

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.

Plight of Rohingya refugees



PHOTO: AFP

We are very saddened by the plight of the Rohingya refugees who are currently fleeing for their lives from Myanmar and seeking refuge in Bangladesh as documented by local and world media. In this context, we are horrified that our country Bangladesh is continuing her policy of forcibly returning refugee boats in distress to the sea. This is morally repugnant at many levels:

1. It is almost certainly against international humanitarian law to forcibly push out distressed refugee boats out to sea, especially when there is clearly apparent danger of the boat not having enough supplies for the survival of the refugees or enough fuel to make it to a safe landing destination.

2. Two recent international incidents come to mind where the UN or other international bodies have taken up criminal investigations due to such disregard of refugee well-being. The first involved Rohingya refugees too who were towed out to sea by the Thai Coast Guard without fuel and left to perish. The second involved a British naval helicopter that ignored the distress of a refugee boat from Libya during the recently ended civil war there -- many refugees on that boat died of thirst and starvation. We as Bangladeshis certainly don't want to follow in

these footsteps and be investigated for violations of international law leading to deaths of refugees.

3. From a purely human angle, we as Bangladeshis who have suffered great atrocities at the hands of war criminals during our own liberation struggle cannot ignore the desperate pleas for help from neighbours who are brutalised in their own homeland (in this case Myanmar). To do so would be inhuman and cruel and against the very foundation of our national character.

4. Last, we urge the government of Bangladesh to immediately suspend the policy of "indiscriminate refugee push back" and urgently consider replacing it with a humane policy of saving the lives of refugees and working to resettle them in their homelands only when there are reasonable conditions of safety for them to live there. We have earned a worldwide reputation as UN peacekeepers. Let us not squander it with callous disregard for human life.

Khalid Wahidul Islam
Senior Computer Engineering Consultant
and Community Servant
California, USA

Appeal to DU Vice Chancellor

The MA (ELT) examination of the session 2009-2010 of Dhaka University with all its requirements was completed on 01 October 2011. Eight months have elapsed but the results of the examination have not yet been published. Many of the examinees have lost the opportunities of applying for jobs advertised by different institutions, and some of them who have been offered jobs of ELT on the basis of 'appeared certificates' are going to lose the offers for not being able to produce certificates of the completion of MA (ELT) degree.

My earnest request to the Vice Chancellor of DU: please, look into the matter and arrange for publishing the results without further delay considering the career of the examinees.

A. H. M. Harun
Shahidullah Hall
Dhaka University

D-Day

An article on D-Day in World War II was published in the pages of a local English daily on 6th June that had a major contradiction with reality. The writer stated as follows: "D' does not stand for 'Doom' or similar words. In fact it does not stand for anything!" Possibly, the writer may not have gone through the original complete volumes of the works of Late Winston Churchill's 'Wartime Memoirs'.

In fact, correlation of the deliverance of occupied Europe to the landing as 'D' day was mentioned by Late Churchill in a related internal office file noting to the Allied High Command, who adopted 'D' day as the code name for the allied landing day in Europe!

The actual day of the landing operation was determined on the basis of meteorological considerations, so as to confuse the Nazi High Command, about the mass and objective of the landing!

Engr. S.A. Mansoor, Dhaka

The cry for water

According to Muhammad Asadullah Khan, a columnist at The Daily Star, "if we run short of oil or other fossil fuels we can have alternative energy sources, but if we run short of pure drinking water we are doomed!" Don't Dhaka's bigwigs feel a little about the poor people... how they stand in queue for hours only to get water? I appreciate some of the moves of the government to tackle the cry for water. But, in my whole life of 14 years, whenever and wherever I have seen a water carrying truck, I have seen how the precious water percolates from the leaks. I think they do not know the phrase: 'drop by drop an ocean is made.' Talking big about the problems won't help, we should do our level best to preserve water. The biggest example of wasting water is how we keep the tap on while brushing our teeth.

Water related problems are also harming rural Bangladesh. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 35 to 70 million people in Bangladesh are at risk of being exposed to unhealthy levels of arsenic. The WHO has called it "the largest mass poisoning of a population in history!"

According to experts, Dhaka's water can become unfit for use within the coming decades. Experts also say if a third world war ever breaks out, it will be for water. As a teenager, I urge the people to please save some water for us.

Shafeen Mahmood
Class IX
Little Jewels School
Chittagong



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VOICES

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The Daily Star online reports.
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Refugee boats keep coming

(June 14, 2012)

BGB should not be more cruel than Nasaca.

Newaz

Please save them. It's really a tragic incident.

Mohammad Nurul Hoque

We must realise that these are oppressed and persecuted people. They are leaving their homes and properties as their lives are at risk in Burma. How can we turn them away? Have we lost our humane qualities and sensibilities?

Shimul

We should not be an inhospitable nation. These people are helpless, homeless and real refugees. The international community including UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations should come forward to solve the present crisis. And more importantly, they should generate pressure

on Myanmar to stop the violence and ensure security for the Rohingyas.

Azizul Rasel

Please allow them to stay under the supervision of UN. Register them and keep them in secure camps. Humanity first!

