

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 250 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Railway network needs overhauling

Journey by train which could be very comfortable, enjoyable and cheaper is getting risky day by day in our country. De-railing of compartments, head-on collisions due to wrong signaling have become common untoward affairs in our railway network. Often it is heard or appears in newspaper that the engine ran without any headlight or the loco-driver got drowsy/asleep, etc. Delay in railway schedules is very frequent.

I think to control railway accidents and to improve railway services; following measures if implemented may yield a positive result:

- Erection of barbed wire fencing on both sides of the railway tracks particularly in the populated areas.
- Improving the overall operational system including signaling and monitoring network.
- Raising the facilities for the passengers to international standard.

- Strengthening motivational campaign to educate passengers on how to use various railway facilities.
- Ensuring strict enforcement of railway laws including dispensation of punishment to passengers found without tickets.
- Introduction of cash and kind prizes for the best performance and instant punishment for negligence of duties for the Railway staff.
- Creating training facilities for the railway personnel at home and abroad.
- Increasing salaries of loco-drivers and other essential/emergency railway personnel.
- Expansion of railway routes all over Bangladesh
- Introduction of special trains for the tourists by re-introducing steam engine.

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



MUNIR UZ ZAMAN / DRINKNEWS



Who will counter Felani's death?

Border Security Force (BSF) of India is ruthlessly killing Bangladeshi people again and again. These are extrajudicial killings. The government of Bangladesh is not taking any effective steps against it. Recently Felani, a poor Bangladeshi girl was killed by BSF. She crossed the Indian border with her father. As she tried to come back, BSF shot her first, she was injured, then they raped her and finally shot her again. Her dead body was found at the border in Bangladesh. The Indians threw her body in our land.

People of this country (silent majority) are shocked at the death of Felani but cannot be united for truth, because the two big parties have divided the people. Many of them want to glorify Indian image than the image of Bangladesh. Some hired intellectuals do not find anything wrong with Indian hegemonic attitude because it helped us during our war of independence.

Felani was a human and as humans we should have protested effectively this act of rape and murder, but we did not. Our silence raised questions about our level of education which failed to teach us humanity. I would be very happy if it were written in our academic certificates that "this certificate is for job only and has nothing to do with humanity". Finally, I ask myself if Felani were the daughter of Sheikh Hasina or Khaleda Zia, what would happen? Are not the daughters of poor people humans?

Dr. M. Mahboob Hossain
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Wishes to The Daily Star : You can do more

The Daily Star, the most popular English daily of the country, has celebrated its 20th birthday. It's great news for all its well-wishers and readers. It has earned a permanent place in the hearts of its readers by dint of honesty and integrity. Its effort to create social awareness on several burning issues is praiseworthy. I am one of the millions who start their day by reading The Daily Star.

Being a well-wisher of The Daily Star, I have two requests to the Star family. My first request is to give recognition to the letter writers who almost regularly write letters enriching the page "To the Editor". Many great ideas can be derived from these

letters. I am sure, some of the letter writers have already written more than one hundred letters and some of those letters are strong enough to get the international recognition too. The Daily Star can at least award three best letter writers a year.

My second request to The DS is to arrange a debate competition amongst the educational institutions throughout the country on the most burning issue of the country, i.e. Road Accident and Traffic Management. So far, no debate competition has been arranged on this most important subject. It is very effective way of creating awareness. I believe The Daily Star can bring some change.

Pradip Das
 Lecturer
 BHPI, CRP

Railway can do better

Last Friday I boarded on Chaiti Express, one of the many Bangladesh Railway chair coach train services that run between Dhaka and Khulna. This was my first trip on this route after the opening of the Bangabandhu Bridge over the once mighty river Jamuna. The train was quite comfortable and clean, and the ticket price seemed reasonable. The food was tasty, the prices were not high and the service was good.

However, almost all the chairs of the non-air conditioned coach (I don't know about the air conditioned coaches) were defective. Since those were all reclining chairs, the upper portions seemed defective when adjusting to the needs of the passengers.

I would urge the railway authorities to take immediate steps to repair those chairs considering the distance and comfort of the passengers. One more thing which I also would like to request the authorities concerned is to lessen the number of stoppages. Many passengers were picked up from different stations, and they were standing on the train due to non availability of the chairs. A little repair is also needed in the sound system, because the announcements of the incoming stations were not properly heard due to faulty sound system. Otherwise, the entire journey was quite comfortable. Thanks to Bangladesh Railway.

