

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.

Open market sales of rice



A news has been published in The Daily Star on January 16 titled "Pricier the rice longer the queue." The news mentioned that "Nearly 125 OMS trucks with 3000 kgs of rice each sell subsidised rice to 75000 people five days a week while many return empty handed in the city."

Very recently, while I was passing along the Karwan Bazar railway market road at about 9.30

in the morning, to my surprise I observed that a truck carrying the banner of OMS of rice hurriedly stopped near a rice trading shop, very quickly unloaded some gunny bags of rice to that shop and immediately left. It was something like selling the OMS rice to open market rice traders for illegal benefit.

Now, from the news it became clear that the occurrence was an

illegal trade and it has also become clear to me as to why 'many return empty handed in the city' as stated in the news. The authorities concerned should carry out a surprise check to unearth the unscrupulous activities concerning the life saving rice of poor people and take severe measures accordingly.

Md. Delwar Hossain
East Rampura, Dhaka

enslaved by the BSF. Every day we Bangladeshis are falling victim to the BSF and occasionally to the Nasaka. But why? It is because our government is not assertive. It sold its soul to the enemy. But beware, our enemy! Our valiant people have started to rise from the ashes like phoenix. They are using ballot to reply the bullet and steadily bettering their condition on their own, come what may.

AS
On e-mail

Remembering late Nurul Islam

One of the saddest news I came across during my recent visit to Bangladesh was the death of Nurul Islam bhai, in spite of the fact that we all wait for a final call from our creator. To me, the life of such an amazing individual ended untimely. He was a role model in good behavior, helping others in whatever way possible.

I acknowledge my debt to him, his soul for all-out cooperation and suggestions he offered me. His affection and care had huge impact in the preparatory and formative stages of my youth and education life.

Late Nurul Islam will survive in the minds of his dearest and nearest ones forever. I pray to the Almighty Allah for eternal peace of his soul.

Md. Sahed Ali
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada

Where are the tickets gone?

Cricket World Cup, the event we all Bangladeshis adore and eagerly wait for, are knocking at our door. We were hoping to experience the magnificent prowess of our players, and the fact that Bangladesh is hosting a number of games this year just heightened

our excitement.

But who thought the attempt to buy tickets for watching the games would be so elusive? When we went to buy our desired tickets, all we could see was the long queue and the people's disheartened faces. Soon it was clear enough that many of us would fail to fulfill our wish to witness the matches from the gallery.

Why have so little number of tickets been issued in the first place? The government is aware about the massive number of cricket fans in this country. Then why should we face all those quagmires? Is some kind of a clout playing its role all along? Whom have all the tickets been issued for? Can anyone answer?

Rafi Abdullah
North South University

Well thought proposals

I want to thank Mr. Pradiip Das, Lecturer BHPI, CRP for his letter published in The Daily Star on January 24, 2011. It is a well thought letter which touched two important issues. His request to arrange a debate on the most burning issues of the country is praiseworthy. And his proposal about giving recognition to letter writers is quite interesting. Those who write in this column spend their time and energy for the welfare of the country; try to attract the attention of the concerned authorities on various problems, giving suggestions and ideas.

I had started writing in The Daily Star many years ago, my first letter was published on May 4, 1994, till now the number of my letters published in this newspaper are 543 (five hundred and forty three). I am grateful to The Daily Star for publishing my letters but I do not know if these letters are noticed by the authorities concerned. Though it is very disheartening, I am still carrying on, hoping all the efforts will not go in vain.

Teaching of English to poor

English, which the Indian nationalists once denounced as "a tool of colonialism," has now become not only the lingua franca of multilingual India, but also a major asset in its rise as a global IT superpower. Now members of India's underprivileged caste, the untouchables or "Dalits" (downtrodden), are clamouring for access to English which is monopolised by English-educated upper castes. The Dalits have gone one step further and erected a granite temple dedicated to what they call "the Goddess English," hailing her as a deity of liberation from poverty and ignorance.

Computer pedestal resonates today especially due to the association of English with India's technology boom, which is responsible for creating a new middle class of software programmers. These programmers are India's English-speaking elites who are almost entirely composed of members of higher castes. The Dalits want a share of India's prosperity by learning English. Shyam Babu, a Dalit scholar agrees: "English is no longer just a language -- it's a skill. Without it you remain an unskilled labourer."

Although Bangladesh has no such untouchable caste, its poor have very little access to teaching of English. With millions of Bangladeshis seeking work abroad, proficiency in English is becoming crucial to their success in foreign lands.

