

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.

# Protect the hills



RAJ ANIKAT/ DRINKNEWS

Recently over 100 people were killed and numerous others were injured in massive landslides in Bandarban due to heavy rainfall. The climatic condition is changing rapidly and this is the outcome of that change. Landslide during rainy season is now a regular incident in south-eastern part of Bangladesh. Around a hundred people die in landslides every year.

Indiscriminate cutting of trees in the hill tracts is the main reason behind it. Besides this, landless people built houses on hills which is very risky too. Influential people are cutting down trees in the hill tracts and the government's role is inadequate in this regard. The government should take proper initiatives to stop felling trees in the hill tracts to prevent such types of landslides. Drainage system should also be improved. Moreover, awareness should be raised among people living in the hill tracts.

**Wasiur Rahman Shibly**  
4th year, Dept. of Law & Justice  
University of Rajshahi

## Will govt fulfil the dream?

I was imagining this scenario: My sons and daughters have stopped going to their private tutors and started to rise early in the morning to say their prayers peacefully without the thought of the tutors chasing them at that pristine time. After the prayer they are reading religious books to recharge themselves morally. Then they are reading that day's daily newspaper to keep themselves informed of the happenings from home and abroad. Before going to school, they are reading textbooks so that they can properly understand the topics to be taught by the teachers. In the afternoon, they would play with their friends. No more huffing and puffing because they need not go to the private tutors'. Besides that, parents would be spared the tension and expenses that private tuition entails.

The present government policy against the coaching business run by the teachers induced me to dream this dream. I wonder whether my dream will be stolen by the sinister syndicate of teachers going against this policy and the government treating the errant teachers with kid gloves without thinking about the greater interest of the nation.

**Abdus Subhan**  
Ishwardi Govt. College  
Ishwardi  
Pabna

# Opting for organic agriculture

A few days ago I saw a programme on Star Plus TV channel of India, hosted by popular actor Aamir Khan. Khan was urging Indian farmers to grow more organic agriculture products avoiding the use of harmful chemical pesticides or fertilizer. Farmers on the show ardently said that by using organic fertilizer and pesticides their farming output was not reduced; rather they are getting higher price for their agriculture products. In the show they mentioned that the highest yield of potato and special variety of rice in the world was made in Bihar from organic farming. India is also the highest producer of organic cotton. If these statistics are correct then arguments of using chemical fertilizer and pesticides for more production do not hold. Our agricultural scientists should encourage organic farming to create mass awareness among the farmers. Our economists should tell us how much we can save in terms of health care expenses as many health hazards are caused by chemical fertilizer or pesticides. By that means, the bad practice of using chemical fertilizer and pesticides will be automatically eliminated. May be the organic agriculture products will be a little bit expensive but we will be able to keep ourselves healthy and build a healthy nation in the days ahead.

**Zabedin**  
Dhanmondi  
Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

## Being sparing in the use of wood

The quality of wood in this dear country is amazing. I stand open-mouthed outside peoples' hardwood front doors, admiring a standard rarely seen in my 'rich' country because of their price there!

As England is not next door to the jungles of India, our use of wood is generally much more sparing - and, I must say, appreciative - than many of your readers, sir. I used to lie awake in my flat in Halughat, listening to the insects chewing away at the door jambs! I saw lorries carrying huge logs (smuggled?) rumbling by and noted the chairs and 'sofas' the local carpenters made with huge arms, that took several men to shift! It seemed none of this wood is treated with preservative as it is assumed it will just rot - and be replaced by more where it came from - except that few can now plead ignorance of the fate of the world's forests.

Surely, we should all be brought up to LOOK at wood, stroke it, thank God for it and care for it, so that fewer people chop down trees with such careless abandon, thinking only of their personal profit or the convenience of having them out of the way. The care of our environment is surely 'all in the mind'.

**Angela Robinson**

# Save grass and grasslands

The other day I used the above noted phrase in one place of my article which commonly means "Human life is transitory". "All flesh is grass" is one of the much quoted phrases used in Holy Scripture and in English poetry.

Meanwhile the above phrase reminds us of the importance of grass which in terms of plant value is a very important plant in the world. In fact, grass provides food (rice, corn, etc.) to both humans and animals. It conditioned soil and protects soil fertility. It contributes significantly in the conservation of our environment. Grass also has aesthetic values; it increases the beauty of lawn and vast land. Walking barefoot on green grass is very good for health.

But unfortunately in Bangladesh, particularly in big cities, grasslands are diminishing because of irrational conversion of agricultural lands into industrial/housing plots. Even most buildings do not have a small piece of land covered with green grass.

Cannot we take some appropriate action to control rapid depletion of grasslands? Still we have time to make our rural areas an attractive place for living, through developing modern amenities plus income generating units based on agro-based SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises).

**Professor M Zahidul Haque**  
Dean  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

## Metro rail for whose benefit?

From the June 25 and 26 issues of the Prothom Alo, we learnt of two very disturbing pieces of news. The first one was about DAP (Detailed Area Plan) of Dhaka. My letter was published on July 5, 2010 thanking the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for backing the recovery of grabbed rivers and lands. At a meeting on June 21, 2010, she assigned seven ministers to implement the plan. But in the two years nothing has been done and the plan is going to be changed for the benefit of the land grabbers.

