

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.

Mismanagement at Dhaka airport

I went to the airport to receive a guest arriving by Malaysian Airline flight no.196 at 8 pm on 21st January 2012. When I attempted to park my vehicle at the parking lot of gate no.01, I was informed by the security at the entrance that both the parking lots of gate no.01 and 02 were now earmarked for VIPs only, though those were found almost empty.

As a taxpaying citizen of the country, I felt so disgusted and insulted being downgraded to the second class status by the so-called authorities and could not figure out what prompted them to take such a wild decision. Is this country for VIPs only?

Was it the decision of the new incumbent minister to show his prowess? I do not know. But I know there already exists a parking space for the VIP entrance. Then why is this additional arrangement?

Being pushed to the covered parking area I went there and somehow managed to park around hips of garbage and unclean surroundings. More



surprise awaited me when I went to the washroom to find that only flat pan facilities were there and that too were in absolutely unusable condition. One person was found collecting Taka two for every use without providing any receipt. But on the plea of shortage of change he was found collecting actually Taka three!

Next, when I approached visitors' gallery to receive the passenger, I found the cleaners cleaning the floor with soap water which made the floor muddy and extremely slippery. Moreover, the passengers coming out with their luggage were splashed with dirty water to their extreme annoyance and inconvenience.

My question is, was it the right time to clean the floor during onrush of the passengers around 9 pm, which could be carried out conveniently at a much later time when incoming flights would be fewer?

Mohammad Ataul Hoque

On e-mail

Imran Khan's remark

"Pakistan has not learnt anything from the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971" Imran Khan, former Pakistani cricket captain-turned politician said this recently. In this regard, I would like to cite an incident. Probably in 1973 or 1974, the Pakistan cricket team came to Bangladesh for the first time after our independence, for participating in a friendly match.

As far as I remember, Imran Khan, Zahir Abbas and Javed Miandad were in the team. After getting down from the plane, they greeted the Bangladeshi officials saying "Nomoskar." The Bangladeshi people were taken aback, as the Pakistan team considered them Hindu.

They did this maybe because we achieved freedom with the help of India. In no time, our people got furious, the match got cancelled, and the Pakistan team was compelled to go back home without any delay.

I do not know whether Imran Khan has spoken from his heart or as a general politician. If this is his true realisation, we must thank him. It is better to realise late than never.

Journalist Hamid Mir, human rights worker Asma Jahangir and some other conscious Pakistanis are trying to convince the Pakistan government of the need to seek forgiveness from Bangladesh, for their inhuman acts in the 1971 Liberation War. But will they do it?

Rashid Harun

Charles Dickens' 200th birthday

Charles Dickens GREAT EXPECTATIONS



February 07 is the 200th birthday of famous English novelist Charles Dickens (full name: Charles John Huffam Dickens alias Boz). Charles Dickens was born in 1812 and died in 1870. He was an outstanding and popular writer. His works are highly praised and admired by people world over for realism and urge for social reforms. Still his novels "Great Expectations" or "Hard Times" are taught in English literature courses of colleges and universities.

One of the striking features of Charles Dickens' literary career was that he started his career as a journalist. His first story "A Dinner at Poplar Walk" was published in the Monthly Magazine, a London periodical in 1833. Many of Dickens' works were published serially in monthly instalments and he used to create episodes as they were being serialised, which would put the readers in deep inquisitiveness for knowing what was happening in the following instalment. Dickens also worked as an editor of Bentley's Miscellany, from 1836 to 1839.

Dickens, who had to work during his childhood, was a voice against child labour. He also actively supported the abolition of slavery. Charles Dickens was not only a great author but a unique personality blessed with natural human values. I pay rich tribute to Charles Dickens on his 200th birthday!

Professor M Zahidul Haque

Dean, Faculty of Agriculture

Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka

Don't hold people hostage!

Whenever there is political unrest, it is the people who suffer. The day the politicians will finally realise this, will that be the day this nation will begin to move forward? When the ruling party creates problems, it is no better than the opposition. I still remember, in 1996 when BNP refused to step down and transfer power to a caretaker government, Awami League (the then opposition) called continuous hartals until the then ruling party stepped down. General people suffered extremely at that time, but as always, the politicians could not care any less. So why does the Awami League want to hold election without the caretaker system now? This unwise decision is creating unrest in the country and causing sufferings to the people.

I think the government should hold a referendum before taking such an important decision, to know whether people want the caretaker system or not. People of Bangladesh should vote for what they want. All politicians must realise that they are public servants and must not hold the people hostage with their unfair and biased politics.

Aminur Rahim

New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka

Did I misunderstand?

LGRD Minister Syed Ashraful Islam's comments about the government's lack of concern about the BSF firing in which Habibur Rahman, a Bangladeshi cattle smuggler, was reportedly beaten and humiliated by the BSF, as well as his remarks about the supposed sensationalisation of road accidents by the Bangladeshi media have highlighted our respected minister's views on those unfortunate events.

Since it has become increasingly difficult to make sense of most of the things our leaders say these days, I seek a little clarity. As a representative of the elected government, should I take the minister's words to mean that we should not expect our leaders to pay heed to the call for redressing any human rights violations and also that we should not expect that our roads and highways should be safe for travel any time soon? Or did I misunderstand?

