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Ban any kind of programme on streets



PHOTO: STAR

On January 5, I was stuck in a severe traffic jam for more than 3 hours. Around 400 students under the banner of Shadaran Chhatra Parishad blocked the Shahbag intersection to press home their demand for increasing the age limit for government jobs to 35 years from 30 years. At first, they formed a human chain in front of the National Museum but subsequently they got agitated and took position on the intersection and burned tires. They threatened to continue their agitation programme until PMO looked into the matter. Eventually, they ended up giving the government a one-week ultimatum to meet their demand.

All the roads connected with the intersection faced severe tailbacks. People suffered badly. Moreover, it was on the day before hartal day. The public sufferings increased greatly. We feel that there should be a ban on using public roads for any kind of political and non-political programme, demonstration or campaign. If the government takes this step, Dhaka will change overnight.

Samiul Raijul
Bangladesh University of Textiles
Dhaka

Increase age limit for govt. jobs

The life expectancy of the people of our country is increasing and so is the retirement age. But the age limit for entering the government jobs has remained unchanged for a long time. Because of session jam and diabolic politics, a public university student needs eight to nine years to complete his/her university education. As a result, the dream of becoming a BCS cadre by competing in the BCS exams shatters into pieces. It is imperative that the government increases the age limit for the government jobs considering all these factors. We urge the authorities concerned to increase the age limit to 35 years from 30 years.

Md. Nahid Iftekhar
Muradpur

Parties should wake up to deaths on road

How to start this letter is difficult, but let's just say, 57 killed, yes 57 killed in 1 week. From your articles in The Daily Star from 8th January to 15th January 2013, 57 Bangladeshis have been killed. They were not killed in an industrial disaster, political unrest or severe human rights issues which would spark debate and outcry. All of them, men, women and children, were probably just going around their normal everyday lives.

The reasons for their deaths are many, political, financial, education, ignorance and sometimes just plain lack of respect for human lives. There is only one thing that links the 57 people, they were all killed in one week on Bangladesh's roads!! It is happening every minute of every day across the country.

Going by statistics from various national and international organisations, this was a quiet week, but try telling that to any of their family members.

When will the citizens of this country insist their laws and rules makers, that they deserve to go around their everyday lives safely and not in fear of becoming another minor statistic in the press?

Bangladesh has many, many pressing issues, I totally agree and understand this, but huge improvements have to be made in the highways and road safety standards for everyone to benefit in Bangladesh's growing economic climate.

I had a letter printed in DS in August 2012 (Road safety in Bangladesh) and to my surprise, all replies agreed standards were poor and rules non-existent. But to say "just live with it, it's Bangladesh" shows what the citizens are up against. This subject affects all people in Bangladesh who try to go from A to B by any means, it can't be ignored.

All political parties need to address these issues for the benefit of its citizens before it escalates out of control.

Derek Jones
Banani, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR

Separate facilities for non-Muslims at Bishwa Ijtema ground

During the Bishwa Ijtema, universal messages of Islam including universal brotherhood are disseminated by the learned speakers participating from all over the globe. Every person, irrespective of religious faith, has the right to listen to these messages. In view of this, I think there should be special arrangements at the Ijtema ground to encourage the non-Muslim brothers to attend the programmes. It should be noted that Islam is not for the Muslims only; it is for the whole of humanity. I urge the organisers to look into this matter.

Abu Shahjalal Azad
Dhanmondi
Dhaka

Spare some time for elderly family members

A recent study, published in this daily, reveals that half of all people aged 75 or above live alone and at least one in ten of the ten million 'above 65s' in Britain is badly affected by solitude. It identified nearly 4,00,000 elderly people in England who say they have children who are too busy to see them. The study also found that for ten percent of parents over 75, their nearest child lives more than hours' drive away. And of those, almost half are visited just once every two to six months.

We can say that the situation of our country in this regard is not better at all. Experts say that the sad, solitary state of many older people is not just a state of mind; it can hasten dementia and increase the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure. Even according to a recent study, the effect of loneliness on health is equated to that of obesity or smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

However, elderly people feel helpless if other family members ignore them and many of them feel bereft and lost following the death of a long-term partner. Some elderly people may have children but may not live close enough for the family to visit with any regularity. Anyway, we should visit our elderly relatives regularly and we must spare a little time for them in the holidays at least.

Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road
Gopibagh, Dhaka

New number plates for vehicles

The initiative by BRTA to standardize the vehicle number plates is appreciable; however the font size is questionable. As I understand, the plate numbers should be clearly visible and readable at least from a distance of 25-30 meters by a person having 6/6 eyesight. The new number plates fail to do so. The authorities may think of writing "DKM-xx-xxxx" instead of 'DHAKA METRO-xx-xxxx'. This will leave more space for the font size to be increased which will make the numbers readable from quite a distance.

