

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.

Stephen Hawking

I am a follower of Stephen Hawking and level his writings with great esteem. He maintains that 'the Universe has the power to create and will in future create itself from gravity.' 'Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing.' He writes, "Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the Universe exists, why we exist."

As an aficionado follower of this brilliant scientist, I am utterly disappointed. What I cannot understand is how anything could exist always and everywhere, yet be neither body nor space nor time. Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who set the planets in motion.

As a Christen, Stephen Hawking grew up believing that Jesus was God and understandably his subconscious mind in spite of being highly logical and analytical had the embedded image of God being Jesus-like in his thoughts and spirit. The Holy Quran says that the moment we compare the Creator to something that the human mind can conceive is no longer the Creator. Isaac Newton did not believe that Jesus was God but saw God as the masterful creator whose existence 'could not be denied' in the face of the grandeur of all creation.

If Stephen Hawking's theory is based on a law of gravity then we need to find out what this law is, on this earth first, the solar system, the universe and beyond. When an apple falls, from a tree it has a beginning, when it hits the ground, an end. This is the law, or principle of all things known to mankind, a constant that is applicable to almost anything known, therefore everything has a beginning and an end as is life and death.

Now if we go into space, the gravity theory, which is the constant here on earth, gradually diminishes upsetting everything based on this principle. Whilst the theory of gravity is the bases of all laws, and principles on the earth, the solar system, the universe and beyond, the very fundamentals of this theory may not be applicable in zero gravity zones, where the attraction of two or more bodies is the same at certain spots of the universe. The weightlessness condition here has no beginning and no end and apples do not fall to the ground based on the law of gravity but floats. While the law of gravity requires God to have, a beginning and somebody to create Him, weightlessness condi-

tions do not.

The human brain is evolving. There was a time when we truly believed on the theory that the earth was flat, that the sun rotates round the earth, the Universe was stationary and now the black holes and the big bang theory. Centuries later, we may go beyond the big bang into theories where man had not ventured before. The likes of Stephen Hawking and many more to come will have to decipher the mysteries of the Universe for centuries before even coming close to questioning the existence of the Creator.

Sir Francis Bacon wrote "It is true, that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

Mahmoodul Haque
Gulshan
Dhaka

Taxes for MPs

From the media report, Mr. Obaidul Quader opined that lawmakers should pay income tax as they take their honorarium from taxpayers' money. If people can pay taxes then why shouldn't the lawmakers pay income tax? Lawmakers are exempted from tax on remuneration and allowances according to the 1973 Members of Parliament (remunerations and allowances) Order. In fact, governance is a matter of setting moral standards for everyone to uphold. It begins at the top. That being the truth, let our MPs correct the situation and convince the people of Bangladesh that lawmakers are not and cannot be above the law. Let them begin paying their dues to the republic. Our members of parliament are already some of the best-paid legislators in the world, a fact that has drawn fire from their constituents who believe they should be paid less. It is totally ridiculous that our MPs go home with huge perks per month while professionals like doctors earn less per month though they work more than 12 hours a day seven days a week! Our MPs? A few hours a week with more perks per day just for showing up! Integrity of MPs should be measured by the same ruler they use for the same country. They really don't care about the welfare of ordinary citizens. There are other more pressing matters we should be attending to like improving infrastructure instead of increasing salaries. Bangladesh's economy is still recovering from the aftermath of a post-election crisis and an ensuing world economic downturn. Yet another drastic pay hike for MPs is the most

outrageous, insensitive, immoral and intolerant abuse by Bangladesh's officialdom the country has ever witnessed.

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

Leadership plan of AL

Almost all the democratic governments and parties select, nurture, groom second and third line of leadership. Suppose in India if anything happens to the present prime minister the next day probably Pranab Mukherjee will be sworn in as the next prime minister. The country will run smoothly. There won't be any chaos or confusion.