Ameer Sobhan

President Nasheed set a good example!

We have learnt from the media reports that Maldives' President Mohamed Nasheed stepped down after the police and army clashed in the streets amid protest over the arrest of a top judge. Mr. Nasheed, the first democratically elected president of the Maldives, an Indian Ocean island nation with the area of 115 sq. miles and 0.40 million people including eighty thousand expatriate workers, had gone to military headquarters on his own initiative for advice before presenting his resignation in a nationally televised address wherein he said, "I don't want to hurt any Maldivians. I feel my staying in power will only increase the problems, and it will hurt our citizens." He also added, "So the best option available to me is to step down." This is a good example set by Mr. Nasheed.

We know that Mr. Nasheed was a former political prisoner and rose from grassroots activism and journalism, and came to power after holding a pro-democracy movement with local and foreign support, in opposition to the 30-year autocratic rule of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, who repeatedly threw him in jail over a period of six years. We remember Mr. Nasheed requested his countrymen after his victory to forgive the former ruler and said it was 'a test of our democracy how we treat' the former dictator.

It is a fact that Mr. Nasheed achieved a good reputation internationally, especially for his campaign against climate change but he could not overcome his national crises. However, we hope the Maldivians will not compromise on democracy.

Mobarak Ali

RK Mission Road

Gopibagh, Dhaka



PHOTO: AFP

AL should change its mindset

As a concerned citizen, I think that only "tolerance and the attitude to accept and consider a different view" by the ruling party can be a possible solution. Against the backdrop of the recent incidents of opposition-led protests and the ruling party's impatience to deal with it, an immediate solution to the standoff has become an imperative.

Yes, restoring the caretaker government is the prime issue of the country now, but the ruling party is adamant not to return to that system fearing that military-backed unelected people may grab power again.

The ruling party argues that the next general election will be free and fair and also assures the opposition that the newly formed EC will be stronger and be given the authority to hold the next election fairly.

But the BNP and the like-minded parties, who have very little stake in the parliament now, however, do not believe the speeches coming from the AL leaders including its chief. BNP fears that the government, through the cancellation of the caretaker system wants to cling to power by holding the next general election under its authority. I suppose, it is not illogical, given the country's political culture.

Above all, the ruling party with two-thirds majority in parliament has to come forward to fulfil its election pledges and to set an example by bringing a change in its own behaviour.

The two parties should create a congenial atmosphere to discuss and defend their stances to ease people's agony and tension.

Probir Bidhan

On e-mail

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Journalist couple killed"

A R Rakhal

This is not a mere crime. Investigation should be done without further delay. Hope the killer will be identified as well as punished so that no one can dare to commit such murder.

Faqrul, USA

Political statements on this gruesome and tragic incident have no value. The government should extend all kinds of help and assistance to the law enforcing agencies to find out the killers.

Najnin Khanam

Find out the killers and bring them to justice as soon as possible.

Rushi jahan

I am extremely shocked.

Salam

This news is so saddening. The government should take steps to make it mandatory for all apartment buildings to install CCTV at the main entrances in order to prevent recurrence of such gruesome murders.

Mahabub Sikder

Awami League is heading towards its biggest election defeat in history. Bangladesh is a lawless country. This state is slowly becoming dysfunctional.

Sheikh Monirul Islam, Opee

When journalists are murdered so brutally, it reflects that something has gone wrong terribly with our society. Someone out there ought to be threatening our democracy, freedom of speech, and human rights. It is terribly disturbing and we are terrified.

Anonymous

We are shocked, and feeling hopeless and helpless. The government has no control over crime.

Mohammad Habibur Rahman

It's very tragic. Think about the son who is only five-year-old. How can the state console the boy? During this Awami League government's tenure, law and order situation has always been bad but now it is out of control. Incidents like these are very natural because criminals and murderers go scot-free because of their partisan identity.

Tasnin Mahmood

We want justice.

Tazul, Azman, UAE

No words to express what I feel. It's only possible in Bangladesh where a convicted murderer also gets pardon from the president.

Farida

I am shocked and speechless. At the same time, I am worried about my family, who will give them security?

Ashif

Shame on our political leaders. The ruling party and the opposition are blaming each other. It's very unfortunate that innocent people are dying and political leaders are reacting like this.

M. Shafiqul Alam

A very tragic end of a young couple. Let there be a thorough and speedy inquiry.

Dr. Farzina

I am thinking about the future of the innocent child Megh who is now really a lonely cloud.

Md. Abir Hossain

Mysterious incident. This proves once again how much helpless we are. I don't know whom to blame. The couple's consciousness about society and politics ultimately led them to death.

Jumana Sarwar

The roaring home minister, who reminds the nation that law and order is better than anything in the past, will again blame the opposition of being part of the conspiracy to stop the war crimes trial.

Dr Islam

Is it an attempt to stop the voice of the media? We need to find out the real reason.

Iftekhar Hassan

This is an abhorrent crime. We do not know the killer nor have any clues. Good forensic experts can get some finger prints. It may be robbery or