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.

The state of our society

Md Asadullah Khan draws the attention of the political regime to the article on the state of our society, appearing in The Daily Star of 25/9/10. The political pundits never broach these hot topics in their mike appearances, and the government is busy hunting for mega projects, while the moral foundations are cracking up!

It is a tough test for public leadership. The only tool used today (in Dhaka) is to live in the past, chanting names, while the young society is degenerating at an alarming rate, morally and ethically. The rot starts from the top, using the young generation for ulterior purposes. There is no continuity of discipline, and the established institutions have broken down. Unlike newly established capitals like Islamabad and Dhaka, New Delhi has the advantage of not starting from zero.

Today, the modern pace of life is much faster, eschewing tolerance and patience. The LDCs are very sensitive to capitalistic living, based on over-spending. The slum areas in the big cities point out to the heavy migration from the rural to the urban areas. The tendency is misapplied in fertile and green Bangladesh, situated in a delta region. The contribution of the farmers is not officially and socially noticed; only their marginal living conditions are spotlighted in the media.

'Over-population' is a man-made term ignoring the wisdom of Mother Nature. Erosion of riverbanks is a natural, powerful phenomenon, witnessed by generations in a rural family; yet we complain over too much water, and too little water. The fertility rate is automatically lower in the mountainous and desert areas. The gift of the gab of the Bengalis is due to the average higher density of population per sq km. The top leaders have to set exam-

A Mawaz Dhaka

E-bikes

Every time the authorities residing in their ivory towers come up with a new gimmick to solve the perennial headache of Dhaka's traffic jam, they never fail to amaze me with the depths of their ignorance. The latest official nightmare is electrically recharged battery operated 3wheel auto-rickshaws (ebikes) that consume 250 MW

Primary education



The Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2010 has turned the spotlight on substantive questions of quality of teaching and learning. The report sponsored by UNESCO points out that in a large number of developing and least developed countries, the cognitive development of children remains below requisite minimum levels.

Approximately 103.5 million children are still out-of-school and less than 75 per cent of those who enrol continue up to grade five in many countries. Some 800 million adults are

of electricity, which is a theft?

If the so-called authori-

waste. So it must be banned!

ties had the eyes to see the

paucity of city roads to

accommodate the private

cars, and the will and intelli-

gence to recognise what

exactly causes traffic jams in

Dhaka, they would not even

think about banning e-bikes,

but take steps to encourage

its use. They are the appro-

priate mode of transport and

an excellent alternative to

rickshaws and baby taxis for

over 50 lacs Dhakabashis

who venture forth every day

to go to their jobs, schools,

bazaars, visits etc. What is 250

MW, when you get in

exchange an affordable,

environmentally clean, fast,

safe means of transport at

your doorstep? Have they

ever voiced similar concerns

at the much greater so-called

"Systems Loss", which is

another name for barefaced

illiterate. Seventy per cent of them live in nine countries belonging to sub-Saharan Africa and East and South Asia, notably, Bangladesh. While access to education has expanded and spending increased in recent years, the 2005 report observes, this has not been matched by an expansion of resources and facilities in these countries. Currently, international aid to basic education is estimated to be \$1.5 billion a year. It is reckoned that an additional \$7.6 billion in international assis-

tance is required annually to

A few days ago headlines

proclaimed the concerned

minister's latest "Lollipop"-

the import of hundreds of

large buses shortly. Will these

buses venture into Dhaka's

narrow pot-holed lanes filled

to the brim with parked

private cars? Will they be

available to carry the old, the

infirm, disabled, women,

children and those with

heavy bags? How will such

people go from their homes

to the bus stop and vice

versa?

Dhaka

Sikander Ahmed

Niketon, Gulshan-1

achieve universal primary edu-

cation by 2015.

Recent pledges indicate that there will be a major shortfall. Nothing reveals the mismatch between stated intentions and actual practice more starkly than the global expenditure on defence. In a scenario where trade rather than aid defines relations with the industrialised world, developing countries need to build the political will to commit major additional resources to priority sectors such as basic education and public health.

Gopal Sengupta Canada

the NU in the middle of their education session as it takes seven years to complete a four-year honours course and four years to complete two-year LL.B course! So, many of the students are leaving the NU and getting admitted to private universities spending a lot of money, to complete their studies I would like to draw the kind attention of the NU authorities to publish the results of LLB (Part-1) examination immediately which

homes.

