

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.

Make every effort to prevent fire accidents



PHOTO: STAR

Death is awaiting us everywhere; violent deaths are happening all the time. In the December 1, 2012 issue of The Daily Star, quite a number of such news were published: Elderly woman killed in capital, road crashes kill 4, female doctor found killed at clinic in capital, two district Awami League leaders killed. It seems people's lives have no value; those are at the mercy of the criminals. People are still in a shock due to the incident of Tazreen Fashions. The cause behind this heavy death toll is so bizarre that it is just unbelievable. According to a survivor, the assistant production manager ordered the guards to lock the collapsible gate and a top official played music on a loudspeaker in high volume to deceive the workers about the fire!

Garment factory may have many defects but in spite of that lives could have been saved if the gate was kept open and the workers were not given the wrong message. Those who were responsible for the deaths of so many people must be brought to justice. All the factory owners must make sure their factories are built consisting of all security measures. They must take all the precautionary steps to avoid accidents. A team must always remain vigilant to prevent any mishap. Above all, it is the government's duty to ensure people's safety everywhere, and inspect the factories regularly.
Nur Jahan
Chittagong

We can learn from PRI

A recent report published in The Daily Star (25.11.2012) titled "Bangladesh drops in remittance ranking" mentioned that although Bangladesh continues to be the top 10 remittance receiving countries, it has slid one notch down compared to last year. On the other hand, countries like Pakistan and Nigeria have improved in remittance earnings from the previous years. The reason behind the success of Pakistan in remittance ranking position in recent years was the state-driven joint initiative called "Pakistan Remittance Initiative" (PRI). Under this framework, the government encouraged the state bank to open dedicated Home Remittance Centres and enhance their activities overseas for collecting remittances. Further, to provide a reliable and immediate contact, a call centre has been established which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Through the call centre the overseas Pakistanis and their families back home can inquire about the remittance services of the bank and lodge complaints if they have any. The call centre has provided a toll-free number for the overseas Pakistanis residing in 12 countries of the world. That has increased Pakistan's remittance earning from US\$ 6.4 billion in FY 2007-08 to US\$ 13.2 billion in FY 2011-2012. The main motto of PRI programme is 'nearer to remitter and nearer to beneficiary,' which resulted in reduction of remittance delivery time and increased the overall standard of the service. PRI can be a lesson for Bangladesh that will not only reduce the suffering of the remitters and remittance receivers but also increase the total amount of remittance. It can also be helpful to improve the remittance ranking position of Bangladesh in the near future.
Liton Roy, Lund, Sweden

Skill development trainings to workers

About 7 million expatriate workers are now working in different countries all over the world, most of whom are unskilled. Had the 7 million workers been skilled, the amount of foreign remittance would have been more than US\$14 billion. Some experts opine that Bangladesh is over-burdened with its huge population while others think this huge population can be a boon for the country if they are properly trained and then sent abroad. It would be wise on the part of the government to set up a modern training centre to provide different skill development trainings to these workers. The sooner the initiative is taken, the better for the nation.
Badsha Solaiman
Organiser, Students and Social Welfare Association

Low Aman price

Recently The Daily Star published news entitled, "The government has decided to procure Aman rice at a price of Tk 26 per kg." I think this price is inadequate for the farmers. I would like to request the government to inquire about how much money the farmers have to spend and also how much labour they have to give for growing per kg of rice and fix the price accordingly to do our poor farmers justice.
Md. Tuhinur Rahman
*Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology
 Gazipur*



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

How long will we remain silent?

At least 111 people were killed and 100 injured in a devastating fire at Tazreen Fashions Ltd. I cannot accept this as an accident. This is simply genocide. The owners always refer to electrical short circuit as one of the causes of fire. But there is no fire exit or fire safety measures in most of the factories, and workers are not allowed to go out of the factory in situations like this. I am sure those responsible for the deaths will not be punished and after the investigation drama they will be declared innocent.
Dr. M. Mahboob Hossain
*Microbiology Programme
 BRAC University
 Mohakhali, Dhaka*

Managing Director unaware of safety!

I would like to propose the following suggestions to BGMEA for implementing in garment factories. All top officials, including the board members of garment industries, and all top managing and supervising officials of garment factories, must read and understand the Factories Act, as well as Shops and Establishment Act. Further, they should be aware of basic factory accident prevention and safety rules and regulations. It may be useful to have simple booklets in Bangla, where the important sections of these laws and rules can be incorporated. Additionally, simple fire protection and safety do's and don'ts can also be incorporated in this booklet! Additionally, BGMEA should have a "safety cell" at its Head Office; and they should at regular intervals, inspect all the factories and advise the factory management and the BGMEA about all deficiencies and shortfalls in this important area. This must also include technical personnel, who will inspect and report on all earthing, wiring, contacts, switchgear and related electrical equipment. Additionally, fire drills must be held in every factory; once in a quarter, during working hours, and unannounced, as a surprise, to see how effective the safety provisions and procedures are working. Importantly, all workers should be paid for such drills and surprise checks as a part of their regular working hour. Hopefully, if these measures are included, enforced and observed, it will reduce the frequency of fire hazard, and create much needed safety awareness, which is absent in our garment industry.
Engr. S.A. Mansoor