We ought to remember a fundamental fact of life that all human beings are mortal. Same succession plan or scheme is true for UK, US and other European political parties. So, for them the transition when required is smooth and efficient.

But in our country unfortunately the above arrangements do not hold true. So far the Awami League is concerned, people are yet to guess who are the persons succeeding the leadership after the present incumbent and her close associates retire. The old order of Awami League is quite aged, physically somewhat handicapped and should not be considered in the next leadership plan. The followings may be the criteria for choosing, grooming, promoting a 2nd line of leadership:

1. They ought to be younger, fifty plus but not more than sixty five.

2. Should have a constituency.

3. Well read, articulate, urbane, good at negotiations, well conversant with world politics and economy.

4. Good in spoken English.

5. Popular among the mid level leaders, grassroots level leaders and workers.

6. An achiever in his/her own right, with some wealth.

7. Preferably not from the business community.

8. Mostly from the professional class like lawyers, doctors, engineers, social workers, teachers, retired civil/military officials, etc.

9. With 100 percent loyalty to the party, its policies, people and the country.

10. An affirmed secular pro-liberation non-criminal background person.

Awami League should do the homework as soon as possible so that no vacuum is created in the leadership and they can steer the country to the desired expectations and prosperity.

Dr. SN Mamoon
One-mail

Protecting vultures

During our liberation war vultures were seen eating the dead bodies shot by the Pakistani soldiers. In the past when a cow or any other animal died, vultures appeared there from somewhere. But now this beneficial scavenger is on the verge of extinction.

Crows and vultures are the main 'natural sweepers'. Crows can live in comparatively small trees but vultures need big and tall trees for their habitation. Vultures do not find shelter as we are cutting trees indiscriminately.

Vultures began to face another risk when the veterinarians started prescribing 'diclofenac' and 'clitofenac'

for our cattle. These birds die after eating carcasses which were given said medicine earlier. So, in the meantime our 95% to 98% vultures have disappeared from our country. Albeit India, Nepal and Pakistan have already banned those medicines, we are still using them. Experts advise to use 'meloxicam' which is not harmful to the vultures.

Bangladesh is now facing the spread of anthrax. But vultures can digest the microbes of anthrax. What a magnificent natural balancing way! For our own benefit the number of vultures must be increased.

Rashid Harun
Dhaka

ment systems should be introduced to manage a healthy relationship with customers.

The SME sector can also adopt mobile marketing strategies connected with mobile services providers to inform tourists about attractive destinations. New online applications such as Google Adwords or Google Analytic can be used to give a prominent place for the website of a specific product. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Blogs can be helpful in promoting tourism industry in Bangladesh.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam
Tourism Professional

Communal harmony

I am sure that I am not the only person who was appalled by the prospect of a single, independent and obscure American congregation, burning a copy of the Holy Qu'ran, on September 11th. This church is not connected to ANY major Christian denomination and this action has NO official Christian sanction at all, even within the USA, never name the world. Despite the hurricane of protest from those of all religions and none - plus government (e.g. Hilary Clinton) and secular authorities - this misled congregation may, unfortunately, go ahead with this action that has rightly been called 'unnecessary, offensive and dangerous'.

As a Christian, I must not only add my own objection to this action but point out that the vast majority of Christians believe that the biblical and Christ-like way to protest against the persecution that some Christians have suffered from some Muslims in some countries is by speaking the truth in the power of God's love, and by extending that love even to those Muslims who are hostile to us. In that context it can never be justified to destroy a book that Muslims regard as sacred.

There could be dreadfully destructive consequences of the proposed Qu'ran burning for Christians in Muslim-majority communities. Already Muslim militants in Indonesia have promised to kill Indonesian Christians if Qu'rans are burned in Florida, and the history of anti-Christian violence there shows this is not an idle threat. Christians in numerous other places, who live in daily fear of potentially deadly attacks, will at once be placed in much greater dan-

ger. Iraqi Christians (about half of whom have fled the country in response to threats and violence) have expressed great concern. Some churches have links of friendship with America and may, falsely, be assumed to approve of everything and anything that goes on there. Christian leaders, worldwide, are pointing out that it cannot be right for Christians in countries that have the freedom to protest, to do so in a totally unacceptable way that puts at risk the lives of other Christians in other countries.