Publish LLB (Part-1) results Majority of the students

studies in the National University (NU). But session jam is very common here. Many students are leaving

Bangabandhu Law College Dhaka PM-please

LLB Final Year

quickly.

help us I live in B block, Road 2, Halishahar, Chittagong. Our colony is constantly living in

ended on 30th April 2010.

Md Zahidul Islam

the fear of getting robbed at any time day or night. Every day, people of this colony are getting robbed. Till now a good number of people have also been attacked physically. We think the media can help us. We have not been sleeping for the last two nights; we can't even leave our home for work, because our family members are not safe in our home. I want The Daily Star to publish frontpage news about this so that our PM can learn about the condition of the general people. Honourable Prime Minister, we want to sleep at night. There is no need to

build a digital Bangladesh. At

first, make our country safe

so that we can feel safe in our

Nazmul Hassan On e-mail

Medical education

People in general have a common complain against the doctors that they are not behaving rationally with their patients. They charge exorbitant fees for their advice and other health services, which are not commensurate with the average earning of the people. They advise unnecessary tests just to get some extra money from the diagnostic centres. They even do not examine the patients properly. Scarcity of doctors in the country is the main reason behind such irrational behaviour. Usually the doctors are reluctant to serve the rural health centres. It has become difficult to keep the doctors in rural areas. To address this problem, it is necessary to set up medical colleges in every district. And the govt. should recruit the doctors

from their respective areas. Moreover, it is a matter of great concern that students are losing their interest to study science at secondary and higher secondary levels. Setting up more medical colleges may encourage them to study science.

Md. Ashraf Hossain Cenral Bashabo, Dhaka

Road accidents

Recently a city bus plunged that accident.

I know that bridge very well. The bridge has been in a dilapidated condition for many years. How many deaths would it take to have a

Water-logging

capital of Bangladesh, plays a vital role to uphold the dignity of our country. But it is a matter of great regret that most of the important parts of the city, namely Chawkbazar, Chandanpura, DC road, Dewanbazar, Bogerbeel, etc., remain under water in the rainy season. Even the tidal water inundates Kalam colony and Goni colony every day, where approximately six lakh people live. In this circumstance, newly elected authorities are playing the role of observers.

Chittagong, the business

Akter, Shahid, Liton, Rahbar Kalam Colony, Chittagong

Decentralisation

Decentralising different offices and industries outside Dhaka is the only way to save this city. This city is literally dying in front of our eyes.

Corruption, unplanned urbanisation, lack of farsightedness, disrespect to law and greed are destroying the city.

Dhaka's housing problem will never end if we don't start decentralisation process. Every single canal and river will be grabbed soon and no open space will be left in Dhaka.

Dhaka's traffic jam has already gone beyond our control. And electricity, water and gas crisis have made life even worse. I don't think elevated expressway and underground train will work for Dhaka.

Solution to Dhaka's traffic problem lies in modernising its public transport system, maintaining a good

road condition so that vehicles can move faster, vacating all roads and footpaths from illegal occupants, etc.

All of the above mentioned problems are associated with over population. It seems like everyone wants to live in Dhaka. We have to spread development and economic activities to every corner of the country and start thinking about Bangladesh as a whole.

G.M. Rezwan Rasul Kalyanpur, Dhaka

Value of life

in Sirajganj is highly condemnable. Any loss of life is poignant but what occurred after the train accident is quite unacceptable. Torching the whole train was a subversive activity.

The accident that took place

My question is - what were the BNP activists doing on the railway tracks? Didn't they hear the whistle of the train? Why did they make the podium near the railway tracks?

In Bangladesh there is no value of life. Bus plunges into the river, runs over the pedestrians and breaks the roadside shops and houses. Train hits vehicles. Miscreants kill innocents, and the angry mob beats the miscreants to death. The police and RAB kill people in the name of encounter. There is no guaranty that we will go back home safely. Solaiman Palash East Jurain Dhaka

Seat belts

This morning a cop stopped me for not using the seat belt while driving. He asked me where my belt was, I showed him where it was. Then he said,"I can sue you for violating traffic rules." I replied that this particular rule would be applicable from November 1, 2010, as has been mentioned in the media.

I wrote on this topic earlier, wherein I mentioned the seat belt was the cause of death of late Mr. Saifur Rahman, as has been revealed. Seat belts are meant to save lives.

It is applicable for America and Europe, where people drive at high speeds. There are no or very few examples of death occurring from car crashes for not using seat belts in Bangladesh.

