

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 200 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



PHOTO: AFP

Cross-border atrocities

Bangladesh achieved independence with the help and assistance of India in 1971. India sheltered and fed millions of our people during the nine months' War of Independence. The war began against the background of a massacre of the unarmed Bengali civilian population unheard of in history. Unfortunately, the victims of the carnage were but the citizens of a state (the then Pakistan) whose integrity the murderous army was supposed to protect. The generosity extended to the millions of homeless, helpless people from across the border perhaps exceeded all previous records. Without India's assistance, the reality would have been different; Bangladesh would not have emerged as an inde-

pendent country. Now contrast that to the latter-day scenario. Since independence, countless numbers of Bangladeshis were raped, mutilated and killed by the Border Security Force of the neighbouring giant. The memory of the Felani incident, I guess, is still vivid in the mind of the people. The most recent incident of torture inflicted upon a Bangladeshi cattle trader as shown by the electronic media is horrific and is in no way less deplorable than the tortures inflicted upon the captives of the infamous Abu Garib Prison. **Saleh Ayub**
On e-mail

Need for a primary school

The government expressed its wish to establish primary schools in all the villages of Bangladesh. But there are many villages in the country which have no primary school. The Chondipur village of Shadullapur at Gaibandha is an example of such villages. Most of the people in this village are very poor and illiterate. They do not bother about their children's education. Only a few of them are interested in educating their children, but they do not have any scope to do that because they do not have a primary school in the village. So I urge the education ministry to establish a primary school in this village as soon as possible. **Md. Meftaul Islam**
Shadullapur
Gaibandha

People of Bangladesh demand CTG

I regularly watch the talk show Grameen Phone Tritio Matra, as it is a very interesting and enlightening programme. On January 17, 2012 the participants were Z.A Khan and Kazi Feroze Rashid. At one stage, host Zillur Rahman asked Z.A Khan why they were so vocal about caretaker government and not so with other issues. We the 16 crore people of Bangladesh also consider caretaker government issue to be the number one issue, because if it is not reinstated, which is a rightful demand of the opposition, there will be great unrest in the country and people's sufferings will know no bounds. The first BNP government after restoration of democracy in 1991 yielded to Awami League's demand for introducing the caretaker government system. But now we are stunned by the stance of the Awami League on this issue. By refusing to reinstate the CTG system they are exposing their autocratic nature. The country may go to the dogs, but they do not care. **Nur Jahan**
Chittagong

Roads should be widened

I was wondering who are to blame for the unusual rate of death on the roads. It is clear that most accidents occur due to bad road conditions, unfit vehicles and untrained driving. We think government has a great deal to do in these cases. We must immediately work out a long term plan to build a smooth and wide road network. To ease the burden on roads, we must develop the railway, waterway and airway sectors. A strong visionary leadership and accountability is needed for the smooth execution of that plan. I think money will not be a problem if we just have a good mindset. Everything is first created in the mind. So the government must now decide whether they will waste national wealth on unproductive and reactive pursuits or for the good of the general people. Time is running out very fast. People are angry enough to break the wall of fear and come onto the streets like uncontrolled deluge to wash away the stagnation. **Tinku**
On e-mail

Health care delivery in Bangladesh



PHOTO: STAR

That health care delivery in Bangladesh is in need of a major overhaul. The poor continue to die of preventable diseases, and infant and maternal mortality rates in Bangladesh are very high. A recent study by the donor agencies once again emphasises the fact that the funds and schemes meant for the poor in Bangladesh do not always reach them. Evidence shows that health services are primarily accessed by the better off people rather than the poor. The study which looked at eleven programmes worldwide, discovered initiatives that have ensured that 30 to 40 per cent of benefits reached the population's poorest 20 per cent as opposed to the typical 10 to 20 per cent. For instance, three projects run by the NGOs in Bangladesh, especially in remote rural areas, demonstrated greater success in reaching the poorest in the community. Some of the reasons for this were that the services were generally free or low cost, the timings were convenient for the poorest preoccupied with their own livelihood concerns, mobile vans delivered health care at the doorsteps, and the delivery was done through women. The study also found that specific programmes in countries as diverse as Argentina, Cambodia, Ghana, Zambia, and Nepal were more effective in their reach because of innovative approaches in delivery. For example, some strategies that effectively reduced inequalities in health services delivery in these countries envisaged contracting with NGOs to provide primary care and using immunisation programmes to distribute insecticide-treated bed nets. None of the government's well-intentioned plans will be effective unless budgetary allocations to the health sector are increased, and more importantly, mechanisms of monitoring and accountability are firmly put in place. Real change can only occur when there is strong political will and recognition, particularly among health policy makers, that current health interventions are not effectively addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged. **Gopal Sengupta**
Canada