In any case, do not let human relationships involve a measure of disagreement but is that any reason for us to abuse one another? Everyone has to learn how to disagree without being disagreeable!

Let all people of goodwill unite in prayer that hatred and violence will NOT overcome the mutual respect and tolerance that is slowly growing between people of all faiths. Bangladesh, with both its tradition and its constitutional promotion of tolerance towards minorities, should understand this perfectly.

Angela Robinson
On e-mail

Ensure equality

We see from the news published in your daily that some of those convicted by the court with death by hanging in a murder case and have recently been pardoned by the Honourable President, are coming out from the jail with television antenna and paddle stand fans in hands (DS: 08.09.10). As per the jail code no accused, especially who are under capital punishment, is allowed to bring anything in other than their clothes and essentials. The jail authorities are supposed to ensure the comfort and convenience of the inmates. But since they are the members of the ruling party, none obstructed them from bringing in whatever they wished, I suppose.

This violation of the jail code and flouting the normal practice will create a bad precedence and may some day give birth to some other complications which we cannot foresee today. For the sake of equity, justice and equality in treatment, those who supplied them these appliances or those who let them take those in should be brought to book.

Ahmed Munir
Purana Pallan
Dhaka



Decentralisation

Take a look around you and see the difference between a week ago and today September 10, 2010. This exactly the optimum size of population Dhaka should have. Unfortunately, we as a nation have become unfamiliar with the word optimum nay almost forgotten it. Given the size of our country i.e. about 56,000 square miles it has at least a surplus population of 100 million.

People from all over Bangladesh through the capital Dhaka in search of jobs Dhaka is already beset with multiple problems and these problems continue to multiply with the arrival of new immigrants every day.

All successive governments, in a wrong manner, tried to address and mitigate these problems resulting in a further rise of the problems. The party in power is planning to build more flyovers, monorails, etc in a bid to overcome the nagging traffic jam situation. To be very honest, these initiatives shall invite more new immigrants into the capital thereby worsening the already worse situation, which will, according to Malthus, usher in natural disasters of epic proportion - a natural way of combating population explosion.

To cure a disease proper treatment is required, if wrong medication is prescribed, most likely the patient shall die. Dhaka is plagued with multiple fatal diseases, it requires the right kind of treatment. Any wrong treatment may kill Dhaka as is the case with a terminally ill patient.

As a layman, I think it is absolutely necessary to make arrangements for decentralisation and equitable distribution of people throughout the country. This one single measure shall help overcome all the problems Dhaka is beset with. The party in power may initiate the process for a better future as the founding father of the nation had so planned.

Saleh Ayub
One-mail

Congrats to Australian premier

We congratulate Julia Eileen Gillard, the 27th and current Prime Minister of Australia, on her winning the election held recently. It is learnt from the media that Ms. Gillard is going ahead with her plans to introduce a 30 per cent tax on iron ore and coal miners' profits, and make Australia's biggest polluters pay for carbon gas emissions. She has further promised to invest about six billion US dollars on rural schools and hospitals.

The initiatives the Australian premier is going to take are related to addressing two burning issues of the current age. One is environmental protection and the other is disseminating education to rural people.

She deserves appreciation and felicitations.

M. Rukanuddin
Dhaka

Promoting tourism products

The giants in the hotel industry do not consistently use new media modules in the process of promoting their products. Only a few of the larger hotels and resorts have created basic IT applications such as a website to promote their products. But in the future the technological application should be utilised more to attract many tourists.

