, horrendous

traffic jams and the like

already complicating life in

the city, the shortage of

water creates new night-

mares for everyone. In most

large city areas citizens have

been suffering from lack of

water. All known civiliza-

tions grew around a water

source to support life, and

to give life to its economy.

No water, no power -- life

appears to be in mounting

stress in some of the resi-

scanty gas supply are add-

ing to the woes of the citi-

zenry. Scarcity of water is so

acute in several areas that

residents are now thinking

of leaving those places. The

problem has become acute

due to inadequate water

supply and contaminated

water. A number of resi-

dents are now using con-

taminated water as the

special supply of water by

the Water Supply and

Sewerage Authority (Wasa)

According to Wasa

sources, water treatment

is not enough.

Persisting heat wave and

dential areas in the city.

ONLINE **VOICES**

Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star Online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

Poor performing bureaucrats to face music (July 21, 2010)

excuse for the public servants not only misusing the country's resources, committing fraud and taking bribes. What was truly alarming is that the good officers would be ostracized. There were Bureaucrats not only have disrenumerous anti-corruption cases against them when the only thing they were guilty of was standing in the way of corruption.

SKhan

Even today we see deserving officers not getting their due, while corrupt bureaucrats who know how to play the game propel through the ranks. It's time to take the politics out of this and allow bureaucrats perform their jobs. Annonto

The people want the politicians

Year after year, we've seen lame to be accountable and I think it's time we made the bureaucrats accountable... only then we can see the light of progress. Muntasir

> spect for the elected representatives but a general lack of respect for the ENTIRE country and all its people. We would like to demand that

this list be made public, so not only will they face the music legally but also in the court of public opinion. Shame on these so-called officers who do not hesitate to do harm to the country for their personal gains. Jinat

Many brilliant people need these jobs, jobs that are not being performed can go to those who

really want it. I rather like the question from one of the ministers when he asks... do these people knowingly neglect their jobs or they are just not capable of doing their jobs? Either situation needs to be investigated and properly dealt

with. Natasha

My father is a top bureaucrat and the only time I hear him complain about his job is when he repeatedly says his subordinates don't follow through with any of their promises. He will ask for a file and it will show up after a month ...

If he is vulnerable to his own employees from within the system, I can imagine the PM and the ministers' frustrations. My father can't fire anyone, not even the peon who doesn't show up for

Sammy

Bravo, another great example of house cleaning ... I hope they show the same sincerity about their own party members.

There is a simple way to evaluate these bureaucrats, just look at the ministries that have done good work in the past year and a half. Anisha

In these days and age of informa-

tion...contemptuous attitudes will not be tolerated. The AL needs to make a list and give it to the media, the public need to know these individuals who are working to slow down the progress of the country.

Concerned

I have to laugh at the bureaucrats complaining about not being promoted, and expecting promotions simply because they are seniors. If that was the case then the CEOs of the world would be in their 90's. Talent gets you promotion, not your seniority. Kona

I think the PM and the AL should see this as an opportunity.. they should evaluate the bureaucrats they can really trust, their loyalty, their talent, their ability to perform their jobs. The people are behind the government in this Jaman

I appreciate this and those who are not qualified should be punished following administrative procedures. Ashraf Siddiquee Bitu

There should be an administrative body to monitor the course of a file randomly, and also the system of handling files should be reviewed.

Azad Abul Kalam

It is more than true that some secretaries are not working the way they should. "No work no pay" is a good system. Ask the officials to work sincerely to serve the nation. Abul Kashem

A system needs to be in place so that the work of each department head is monitored. Why not hold board meetings once a month with the prime minister as chairperson. At the meeting each head of department has to submit a report of the progress made by him/her. If satisfactory progress has not been made, then action should be taken against the officials concerned. M.A. Malique

Hire & fire is the only solution to bring normalcy in the public administration.

them understand that no one is indispensable. All the members of the civil service have to follow and implement the policy of the government. Syed Jabed

pastime for the politicians, media and the public. Our failure is essentially political. If our political system improves, so will the quality of bureaucracy.

Sarwar Shahid

The government must make

Bureaucrat bashing is a favourite