The Daily Star's role appreciated

I would like to thank the authority of The Daily Star for expressing the 'Apology' with an extra importance by publishing it on the front page of January 18, 2012. I appreciate your courage to refuse the money for that advertisement on ethical ground. When I first saw your front page article on 'Doreen Tower' (Dec 10, 2011), I wanted to thank you for your fearless journalism. I wanted to take the opportunity to disclose to the people the fact that the owner of this Doreen Tower was the same person who has done the 'Landscaping with a colourful fountain' on the public road! (Letter, The Daily Star, Nov 18, 2011). Are these people more powerful than the state authority? Why the authority is so scared of establishing the law of the land? It came as a shock to me when I saw that large front page advertisement of Doreen Tower on Jan 17, 2011. For a moment, I was about to lose my admiration for this newspaper. But your apology has reassured us that The Daily Star has not deviated from its stance of fighting against all sorts of land grabbing, encroachments and illegal constructions. Please keep it up. We are with you. **A concerned citizen, On e-mail**

"AN APOLOGY" published in The Daily Star on 18th January 2012 amazed me because this is not a usual apology that we are used to see in the dailies of our country. I am proud of being a regular subscriber of such daily. I believe such apology could give a moral lesson to all the print and electronic media of the country. I urge all the newspapers to follow the path of ethics The Daily Star showed for the sake of our people, society and country. I finally thank The Daily Star for such a brave action. **Foyed Ahmed**
Motijheel, Dhaka

Donate the proceeds

This refers to your front page apology published on January 18th. In my opinion, you may prepare a list of black-listed persons and organisations for prior verification before accepting advertisements from them. However, I believe you should not forgo the amount due for the advertisement. You should rather take full payment and donate the amount to any charitable organisation of your choice. You may add some more as a gesture of 'penalty' for accepting the advertisement in error.

Alarming road accidents



PHOTO: STAR

There is not a single day that we pass without reading the news of road accidents in the newspapers. Such news make us extremely sad and it is unbearable to read the description of the accidents. Almost all the accidents are caused due to reckless and unskilled driving, bending of traffic signals as well as negligence and impatience of the drivers. The recent death of a journalist in a road accident, who was first hit by a bus from behind and as he fell on the road the bus ran over him, was very shocking. It is hard to accept the fact that passengers of the bus refused to cooperate with the police in identifying the driver of the killer bus although they witnessed the accident. The passengers did not care about the victim's life as he was crushed under the wheels of the bus they were riding and did not insist on stopping the bus after it initially hit the motorbike. The passengers of the bus also had a role to play but they neglected it. This self-centred attitude of ours will lead us to an extremely bad situation as no one will be there to save us, if we fall victim to road accidents. **Mashudul Haque**
Central Road, Dhaka

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Pranab, Ashraf play it down"

Anonymous
There is nothing to play down. Now we just want justice. Our government should wake up and take strong stand against such atrocities by India.

Jumana Sarwar, PhD, P.Eng
I am an ordinary citizen and do not have the intelligence as the two gentlemen have. But when an ordinary citizen is murdered and brutalised by whoever it is, I become worried.

A Bangalee
As the governments of Bangladesh and India say that they are good friends, I would suggest that they should withdraw border guards from both sides. No guards, no conflict. Peace will be established.

An expat
What a symbol of good friendship between Bangladesh and India!

Shimul
Pranab and Ashraf are not worried because the casualties are poor Bangladeshis.

Mohsin
People who saw the twelve minutes uncensored video of the barbaric act of Border Security Force (BSF) cannot downplay this matter. The Indian government again proved its selfishness regarding this issue. On the other hand, why the prime minister or LGRD minister of Bangladesh ignored this issue is clear to us. They need India's support.

Anonymous
This is a blatant insult to the people of Bangladesh. The government is basically saying that it is not right to be worried when its citizens are tortured and killed by the border guards of another country! Then why on earth did we elect them?

Dr Islam
Syed Ashraf Islam's comment is insensitive and unfortunate. The voice of the offender and the victim can not be the same. Showing indifference to citizens' lives can't be the policy of a responsible government. The brutality by the Indian guards on Indo-Bangla border is just the reflection of India's attitude towards us.

M. Shafiqul Alam
Syed Ashraf Islam's comment has offended us. It lacks minimum decency that befits a minister. Hope he repents for his cruel comment.

Rathikant Basu
It is a clear case of violation of human rights and needs to be investigated by the Indian National Human Rights Commission with the assistance of its counterpart in Bangladesh. Both the countries subscribe to international conventions on human rights and such incidents cannot be condoned.

Anonymous
Bangladesh should boycott all Indian products and get the UN to impose sanction on India. The present government will not do anything because they are pro-Indian and that's why this is happening continuously.

Anonymous
It looks as if the national interests of India and Bangladesh are the same. We do not understand why Bangladesh downplays the heinous acts of India when Bangladeshi citizens are being tortured and killed by the Indian BSE. It is a shameful act on the part of Bangladesh.

London Eye
The LGRD minister rode roughshod over the issue but he is equally right to highlight illegal trespass to Indian territory and vice versa by criminals.

Shafquat Azad
I hate to say this but I believe that our sovereignty doesn't exist. That's why we can easily ignore these issues.

Abdul Patwary
They are birds of a feather. The finance minister once said, "Don't go to the bazaar when the prices shoot up." He has also said in public that the looters of the stock market are so powerful that they cannot be named. Faruk Khan said, "Eat less." Now Ashraf says that the government is not "much worried" about the border inci-