Bangladeshi workers need proper govt. support



PHOTO: STAR

Malaysia, a desired labour market for Bangladeshi workers, has officially lifted ban on recruiting Bangladeshi workers after four years. As a result, Bangladesh would be able to send 5 lac workers to Malaysia in the next five years under government programme beginning next January. I would like to congratulate Bangladesh government on its success because this is undoubtedly an outcome of its diplomatic efforts. It will cost each worker around Tk. 40,000 to go to Malaysia which is much less than the previous rate. But the government has to take strict action against any irregularity which may cause the fixed cost to be exceeded. And all the government employees related to the process should work for the interest of the country instead of harassing the aspirant workers. Besides, it is a praiseworthy initiative to arrange loan on easy terms for the potential workers. The authorities concerned should be service-oriented so that the workers could get proper service without any impediment.
Rasel Osman
*Honours final year
 English Department
 Dhaka College
 Dhaka*

Fate of women same everywhere

America is perhaps the champion in bringing equality between men and women but yet disparity prevails here too. I work in a gas station as a cashier, which is located at Woodway Dr, one of the most posh areas in Houston, Texas. One night a middle aged lady rushed into the store and asked whether we could help her fix the punctured tire of her car which she left somewhere nearby. My boss, the owner of the store, was also present there. He expressed his inability to do so as the workshop was already closed but offered to help her by calling a roadside assistance company. He called them a number of times but no one answered the phone. Frustrated, the lady began praying to God but to no avail. She then burst into tears and exclaimed, "My husband is a very nice man, but if I go home without the car, he is gonna kill me."
Saleh Mohammad Ayub
*Houston, Texas
 USA*

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Sunday's The Daily Star news report headlined "Oops YES!"

Nafi Fazal
 Shabash Tigers. Congrats to Mushfiqur. We deserved it.

Translucent
 Congratulations to Mushfiqur and his team. At last a taste of win and long may it continue. I liked the way the boys celebrated and the Gangnam dance showed a good team spirit. I did not like the name Sahara on the smart looking jersey though! Well done and enjoy the win.

Ashim Kumar Paul
 It is, indeed, a pleasant gift for all Bangladeshi people in the month of victory. A long-cherished dream finally comes true. My heart-felt congrats to all of you, Bangladesh cricket team!

RCH
 Tigers, when you go to the podium for prize, please wear your national jersey. Bangladesh team is not a private club -- it is a national team.

Sarwar Alam
 After losing two matches, this victory was unbelievable! West Indies has a glorious history in the finals. So, it is a very positive win for Bangladesh. Congrats!

Kazi Salim
 Congratulations, Tigers. You have presented the nation with a victory in the month of our victory.

Misbah Uddin Sumon
 In 1952 we won the right of Bangla language, in 1971 we get Bangladesh, and in 2012 we have won ICC Sahara.

Shabab Hussain
 I was in the stadium when Bangladesh scored only 58 against WI in the last world cup. We went back home with heavy hearts. Today, our team has soothed that agony. Well done!

Ziaush Shams
 Good to see that Bangladesh has won the series after such a struggle. Congratulations... keep it up.

Shah Jalal Shimul
 Congratulations to Bangladesh cricket team for giving us another victory.

Md. Zahedul Islam
 I do convey my heartfelt ovation to Bangladesh cricket team for such a magnificent triumph. Our team truly deserve this win as they have played really well.

Sohul Ahmed Moku
 Our cricketers proved that unity is strength. Our politicians should learn from that if they want to win people's hearts.

Saiful
 This victory has come through a quality game. Well done, Bangladesh team. Please keep it up and go ahead.

A Bangladeshi expatriate, NY
 A good win. I hope the players understand what it takes to win and applies them consistently.

"Whose footpath is this?"

I completely agree with Khandaker Zia Hasan who said in his recent letter, published in your daily on December 5th, that our footpaths are being unnecessarily blocked, causing major problems to the pedestrians. Unfortunately, the example he cited isn't the only one. A bit ahead of the Mohakhali Masjid, at Amtoli bus stand, a part of a footpath is being used by some people for collecting money for the construction of a mosque. Apart from that, they create unnecessary noise using speakers, which causes great disturbance to the nearby South Point School and the residents of that area. The R&H department has a makeshift tenement there. The noise causes discomfort to the sick, elderly and infants. Despite numerous protests, no action has been taken against this. We hope the authorities concerned will read this letter and help clean the environment.
Jamshaid Taher