The second one was about the flyovers and over-bridges. We were thinking that those will reduce traffic jam, while metropolitan police and experts are saying that it will increase the traffic jam, special lanes for buses. So metro-rails would be the solution. A few people wishing to remain anonymous and are in charge of different departments tasked to build the flyovers and over-bridges said to the Prothom Alo that the government was interested in it for two reasons; first, the people could see the project and the second, the project cost estimated at 28 thousand crore taka, they would be able to pocket a sizeable sum in the name of commission from the project.

For the unbridled greed of some people in the government, the entire nation is suffering.

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong

## Clean the mess

On June 28, I read the article titled "A bullet-proof arms trade treaty" with lots of interest, in your editorial page. All kind of arms & ammunitions are entering through our neighbouring countries without any control whatsoever. This is the most worrying part.

When a pistol or a revolver is available at home, especially, at times when bad temper takes over, people may be tempted to fire a few shots. They may even kill themselves, or even murder someone. This is the general human behaviour. Crime rate is simply going up because of presence of arms in the market. To destroy a society you need two things: guns and drugs available at cheap price. In that society would disintegrate automatically and nothing can be done about that.

The security forces under the defence and home ministry should come to society's aid and clean-up the society immediately. At the moment, the police, RAB, Ansar, etc are not in a position to clean such a mess; let's do it now before the next election. Or else it is going to be a bigger mess.

**Sheikh monirul Islam, Opee**  
On e-mail

## Govt. should accept fact

It is not understandable why the government is picking up a quarrel with World Bank. We are a sovereign state. May be, we are a developing country but we are blessed with a Nobel Laureate, and highly intellectual people who are as brilliant as the Westerners are. The Finance Minister had the experience of working with the international agencies when he was posted in Washington DC for several years. He should understand what is right, and what is wrong instead of giving opinions and counter opinions. He is the most senior member in the cabinet, and I am sure his words would certainly be accepted by our Prime Minister. So, instead of giving opinion and counter opinion on Padma Bridge; let us for once call a spade a spade and stand on the correct footing. No matter if it belittles our head for the wrongdoings of others, but let us not jeopardize our potential as an intellectually fertile nation.

**Tayab-ul-Huq**

## READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's *The Daily Star* news analysis headlined "What price do we pay?"

### Faisal Mahmud

Beautiful analysis. I didn't know that Padma Bridge was the largest project taken by the WB.

### Hafeezul Alam

The news analysis contains a bunch of frustration, not even an iota of solution. As per the law of the land, nobody can be punished on the ground of perceived corruption conspiracy, not substantiated by proof.

We better avoid any type of foreign loan and propose that the government takes initiative to raise at least 4 billion dollars by issuing bonds. Our NRBs should also come forward to invest in the project.

As a sovereign country, neither the government nor the ACC, a constitutional set-up, can be dictated by any foreign agency. Yes, Bangladesh needs money for Padma Bridge but not at the cost of national humiliation.

### Kamal Ahmed

It is a very unfortunate situation for Bangladesh. Europeans and Americans are clearly unhappy with the way the government has dealt with Professor Yunus.

### Independent view

Instead of blaming the WB's decision, the govt should catch the people in Bangladesh who rigged it in the first place.

This will have a major ripple or knock-on effect on all major projects. Already ADB and other donors have become conservative on all matters. Hope this scar will heal, if not, then ordinary people of Bangladesh will suffer immensely.

### Adem, USA

The future of Bangladesh will be affected by this episode. The world view on Bangladesh has changed because of the policies of the present administration. The world has become unhappy with Bangladesh and it has to pay a heavy price for this.

### Mo Chaudhury

I believe the costs are expected to be substantially higher. This is because the current LIBOR rate of 1% is very low by historical standards and is expected to go up significantly as the world economies recover and monetary authorities worldwide shift from provision of liquidity to fighting inflation.

## Save the Rohingyas

Rohingya Muslims are perhaps the most neglected, persecuted and friendless human community in the present day world. This poor and forlorn ethnic community has long been groaning under abject poverty, gross injustice and inhuman persecution by the majority Buddhists and armed forces of their own country.

Though the Rohingyas have been living in Myanmar for generations, majority Buddhists and the ruling military junta consider them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The recent communal violence in Rakhine is but the continuation of the age-old persecution and discrimination on the Rohingyas. It is reported that hundreds of helpless Rohingyas are now fleeing their ancestral homes and trying to cross into Bangladesh to save their lives. But our government is refusing their entry on the plea that Bangladesh is already overburdened with thousands of Rohingya refugees who crossed into Bangladesh about 20 years ago.

It is high time our government raised the Rohingya issue in the UN to put pressure on the Myanmar authorities for a lasting solution to this problem. We hope the OIC and other human rights groups will also come forward to permanently stop human tragedies being committed in Myanmar.

**Md. Mohsin Ali**  
Nutan Courtpara  
Kushtia