The SME sector has a lesser awareness on these new media. The SME sector in Bangladesh should associate social media as much as possible to promote their products. Online reservation and pay-

Favourite officers

During the last sixty-three-years the army officers who took control of the affairs of the country was favourite of the political leaders. Brigadier General Mohammad Ayub Khan served the political leaders while discharging duties during the tumultuous partition days. Mohammad Ali Jinnah appointed him the first GOC of the then East Pakistan. Liaquat Ali Khan, the first prime minister of Pakistan, appointed adjutant general of Pakistan Army General Mohammad Ayub Khan as the first commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman appointed Major General K. M. Shafiqullah BU as the chief of army staff and Major General Ziaur Rahman BU as the deputy chief of army staff of Bangladesh Army and both of them were provided with various facilities. After assumption of the high position, the army officers comes in contact with the high officials of the three branches of the government-- the executive, legislative & the judiciary. Moreover they also come close to the diplomatic circle, bankers, contractors, industrialists and also the noted editors.

While assuming the state power through martial law they induct only one editor in the cabinet while the rest being subjected to scrutiny and therefore all the chief martial law administrators became unpopular in the media.

Golam Ashraf
Gulshan, Dhaka

Clemency to convicts

The president's granting clemency to 20 AL activists sentenced to death for murder is quite natural for Bangladesh context where the ruling party is always there to nurture their party criminals. I remember Rabindranth Tagore's line, 'Those who commit crime and those who tolerate it are tormented by the same kind of hatred'. That's all we the saner souls say now.

AS
On e-mail



Losses in fruit business

An important article on the subject was published in the 'Business' pages of a local daily on 3rd September. In my opinion, the write-up was rather ineffective, limited only to broad information from a number of sources.

There was nothing interesting on what, how and where these suggestions can be most effective.

Also critical information on the shelf life indication from the point of wholesale to kitchen, of these daily food items was not provided. The total annual financial loss amounted to the staggering sum of Tk.3391.71 crore, of which Tk.3065.6 crore was in fruits, and Tk.326.11 crore in popular vegetables that we cook every day! The article emphasised on the overuse of ripening chemicals, and poor packaging for transport, which caused these losses. It was maximum for Jackfruit followed by Pineapples-- the two most popular fruits grown in Bangladesh.

It quoted a BUET (my Alma-Mater) professor, who stated as follows, and I quote: "The present status of preserva-

tion and packaging was far from satisfactory". However, no suggestions were given on how these areas of preservation and importantly, packaging can reduce these losses! In my opinion, BUET should carry out experimental determination, particularly on effective methods of bulk storage, transport and packaging criteria, applicable for Bangladesh. This information should be widespread and well publicised in our overall national interest. Merely stating the defects is of no use to anyone; particularly in matters pertaining to our food and health.

Without providing these important and critical information; the article was mere words; rather a boring essay, or lecture; which does not provoke or interest the serious reader to get any useful ideas that can be passed on for improvements in our handling of these important food items that we eat everyday!

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

traffic jams blue printed in my preceding 76 letters over the last 3 years!!!! This will involve some tough administrative/financial decisions.

1. Total ban on import of all private vehicles for 2010-2012 for everyone.
2. No purchase of cars on loan/subsidized facility from any source.
3. No private car to run on CNG.
4. No parking or horn blowing on all public roads to be opened to MVs and NMVs.
5. An independent body to list out the private vehicles of each individual. No one should be allowed to possess more than one car per family. (I have heard of one family of three having 18 cars 'rusting' in their garages, looked after by only 6 drivers, most of whom play cards the whole day).
6. All cars to be regularized as per respective Income Tax Returns, Wealth statements, duty paid chalans, tax tokens and fitness certificates, etc.

Owners who cannot even think of being without their 'pet' cars can make arrangements with ITL to have their own BMWs, Prados, Patrols, M-Bs etc on call whenever required (for a price of course). They can have their cake and eat it too. They will find it much cheaper in the long run without the headache of maintenance, drivers' shenanigans, long refuelling lines, renewals etc.

Sikander Ahmed
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