S. M. A. Rashid, PhD

Border killing must stop now

Border Security Force (BSF) of India has again killed Bangladeshi people. According to newspaper reports, last year they killed 34 Bangladeshis. They killed 237 Bangladeshis during the present government's tenure and over 1000 in last 10-12 years. Besides, they have got used to torturing Bangladeshi nationals living at the border areas all the time.

Every time BSF kills some Bangladeshis, the Indian authorities claim that the victims were smugglers. But the fact is, most of the time they kill and torture innocent people. In the past, the murder of Felani, a 15-year-old innocent girl, agitated the world. It is a matter of sorrow that sometimes our government comments in such a way that it seems they are not against the killing. India helped us in our Liberation War in 1971. But after 1971, it appears they have been acting against us. Border killing must stop now. The government should convey a strong message protesting against such killings through bilateral discussions with the Indian government.

S. M. Imranul Islam Rajon
Mohammadpur
Dhaka

Awami League must control BCL



PHOTO: STAR

When we see smoke, we know that there is fire somewhere. Nowadays, things have come to such a pass that whenever there is any report of misdeed somewhere, instantly the thought that crosses the mind is that it may be the work of Bangladesh Chhatra League. In fact, they are wreaking havoc in educational institutions, manipulating tenders, attacking activists of the opposition political parties, killing innocent people, etc. In short, they are engaged in all sorts of criminal activities.

It has become possible because the Awami League-led government is indulging them; they are free to do anything and no steps are taken against them no matter how loathsome the offence might be.

On January 12, 2013 Jatiya Party Chairman H. M. Ershad said that the government is "trying to protect" the killers of Bishwajit Das, who was brutally murdered on December 9, 2012 by the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL). We appreciate his saying the right thing and asking punishment for the killers of Bishwajit.

The whole country saw the killers. It is shameful that the government is trying to shield them so brazenly. People has become outraged, the government must rein in the BCL for their own good.

The murderers of Sagar-Runi are still at large; police could not find any trace of Ilias Ali and many more people who had disappeared in the last couple of years. This is very mysterious. Did the police try at all to find them? We have doubt about that. All their activities seemed to be only eyewash.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong



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\$1b defence deal sealed

Dhaka, Moscow also sign nuke plant, 7 other agreements; agree to fight terrorism together (January 16, 2013)

Reaz Hassan

There cannot be any doubt that the armed forces must be upgraded and made capable of resisting the evil forces, both external and internal. From that point of view, we welcome the arms purchase. However, some reservations remain. Firstly, the issue was not discussed in the JS or in the parliamentary standing committee at all. Secondly, why should the nation remain unaware about such a deal? Moreover, the loan of \$1 billion obtained from Russia was borrowed at an exorbitant rate of interest. Though delayed, we expect our government would divulge the contents of the deals and MoUs signed with Russia.

Concerned

Bangladesh does not need this deal. It is suicidal, while so many areas are to be funded and improved. Schools, hospitals, roads, culverts, river

dredging and so many other areas are there which should be given priority.

Mijan

Any arms purchase deal should have been debated in parliament first and then the decision to go ahead taken.

Rch

Sheikh Hasina, during her last tenure, bought eight MIG 29, and now only 4 are flyable! Why is she doing it again?

Towhid Tuhin

The project of nuclear power plant will be a constructive one. We may seek financial support to improve our agriculture, education and so on. But I do not realise the importance of buying such costly weapons where there are other demands to be fulfilled.

EB

Who advised this to AL gov-

ernment? Buying arms is a waste of public money. We should invest this money in infrastructural development.

Ask

What a travesty and short-sightedness when there are so many needs to be fulfilled. The armed forces are already given resources the country can ill-afford.

Selma

Is it prudent to spend all these money when our hospitals, schools and roads are all old and dilapidated? I wonder how much commission the Russians offered to seal the deal.

Ferdous Jalil

\$1 billion for weapons is nothing, but \$1 billion for 5 grand hospitals or 50 schools or an elevated expressway or the Padma bridge is a lot.

Ahsan

The \$1b arms deal is a total waste of money. A major portion of it will be spent on bribes, commissions, etc., and the remainder will be spent for buying unnecessary weapons which will become unusable soon after.

Misbah Uddin Sumon

When the prices of daily necessities have gone out of reach of common people, when getting loan for con-

structing Padma bridge is uncertain, when the price of electricity is increasing day by day, why is our government buying weapons instead of solving these problems?

Roni Rahman

We can not get money for basic fundamentals like bridges and roads, and yet buying guns on high interest rates? Who are the beneficiaries?

Nasirullah Mridha, USA

Teachers are struggling to get their institutions under MPO and facing police brutality on streets. Our shabby infrastructure is keeping the investors away from setting up industries. Spending \$1 billion on defence in present circumstances is just not right.

Hasan-SZ

\$1 billion for obsolete Russian technology! Who is Bangladesh going to use it against? India?

Md Shahjahan

All deals and MoUs signed must be discussed in parliament.

Jumana Sarwar

There is nothing wrong in modernising the defence forces. However, the nation has many pending issues and certainly the government has failed to set priority and