Mahmood Elahi
Ottawa, Canada

Judiciary and corruption

The publication of the TIB report on corruption in judiciary is mostly related to the activities of the "Peshkars", which probably means those who place

the case files serially to the honourable members of the bench! These and the other subordinate staff manage the queue of the dockets and do the necessary processing of the various papers and documents related to the court's order of proceedings.

This is a possible area which can be improved, and the lead time probably rationalised; that is managed by the bureaucracy of the court hierarchy.

This is a probable area of weakness, which has been loosely spelled out as 'corruption in judiciary'.

One reason could be the frustration in the time taken for trials, particularly due to repeated postponements of hearing dates. This is an area which may need some form of rationalisation. May be some type of harsh fines, covering all costs and overheads related to the delay, may be imposed on the litigant who seeks postponement. Another bottleneck is the lack of the number of judges, compared to the number of civil cases coming up for trial. We may have more courts established to handle larger numbers of cases.

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Beware, our enemies!!

When I read the report that a trawler carrying 20 to 25 Nasaka troops detained 10 of our fishermen in the Bay of Bengal on gun point leaving a message to the owners of the fishing boats demanding a ransom of Tk 12 lakh, a chill coursed through my veins. I felt humiliated. Memories of Pilkhana tragedy came crowding in my mind. I thought who actually was behind the killings. The enemies that carried that carnage are now reaping the benefit from the weakened Border Guard of Bangladesh.

I remembered the scene how the girl named Felani was shot dead by the BSF while she was stuck and hanging from the border fence, how the Indians were occupying our lands in Sylhet, how we are

Fate of school bus service



PHOTO: STAR

I was very happy to learn about the introduction of buses meant for the school children. To me personally it seemed like the best thing that ever happened in this country after achieving independence in 1971. No doubt it is a milestone achievement in the transportation sector.

The next day while reading my favorite daily, to my utter dismay I came across the frustrating front page picture, displaying

general passengers riding on the bus meant for the school children. I simply wonder when this nation shall become civilized, or shall we remain rustic forever?

While staying in Houston, I witnessed with great amazement, the school buses carrying students are the VIPs in true sense traveling on the streets. No one blocks their path, it is against the law. It is the priority vehicle number one on the street. Since I did

not have the opportunity of coming across any presidential motorcade, while in Houston, I think by all means school buses are the number one vehicles plying the streets.

This emphasizes the degree of importance attached to education, students, teachers and all those related to it. Why can't we learn the good things from others?

Saleh Ayub, On e-mail

Decay starts within minutes of...



surprised many scientists. Scientists issued warning to the smokers that the habit causes immediate genetic damage and quickly raises the short-term risk of cancer. These findings should ring a serious warning to those who are considering to start smoking.

Cancer-causing chemicals in cigarettes are a group of chemicals called Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs). PAHs are known to cause damage to DNA and are therefore thought to play a significant role in the onset of lung cancer. Scientists labeled and traced a single PAH named phenanthrene from cigarette smoke -- through the bodies of 12 volunteer smokers and were surprised to find that phenanthrene in the bodies of 12 volunteer smokers rapidly transformed into a known DNA damaging toxin which began to cause havoc on the DNA of the smokers within just 15 to 30 minutes after smoking. The chemical in the cigarette smoke is changed so rapidly into a DNA damaging toxin as if it is injected in the vein. Smoking has been linked to the loss of 3,000 lives a day worldwide, mostly as a result of lung cancer.

Cigarettes should be immediately banned.
Dr. Mohammed Rafique Uddin
Tennessee, USA



UNESCO.ORG

Quranic Botanic Garden

So far we have heard about and seen Islamic education, Islamic party, Islamic bank, Islamic country, but now an Islamic botanical garden is going to be set up in Qatar. Qatar's leading daily newspaper, The Gulf Times, reports that a proposal to set up a botanical garden on the basis of the scientific and aesthetic concepts given in the Holy Quran was approved by the UNESCO headquarters in 2006.

The garden titled as 'Quranic Botanic Garden' is going to be established at Al-Shahaniya area of Qatar. The report adds that a number of plants mentioned in the holy Qur'an like date palms, figs, grapes, olives, and pomegranates etc., will be planted in the proposed garden. Newspaper says, the garden features will be based on the Quranic verses that mention the Gardens of Paradise.

The project leaders hope the project would help achieve important objectives in the fields of environmental conservation, scientific research, education and recreation. A living display of plants mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, arranged as a traditional quadripartite garden, will be useful to carry out training programmes in the field of environmental conservation, as well as to spread knowledge of the Holy Quran.

Spreading over 24 hectares of land, this unique garden will include about 350 species of local flora, apart from 51 plants mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith.

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