Jashim Uddin

Has the government forgotten what happened during our Liberation War? We need to stand beside them for nothing but humanity at this moment.

Anna Karenina

As a Bangladeshi, I feel unhappy seeing the cruelty of the government of Bangladesh. We will be honoured by other nations if we give shelter to the refugees.

Firko

Bangladesh should remember that in our hour of need, our

citizens took refuge in other countries. That is the humanitarian and moral thing to do. Our government needs to change its position.

Wasim Choudhury

I think it will not be right to open the border at this moment.

Rimky

UNHCR must take full responsibility for them including sending them back later.

Naeem

Bangladesh government, please remember 1971. One million people became refugee in India (when India was also a poor and populous country).

Shameem Rumeel Hasan

As I was reading this news, my eyes were filled with tears. Come on, humanity first.

Ariful Islam

Those people should be given temporary shelter even if it is hard for Bangladesh to deal with the possible massive influx of refugees. But how can they return to the places that they are fleeing from?

Dev Saha

The picture tells it all. We cannot let these people die in the

hands of the brutal Burmese. We must make room for them and at the same time do diplomacy to pressurise the Burmese government to take back their own citizens.

Jumana Sarwar

The government must change its current 'no more refugee' policy immediately. The issue is not whether the Rohingyas are Muslims or Buddhists; they are humans and they are being uprooted from their homeland. They must be let in on humanitarian and compassionate ground.

Ryan

We must understand the ploy of Myanmar government. They will make an all out effort to deport the 800,000 Rohingyas living in Myanmar. There is no point in luring them into our territory with promises of assistance.

Pavlov

Rohingyas have been the inhabitants of Myanmar for thousands of years. Still these people are neglected in their country. Development or changes in the government does not bring any good to these people. Aung San Suu Kyi is a Nobel laureate for peace. What peace has she brought to these people?

What are our political parties doing?

Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 through a bloody war of nine months. Though it is said that the war was 'nine months long' actually, time was longer as the struggle had been going on since the British regime. Finally, our freedom fighters brought the sun of independence through their supreme sacrifice. They dreamt of building a 'Golden Bangla'.

After some days we will celebrate 42 years of our independence, but could we fulfill the dream of our great heroes? What is our achievement in these 42 years? Our corrupt politics didn't let us go forward. We have been known as the champion in corruption. All the politicians are mad for power. They don't think about the welfare of the people. Most of the people live below the poverty line; our state couldn't ensure them three meals a day. Most of our people don't get proper medical treatment. The law and order situation is not good. When this is the situation, what are our political parties doing?

Md. Rashed Ahmed
Student
Jagannath University

than five hundred taka. They have only five hundred taka notes." Hearing this sad story, I quickly withdrew some money from my account and gave him the money so that he could go home.

I would request the banks to consider the problem and solve it urgently because as a business learner I know, "A dissatisfied customer is deleterious to your organisation even if you are a market leader."

Md. Mostafa Kamal
Department of Finance & Banking
BBA programme
Jahangirnagar University

Everything's in shambles

After basking in power for three and a half years, Awami League-led government suddenly remembered that it had pledged many things to the people to get elected. The government has now declared that it is not at all concerned with the opposition's ultimatum, it will rather concentrate on fulfilling the pledges it made to the people.

The realisation came too late. In the meantime, people's sufferings have become unbearable -- they are facing acute shortage of electricity, gas and water; prices of essentials are going up day by day; criminal activities increased manifold; corruption in every sector is eating away the vitals of the country. Road accidents are taking huge tolls; traffic jam has reached such a level that people have become very frustrated. In short, everything is in a shambles.

It is the government's sacred duty to ensure the welfare of the people but the government is busy contriving ways on how to subdue the opposition political party.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Journalists in peril

On May 26, when three journalists of the daily Prothom Alo were photographing demonstrations by the female students of Dhaka Women's Polytechnic in the capital's Agargaon area, they were severely injured by the beastly attack of some police persons headed by an assistant commissioner of police. The manner in which the police attacked the journalists was uncivilised. Police also snatched away mobile phone sets of the victims in which the torture of the police was recorded. What a barbaric incident! Our police have once again shown their heroism on the street!

On May 28, some miscreants attacked the journalists of bdnews24.com in the city's Mohakhali area. The local criminals swooped on the newsmen on the ground floor of the media house and stabbed them indiscriminately.

Then again the law enforcers charged truncheons on some newsmen and lawyers when they were listening to the sad story of a helpless teenaged girl who was sexually assaulted by two sub-inspectors in the police club on May 30.

It seems to us that Bangladesh is turning into a dangerous place for the journalists. Now the newsmen are being humiliated on the street by the law



PHOTO: SK ENAYUL HAQ

enforcers while the office of news agency is being flooded with blood. They are not even safe in their home. The tragic death of Sagar-Runi shocked everyone of the country. Police have failed to trace the killers.

It is a matter of great dissatisfaction that the incumbent government is not serious about protecting the dignity as well as the life and property of the journalists. Recently, the state minister for home advised journalists to keep a 'safe distance' from police while collecting news. By saying so does he mean that the journalists themselves are responsible for their humiliation? Where are we living?

Abul Kalam Azad
Agailjhara, Barisal