I wonder whether the concerned lawmaker or the police are aware of this or not. Saleh Ayub On e-mail

Road safety

Road accident has become a serious problem in Bangladesh. Each year, as per police report, more than 3300 people lose their lives in road accidents and many more

sustain injuries. The authorities should take urgent steps to improve road safety and thus prevent road accidents. The govt. as well as other organisations should play their part in this regard. And, of course, everyone in the society has a part to play in combating the problem. Tanha Kashfia Kate

Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

Trial of war criminals



FIROZ GAZI / DRIKNEWS

It is very urgent that the trial of the war criminals is completed. People of Bangladesh are very keen to see the trial commence as early as possible.

The government should not delay the trial; otherwise people would doubt the whole process.

from the outside!

Rowshan Ali, On e-mail

Mindless vandalism



Again five BNP men were killed this time by the running train, not by the lathi and oar wielding AL cadres. The criminal train was unable to go off scot-free, because the mob was overwhelming in number and the revenge was quick.

I felt like the burning train was burning my hope for a better future characterised by sanity and love for the country. There is no excuse for this vandalism. When will we, the wretched

Bengalis, come to sense? Tinku Lalpur, Natore

Chittagong

Following a train accident in Sirajganj on October 11, an angry mob torched the train. Those who destroyed the state property were none but miscreants. And we do not want the innocent people to be killed any more. The ruling party or the opposition has no right to kill the innocents and destroy state property. We always expect them to work together for the betterment of the nation.

Habibur Rashid Ismail

This is another heart-rending picture of our politics. The comments of the high commands of both AL and BNP about this incident are almost the same traditional reiterations that we have been habituated to read in the national dailies, and we consider it our fate.

How long will our lives be the political parties? Mobarak Ali

hostage to a few hooligans of Gopibag, Dhaka

safe road? Faruki, JU

into the river near Amin Bazar. Some people died. Monowara Khatun Tara, a student of JU, also died in

who gave their lives in '71 didn't do so with this despica-

Law and order

situation As a proud Bangladeshi I feel honoured that Sir Frank Peters has shown such concern and interest in the well being of Bangladesh and openly expressed his thoughts from which we can all learn. His well-rounded, down-to-earth, intelligent remarks cuts through all the waffle we hear from our lawmakers and deals honestly and sincerely with the real issues that affects all of us.

When he questioned how it was possible for any government or police high-ups to claim crime was on the decrease, when crimes were not even being reported and recorded, I was stunned. I could not help but think why the majority of people (myself included) hadn't thought of that, how we had turned a blind eye to the payment of baksheesh to cops and failed to see the bigger picture and the damage we were doing to society.

When we leave our homes in the morning, we don't know how safe we are, or what awaits us. Are our children going to be mugged on the way to or arriving back from school? Before Bangladesh becomes a total crime and corruption cesspool, action has to be taken. I'm sure those

ble society in mind as their legacy. We all share great shame in allowing Bangladesh to become what it

Dr. Alam Ahmed Baridhara, Dhaka

New option for building house

Boards made from particles of the stem from the hemp plant, mixed with a binder made from hydrated lime, can be safely used as a material for building houses! However, it needs a frame structure, made of wood, steel, brick or concrete, as the fibre boards from hemp called "Hempcrete" is not strong enough to be load bearing! Otherwise, it is a good insulator, for withstanding hot, cold and even wet weather, being waterproof against persistent rain and the damp environment associated with it.

Though the boards are porous to some extent, there is no concern regarding any attack of mildew or molds. The material is not susceptible to mold even when kept soaked in water for days during tests of this house building material!

A company in USA has started manufacturing these boards, which will shortly be coming in the market. They are offering modular homes, based on this hemp board, which will also be exported.

This will herald an era of low cost green housing, which can be installed in a week or two! The houses are cool inside, and have quite attractive finish inside and a nice look

I wonder if we can modify the binder used for the manufacture of particle board from jute stalk in Bangladesh. The aim will be to make the particle board water proof, and hence suitable for external use, which is not possible now. It could then be effectively used as a cheaper building material instead of the expensive brick, cement mortar and plaster needed for the walls. The load bearing frame structure can be built from locally rolled steel structures or bricks as desired. This development can

usher in a new and cheaper option for house building, and will replace the fuel used in burning bricks and the expensive cement now used in building and finishing the outside and inside brick walls of the house. It could also replace the cement floors inside the house. Our BCSIR laboratories in collaboration with jute particle board manufacturers can take up this research project in overall national interest.

Engr. S.A. Mansoor Involved in the manufacture of jute particle board