Humayun Hyder
 Zikatola, Dhaka

No improvement in sight

On 6th January 2011, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her thirty minutes speech claimed that her government achieved remarkable successes in last two years. She listed a few issues that need to be solved in the coming years. She claimed that the govt. made improvements in law and order, and took initiative to ensure fair price for the farmers. Yet no improvements are seen.

The price of coarse rice in the market on 2nd January was between Tk. 34 and Tk. 36 per kg, last year it was between Tk.26 and Tk.27 per kg. The government requested the farmers not to leave one inch of land uncultivated.

PM said that the govt. has added 1000 MW electricity to the national grid and will add 2,361 MW by next year, that thirty three power plants has started to generate 2,941 MW electricity and twenty four power plants will be made to generate 12,000 MW of electricity by next five years.

PM also said that the identified war criminals were arrested and the trial would start soon. She also included that her govt. has made the parliament the center for practising democracy, and so many things.

I request the nation to support the government, and the government to take steps as quickly as possible to reach its goals.
Choudhury Tasnim
 On e-mail

A unique gesture!

The recent violence in the Egyptian Coptic Church - one of the oldest churches in the world - means that the media cannot ignore any longer the persecution of Christians in some countries. In the past, the only way to read about it was to access the few dedicated websites who monitor the subject.

What a wonderful response there has been from leading Muslims in Egypt to the violence! One of the leaders of the prestigious Al-Azhar mosque and university immediately declared that this behaviour was totally unIslamic. The

government promptly organised protection for some Muslims who were interviewed and expressed their disapproval of this untypical behaviour in Egypt, saying that they were used to supporting and sharing in Christian festivals and that Christians were their brothers and sisters!

Angela Robinson
 Gulshan, Dhaka

Comments on "Focus on Alternatives"

Your staff correspondent's report titled "Focus on Alternatives" published on 8th January, related to the Colloquium on Alternative Energy held on 7th January in your office. The subject of commercial availability and use of 'fuel cell' in many countries was discussed. However, as far as I am aware, 'fuel cells' are still not established as a ready solution for power supply. It is expected to get wider usage may be in the next five years or so! Its largest prospect for the US domestic market will be as

engine for electric cars; needing no power from any source, except water in place of gasoline or diesel fuel to be put into the fuel tank! We eagerly wait for the launching of the fuel-celled automobile in Bangladesh!

However, on solar power sources, the new product available in the US market as thin filmed sandwiched solar glass panels that can be fitted like ordinary glass pane in windows. This can easily supply power for the many new high-rises coming up in USA! We should go all out for this product, which I knew was sold in California, a few years back! I do not believe that this remarkable product was mentioned; during the discussions.

We need not go for using cow dung; but go for "human dung"; for the want of a better word! We should explore the possibility of using the refuse collected in WASA sewage pits on area wise basis. The methane available can be easily used for cooking.

Engr. S.A. Mansoor

Ban private coaching



PHOTO: STAR

Very often we hear that the govt. has put a bar on private coaching run by the school teachers. We are not sure whether the government has taken such decision. Private tuition has now become a roaring business. Students are told indirectly or directly by some teachers that those who want to secure good marks should seek the help of teachers outside the school, preferably at the teacher's house or at the coaching centre run by the teacher. A silent competition exists among the teachers. This unhealthy competition ruins the environment at schools.

teachers don't teach properly in the classrooms. The present government can earn much credit by removing this social malady. The whole nation will be benefited if ban on private coaching can be successfully implemented. Of course, in order to make the ban really effective, teachers' salary and other benefits should be increased. Then they may obey the government instruction.
Md Jalal Uddin
 Assistant teacher
 Natore Govt. High School

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Revive the drive!

The citizens of Dhaka are finding no respite from traffic congestion. Haphazard driving and jaywalking are going on unabated. The law enforcers on the roads were supposed to bring every single lawbreaker to book from November 1, 2010. Although some vigour was seen amongst the officials during the commencement of the traffic drive, now it seems that the momentum died down a great deal.

I personally cannot find any reason for the authorities to resign, because the drive has definitely been able to make

an impact on the general mass. I know more than one person who have started to use the seat-belts whenever they drive and am also sure that more bike riders use helmets now than ever before.

I believe if the traffic drive is picked up where it was left off, more and more people would start to abide by traffic rules. I just hope the decision makers are also thinking along the same lines.

Shahriar Kabir
 Dept. of EEE
 BUET, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR